

Chapter 3

The Pleasures and Problems of Growth, 1920–1940

By 1920 the twenty-six-year-old Genealogical Society had won a permanent and prominent place in the official programs of the Church. Nearly every ward and stake had a genealogical organization. Temple attendance was increasing, and the expertise of the Society staff was always in demand by people who came to do research. Genealogical leaders were continually quoting the Prophet Joseph Smith's statement that "the greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead," and they seemed determined to emblazon that attitude upon the conscience of every Latter-day Saint. Nevertheless, only a handful of Saints in most wards were devoting much time to genealogical research, although the number of members heeding the persistent call for genealogical work was growing gradually.

The next two decades saw tremendous growth, the inauguration of several new programs, and the emergence of some important new leaders. Susa Young Gates reminisced in 1927:

We who have seen this organization develop from . . . a dozen founders in 1894 . . . with headquarters in a little upper room in the Historian's Office, to a lively membership of 4,724 with spacious and luxurious library and offices in the Church Office Building, contemplate with wonder the daily renewed miracle.¹

Growth of the Society

By the end of 1937, the library contained over 19,200 books, including several thousand volumes from Scandinavia, Germany, and the British Isles obtained by John A. Widtsoe while he was president of the European Mission. The Society planned to spend \$2,500 annually on new books. Only four genealogical libraries in the country were more extensive: the Library of Congress in Washington, the New England Historic Genealogical Society Library in Boston, the Newberry Library in Chicago, and the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society Library in New York City. In 1928 one well-known genealogist from Chicago remarked that although some libraries had more books, the indexing system of the Utah library was the finest he had ever seen.² The library served an average of seventy-five patrons each day.³

By 1934 the Society had nearly 6,000 lifetime members and hundreds of annual members. That year it moved into new headquarters in the Joseph F. Smith Memorial Building, with expanded research facilities that could accommodate 300 researchers. Twenty trained researchers worked for the research bureau, and the new Temple Index Bureau had a card file of over six million names.⁴

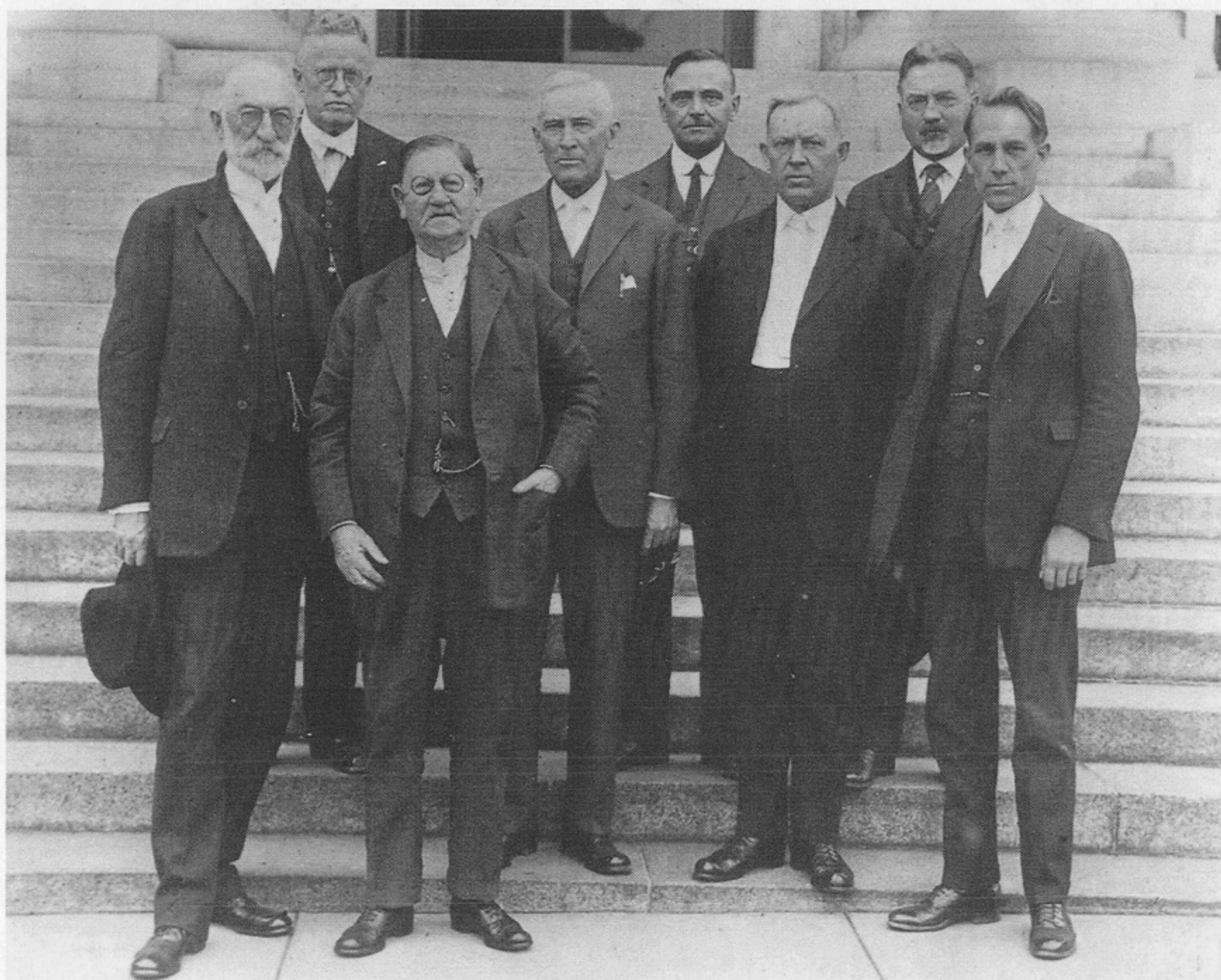
During this era, genealogy became highly institutionalized in the Church through home teachers, classes for various age groups, handbooks, numerous new committees, and an increasing amount of official endorsement and emphasis from Church leaders at all levels. In the 1920s, the Patriarch to the Church, Hyrum G. Smith, headed a "Committee on Activities and Lesson Work" intended to promote both conviction and activity among Church members. Working with priesthood leaders, auxiliary officers, and Church schools, the committee promoted publications, sponsored conventions, erected memorials, promoted family organizations, and urged temple excursions.

The Great Depression of the 1930s provided, in one respect, an unexpected stimulus to genealogical work; many who were out of work took the opportunity to do some long-neglected family research. One Society staff member later noted that there was probably more work done in this period than at any previous time, with the library often filled to capacity.⁵

As might be expected, all this expansion was accompanied by intensive discussions, some differences over policy, and a few misunderstandings. Several thorny questions were debated in these two decades. Their resolutions had important consequences for the future.

New Leaders

During these years of expansion, the Society was led by four different presidents. The first three were all members of the First Presidency of the Church during their tenure as president of the Society—Anthon H. Lund, who served as president after the death of Franklin D. Richards in 1899 until his own death in 1921; Charles W. Penrose, who died in 1925; and Anthony W. Ivins, who



Society officials, 1923, in front of the Church Administration Building. Shown are (left to right) Church President Heber J. Grant, board member; Joseph Christenson, librarian; Elder Charles W. Penrose, president; Elder Anthony W. Ivins, vice president; William A. Morton, secretary; Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, treasurer; Elder John A. Widtsoe, board member; Patriarch Hyrum G. Smith, board member. Courtesy Utah State Historical Society.



Officers and staff of the Society, 1923, in front of the Church Administration Building. Courtesy Utah State Historical Society.

held the position until 1934. At that point, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith of the Council of the Twelve was appointed president. Elder Smith had been a member of the board since 1907. He had also served as librarian, editor, secretary, treasurer, and vice president. By the time he was released in 1961, he had led the Society longer than any other president.

Elder John A. Widtsoe, also of the Council of the Twelve, was appointed to the board of the Society soon after being called as an Apostle in 1921. A respected scholar and academician, Widtsoe brought broad perspective and foresight into guiding the direction of the Society for the thirty years he served on the board. He helped create support for the establishment of a Temple Index Bureau. He also promoted such significant projects as micro-filming and propounded views that anticipated future programs such as the name-extraction program.

The position in the Society that demanded the most time was that of secretary. Since the president was always a General Authority of the Church and therefore able to devote only part of his time to the Society, the secretary became the full-time manager. In 1928 this position went to Archibald F. Bennett, who devoted the rest of his career to the Society and became one of the most

well-known genealogists in the Church and in the genealogical world. He was the author of numerous books and articles; his best-known work was *Saviors on Mount Zion*, a genealogical instruction manual published for the Sunday Schools in 1950. His



Archibald F. Bennett, ca. 1938, author, teacher, publicist, genealogical enthusiast, and Society secretary, 1928–1961. He was popularly known in the Church as “Mr. Genealogy.”

writings, public addresses, classes at Brigham Young University, and willingness to help people at the Society endeared him to many. An avid researcher, he became particularly interested in the family of Joseph Smith. Through some clever genealogical sleuthing, he discovered a previously unknown daughter, who died in infancy, in the family of Joseph Smith Sr.⁶

After Elder Smith became president in 1934, he employed L. Garrett Myers, a banker by profession, as the superintendent of research and as assistant treasurer. Myers later became superintendent of the Society. Working behind the scenes and receiving little recognition, he directed the day-to-day work of the Society for twenty-five years.

“Grass Roots” Inspiration: The Temple Index Bureau

The upsurge in genealogical activity and temple work among Church members inevitably resulted in duplication of effort, incomplete and inaccurate records, and serious discussions about solving such problems. Leaders became increasingly concerned over the fact that overlap in research by unacquainted branches of the same family frequently led to duplication of temple work, because no effective cross-referencing existed between the temples. Further, the demand for names to accommodate temple patrons sometimes led to the performance of vicarious ordinances before the deceased person had been accurately identified or the family relationships clearly proven.

Beginning at least as early as the 1890s, various unsuccessful attempts were made to eliminate duplication of research and temple work. Some families experimented with their own card-indexing system. The Society developed a rudimentary surname index to families submitting names for temple work, but it was not an adequate reference to individuals.⁷ Another effort to avoid duplication would be eschewed by modern librarians, although it seemed to be a practical solution at the time: “When a name is taken from the books,” researchers were instructed in 1919, “a check mark should be placed opposite that name, to the end that no one else shall take that name again for purposes of temple work.”⁸ This policy continued until 1927. Various other solutions were tried, but none were adequate.



Harry H. Russell, ca. 1937,
founder and director of the
Temple Index Bureau.

Harry Russell was one of those people most concerned about research and temple ordinance duplication. His efforts eventually resulted in the establishment of an important new approach to the problem. Converted to the Church in 1912 at age forty-three, Russell moved to Utah and became actively engaged

in temple work and genealogical research. From 1914 to 1918, he served as a missionary on the Temple Block in Salt Lake City, and for twenty years, he was an officiator in the Salt Lake Temple.

One of Harry Russell's research sources was a book of the genealogy of the Abbott family. After spending some 360 days in the temple performing proxy ordinances for his ancestors listed in the book, he learned that certain relatives were also doing Abbott names in the St. George Temple. He went south to visit them. To his dismay, he discovered that they had the same book and had been doing work for the same names he had done in the Salt Lake Temple. His training as an accountant and businessman led him to quickly calculate the hours lost if such duplications were taking place in all the Church's temples (five were operating in 1920, and the Alberta Temple was nearing completion). The results greatly offended his business sense, for he saw untold loss of both time and money, most of which could be avoided by an effective coordinating system. He was so dismayed with the situation that, even though he continued to work as a temple officiator, he refused, at least for the time being, to perform endowments for his own progenitors.⁹ But he did not let the matter drop. Rather, he began to press for the establishment of a clearinghouse that

would index all names for which temple ordinances had been performed, identify them properly to avoid duplication, and incorporate all past ordinances into the index.

Harry Russell had embarked on a difficult campaign. Several obstacles stood in his way, including some officers of the Society who, even though they recognized the problem, had objections to the kind of bureau he was proposing. Joseph Fielding Smith, for example, was initially reluctant to plunge into new water.¹⁰ One of his concerns, apparently, was the high cost involved, since it would take considerable manpower to go through all the records, transfer them to index cards, then keep the system up-to-date. But Russell found support from other leaders, including Elder John A. Widtsoe and President Heber J. Grant.

Harry Russell's unyielding tenacity was one of the major factors in establishing the Temple Index Bureau. He always called it his "baby," quipping that getting it approved was just like having labor pains.¹¹ Yet it would not have been born without the help of others. At least by 1921, all the temple presidents had joined the chorus of voices calling for something to be done. At the time of April 1921 general conference, Elder Widtsoe met with the temple presidents and recorders. After much discussion, they decided that a committee should be formed, consisting of representatives from each temple, to formulate a plan.¹² At a similar meeting during the October conference, the committee presented a plan which the temple officials approved. On 3 November, Elder Widtsoe reported this progress to the directors of the Society, who then instructed the activities and programs committee, chaired by Elder Widtsoe, to continue working on the project and to bring some definite recommendations and cost estimates to the board and to the First Presidency. Joseph Fielding Smith—apparently more supportive of the project by this time—and Joseph Christenson were members of this committee. By the following April, their plans were in order, and the new Temple Index Bureau was established. Officially, the Index Bureau became an adjunct to the Church Historian's Office, because it was considered part of the record-keeping system of the Church. The Index Bureau was not transferred to the Society until 1942. Harry Russell

received a fitting recognition for all his efforts when he was appointed the first superintendent of the new bureau.

Russell had the momentous task of providing an index of all the names that had ever been endowed. The Executive Committee of the Society, and Joseph Fielding Smith in particular, gave wholehearted support. The Society quickly ordered 200,000 cards that had been specially designed by Russell. Within two years, another 200,000 were needed. Eventually the index would consist of millions of cards.

This new program led to a new kind of Church missionary call. In each community where a temple stood, except Laie, Hawaii, women with typing skills were called as missionaries to transfer names from temple records to index cards. In August of 1922, twelve missionary typists were busily engaged at the Salt Lake Temple, five in Logan, four in Manti, and three in St. George. Russell supervised the work, insisting that special attention be paid to accuracy. After nearly five months, the typists in the Logan Temple had completed 126,000 index cards, and all but 44,000 had been checked against the original records and sent to Salt Lake City.¹³ By 1924 the Church had authorized placing five typists, in addition to Russell himself, on full-time salary.



Typists preparing index cards from the temple records at the Temple Index Bureau, ca. 1924. Harry H. Russell is in the background. The index was used to eliminate name submissions for whom temple ordinances had already been performed.

The bureau took four and one-half years to get the index in order so that it could begin functioning as a clearinghouse for vicarious endowments. In the meantime, several problems had to be solved. Some were purely functional, such as what kind of material should be used in index cards. Not content with just any index card, Russell conducted elaborate durability tests on various cards before approving which to use. As the work progressed, the question arose whether the index could be used by researchers before it was complete. In October 1925, the Bureau decided to allow families, when properly supervised, to use the partially completed index as a check for duplication in their own research.¹⁴

Russell's most complicated problem was devising an efficient system of filing—one that would facilitate name finding as quickly and accurately as possible. Because of variant surname spellings, a patron could expend considerable time searching in dozens of places for a single surname. Russell noted, for instance, that there were thirty-eight different ways to spell *Smith*. To solve the problem, he devised a phonetic filing system so that all names that sounded alike would be located together. "Auxiliary" cards guided researchers from alternate spellings to the standard spelling for each name. Patronymic prefixes were ignored; hence, names beginning with such prefixes as *von* or *Mac* were filed under the first letter following the prefix.

Despite Russell's painstaking work, his system was neither flawless nor problem free. Even though he prepared detailed instructions for his filers, some of them did not follow instructions, and the system "fell down in the execution," as he put it. When he discovered the flaws, he began immediately to have the cards rearranged, but after five years the job was still not complete. With a task so monumental and filled with so much potential for human error, understandably the bureau continued to be plagued with problems and never completely solved the dilemma of duplication.¹⁵

Harry Russell's frustrations were complicated by the fact that he was creating a new system with which others might disagree—for example, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith. "I think you made a *very great blunder* in ignoring all *prefixes*," the Apostle had written him when he first devised the plan. While Russell worried about countering authority, he did not change his mind. In 1932, Elder Smith

urged Russell to adopt a phonetic filing for given names similar to the one used for surnames. In Russell's mind, this was a patent impossibility. The task of rearranging and making adequate "headers" (cross-reference cards) was so gigantic as to be unthinkable. The surname problem was complicated enough, but to try to file phonetically the thousands of given names such as *Niels, Nels, Nils, Ann, Anna, Anne, Annie*, "and so on ad infinitum," was, he said, "ridiculous to even consider it at all." Such a departure from the system of locating given names according to spelling "would mean disaster, loss of money, and ruin in the files. Remember that cards are going into the files at the rate of almost half a million a year. We are distracted with the complexities that we now have, to say nothing of adding more," he wrote in 1932. Three years later, still miffed at Elder Smith's continued pressures to change the system, he gently reminded his superior of the value of practical experience in the business of filing. He had already tried the proposed system and found it unworkable:

It's easy for people to stand off and say, 'Why don't you do, thus and so?' when they have no practical experience in the matter in question, and when the matter has been tried, found wanting and abandoned long ago. If we do not know more about our own problem than any one else, we should be arrested and sent to Provo.¹⁶

Whatever else may be said for Harry Russell, it will never be said that he was afraid to speak his mind. Symbolic of his ultimate commitment, he often signed such letters, "Yours for the Dead."

By 1925 most of the indexing was complete, and Harry Russell was ready to begin what he called "the stupendous task of arranging the cards in the files so as to be 'get-at-able.'" To do this, he estimated, would require his staff to handle about three million cards, five to ten times each. The files were nearly complete by October 1926. On 12 October, Russell was assigned to prepare a notice for the *Deseret News* that would make the announcement he had long awaited: beginning 1 January 1927, all temple sheets prepared for endowments must pass through the Temple Index Bureau. This would apply to all except the Hawaii Temple, which would keep its own index system.¹⁷ The job of clearing names through the Temple Index Bureau then became a prominent aspect of the work of the Genealogical Society for the next sixty years.

Harry Russell had one final difference of opinion with Joseph Fielding Smith. The index cards reflected endowments that had been performed, but not the sealing ordinances. Complete accuracy, Russell felt, demanded that the sealing records also be indexed. He began to work toward this end and apparently was able to file at least some sealing cards. Joseph Fielding Smith, however, disagreed with Russell's plan. In Elder Smith's opinion, the number of duplications prevented by adding the sealing records would be minimal and hardly worth the tremendous cost in time and money. But Russell persisted, and on 18 April 1935, went over Elder Smith's head by writing to President Heber J. Grant. President Grant forwarded the letter to Elder Smith, asking for more information. Elder Smith immediately wrote a long explanation of his view to the Church President, then drafted a reprimand to Russell. "When are you going to quit annoying President Heber J. Grant?" he asked, asserting that less than one-fourth of one percent of the index cards contained insufficient information.

Now, please, let President Grant alone and quit bothering him with this kind of matter. . . . It is not becoming in you to constantly try to place me in a hole by appealing to President Grant and stating that it is with difficulty that you can get anything accomplished. We have decided that the Bureau shall be an Index Bureau and not a Bureau of Records.¹⁸

Harry Russell could hardly contain himself. "You are off on the wrong foot," he told Elder Smith. "You are wrong exactly 99 ⁹/₁₀%, for instead of *some* cards with a lack of necessary information," all cards containing records of endowments up to 1928 were incomplete. The recording of endowments up to that point, he said, was "disgracefully deficient and defective"—it omitted names of fathers, mothers, husbands, and wives. The only solution was to put sealing cards, at least pertaining to sealings for the dead, in the files for the period before 1928. Then, with a touch of humor, Russell wrote, "After you have the SEALING CARDS UP TO JANUARY 1928, I will be perfectly willing to hold my peace, quit saying mean things about your defective temple records, and be a real good little boy from that time on."¹⁹

One complicating factor, only hinted at in this correspondence, was the irregularity in the sealing records that grew out of the

nineteenth-century practice of “adoption.”²⁰ Elder Smith felt it would be unwise for such information to be made generally available to families whose ancestors had been adopted into other families, and he was disturbed whenever it was discovered that workers in the Index Bureau had given out such information. He believed this practice could only cause needless confusion and misunderstanding. Eventually, Elder Smith requested that the record of all sealings not connected with actual family relationships be made unavailable.²¹

Despite all the challenges, the Temple Index Bureau made a laudable record for itself. A name could be cleared for temple work in an average of thirty-five seconds. During the first five years of operation, a total of 4,246,668 names were checked, resulting in the prevention of 264,334 duplications (about 6 percent). By 1 January 1936, the number of names checked had reached 6,833,371, with 561,535 duplications avoided. One month later, on 2 February, Harry Russell died, hopefully well satisfied with how his “baby” had matured. In time the percentage of duplicate rejection increased. By the end of 1959, the Bureau housed nearly 21,800,000 cards, had checked over 29,000,000, and avoided nearly 6,000,000 duplications (about 20 percent).²²



Society staff sorting Temple Index Bureau index cards, ca. 1935. Harry H. Russell sits on the right side of the table. Courtesy Delbert and Barbara Roach.

Research Assistance

While indexing and avoiding duplication in temple work was important, promoting genealogical research was still the primary function of the Society. Research activity increased dramatically in the 1920s and 1930s, along with the development of several new programs within the Society and accelerated efforts to generate enthusiasm at stake and ward levels.

Beginning in the early 1920s, the Society no longer appointed field agents on an official basis. Apparently, it did not want to be held officially responsible for the work of professional researchers. Still, the Society continued to recommend competent professionals to its patrons and even transmitted funds from Utah patrons to foreign researchers. These included some former agents of the Society.²³

The Society made every effort to expose research scams. In 1935, for example, it issued a strong warning in the *Deseret News* against "certain individuals, styling themselves genealogists [who] are resorting to an attractive type of advertising and thereby inducing many members to place orders with them for genealogical research." According to the warning, such people simply gathered names indiscriminately, with no proof of family connection. These names could not be used for temple work under the rules of that time.²⁴ The following year, the Society called attention to a group known as the Media Research Bureau that was advertising compiled genealogies for sale "which in reality are brief compilations of very general information already in print and of very little use to those who purchase copies."²⁵

While the library encouraged research, it attempted to avoid duplication of research effort by restricting patrons to pursuit of only four surname lines of their own ancestors. As stated in the *Temple and Genealogical Handbook* of 1924: "limiting the performance of temple ordinances in behalf of those who are the kindred of the individuals engaging in that sacred work, is intended to prevent the endless confusion and repetition that would result if there was no limitation."²⁶ Patrons were supposed to indicate which line they were working on to Lillian Cameron, who was placed in charge of library research in 1920. Work on

additional lines was permitted only after a further request was approved. Cameron could also employ workers to do research for patrons at a cost of fifty cents per hour for members and sixty cents for nonmembers of the Society. The researchers received forty cents, and the Society kept the rest as a service fee.²⁷

Lillian Cameron's work in assisting research was in addition to her other duties as librarian because the position of research supervisor was not established until 1923. Susa Young Gates accepted the first appointment, but within a few months the executive committee decided that a man should have the assignment.²⁸ In 1924 the Society established the Research Bureau, headed by Andrew K. Smith.

The recommendation to establish a research bureau came from board member John A. Widtsoe. During an extensive Scandinavian tour on Church business, Elder Widstoe observed genealogical researchers doing work for Utah members, and he became convinced the Society should supervise their labors. He recommended that this objective be accomplished through a central research bureau established by the Church.

The Society did not adopt the worldwide supervisory program Elder Widtsoe had in mind, but it did establish the Research Bureau, which supervised all research done at the library, hired researchers, made contacts with foreign researchers, transferred money to foreign countries when needed, conducted classes in genealogical research, assisted in obtaining information not available in the library, and acted as a general clearinghouse in coordinating research activities. As in the case of many such innovations, the new bureau did not escape criticism. The Logan Temple recorder complained, for example, that the Society was attempting to "corral" all genealogical research. The Society replied, "Our research work is optional with the people, as to whether they accept it or not."²⁹

The Research Bureau expanded rapidly, employing at least twenty full-time researchers as well as several part-time people in 1932. The Bureau was organized into three major divisions. The first division, the Research Department, provided research help in several languages and offered to "undertake any kind of service connected with the searching and compiling of records."



Research staff of the Genealogical Society, 1938. Staff members compiled genealogies for a nominal fee, 1924–65. Left to right, standing: Areta S. Blake, Leah Y. Phelps, Jeannette S. Lunt, Ada W. Chace, Margaret Hoyer, Elizabeth N. Jones, Mary Peterson, Mabel Y. Sanborn, Ernst Koehler, Ovena J. Ockey (supervisor of researchers), Friedericka W. Hofer, Gertrude L. Baird; left to right, seated: Grace R. Reynolds, Edna Alley, Ralphena Hacking, Reva Baker, Gwen Bryner, Ellen M. Alley, Marie J. Heninger, Ida A. Taylor, Kathryn C. Stayner, Edith M. Coray. Courtesy Delbert and Barbara Roach.

Staff members looked for overlapping research, filled out family group sheets and temple sheets as research was completed, had the temple sheets checked with the Temple Index Bureau, and later recorded completed temple ordinances. A subdivision known as the Correspondence Department sought information in other parts of America and in Europe when requested by patrons.

The second division, the Instruction Department, organized classes in genealogical research, published lessons, and offered instructional services to all the stakes and wards of the Church. For those who were too far away from the library, the department offered personal help and instruction by correspondence.

A third division, the Research Clearing House, aided people who were doing their own research and wished to cooperate with an elaborate plan for avoiding duplication of research. One of the Research Clearing House subdivisions, the Information Bureau, kept a mailing list of all patrons with a known relationship to any particular surname, a progress sheet for each researcher, and a book of pedigree charts with an index to those who had contributed each pedigree. The Information Bureau endeavored to provide preliminary reports to those who requested information by correspondence, though it became immediately evident that the demand exceeded the bureau's ability to respond quickly.

The Genealogical Archive was another subdivision of the Research Clearing House. To the extent that genealogists were willing to cooperate with this archive, their completed genealogical research was filed in a series of "surname books." By 1928 the Archive had accumulated 13,000 surnames. Researchers wishing to deposit copies of their records in the archives were charged a nominal fee for copying and indexing; for dedicated genealogists the advantages of building up a major file of completed work was well worth the cost.³⁰ In 1928 a new file, the Patrons' Section, was created which consisted of family group sheets submitted by patrons. The Clearing House also housed Church census records, pedigree charts, and an index to a variety of Church historical records known as the Early Church Records Index. The Research Clearing House was renamed the Church Genealogical Archives in 1929 and renamed again as the Church Records Archives in 1942, as part of the new names-processing procedures that are discussed in more detail below.³¹



Genealogical Archives record room, 1937. Left to right: Esther C. Naylor, Marcella Collett, W. Henry Chase, Ellen O'Brien, Olive Davis. The Archive solicited family group sheets and pedigree charts from Society members. Courtesy Delbert and Barbara Roach.

Several problems plagued the Research Bureau, including serious financial deficits. The Bureau was lenient in collecting unpaid accounts, and the supervision charges did not meet the department's overhead expenses. In March 1935, the deficit amounted to \$3,000. A large number of inactive accounts were carried on the books (that is, open accounts of patrons who had not come back for some time). The bureau attempted to rectify the problems by placing a 10-percent supervision fee on all funds deposited; by instituting more rigid accounting, collecting, and auditing procedures; and by closing inactive accounts. By mid-1936 such financial difficulties were apparently subsiding.³² The Society continued to assist in research through 1966, when the increase in Church membership made it impossible to provide this service to all members of the Church.

As genealogical activity quickened throughout the Church in the 1930s, a number of stakes proposed the creation of local or branch genealogical libraries. The Society, however, officially discouraged such suggestions. The directors felt that small branches could not provide adequate research facilities under any

circumstance—a better policy would be to spend all available resources in building the central library in Salt Lake City. In 1934 a genealogical archive was established in the British mission without serious objection from Salt Lake City, but the general preference for centralization remained.³³ Decentralization was an idea ahead of its time—the concept was revived thirty years later when it became feasible to create effective branch libraries.

Despite all the programs and activities, and what appears to be an amazing surge of genealogical activity and success, the directors of the Society were not fully satisfied. Nor, apparently, would they be until they felt that all Church members were doing their genealogical duty. In connection with a plea for more funds in 1939, the editors of the Society's magazine wondered aloud why more members of the Church were not as enthusiastic as they: "We wonder at times if the membership of our Church understand the real function of the Genealogical Society."³⁴

Apparently one reason for lack of participation in genealogical research was financial. People did minimal research in the 1930s simply because they could not afford even the small fees charged at the library. The Society itself sometimes provided research help for certain "worthy" poor who could obtain recommendations from their bishops. Some patrons were permitted to pay with produce. In the eyes of at least one researcher, this practice tended to get out of hand. As she told one of her supervisors, she refused to accept any more dried apples or prunes. She had eaten them all winter and could hardly bear to look at another.³⁵

In the meantime, the Society continued to seek ways to help Church members improve their research skills and avoid duplication. One way was to encourage surname and family organizations.³⁶ Surname organizations consisted of people doing research on particular surname lines, regardless of direct family relationships; family organizations were composed of people doing research connected with particular family lines. Such organizations could help avoid duplication and thus facilitate more effective, less expensive research.³⁷ The Society seemed to give some preference to researchers who were members of such groups.

Correcting Slipshod Research

The 1894 revelation received by Wilford Woodruff regarding the importance of researching one's own ancestors became, in the early twentieth century, the justification for restricting one's research to his or her direct ancestral lines. The fact that this rule was not always followed is evinced in a 1929 letter from the Society's board of directors to President Heber J. Grant complaining that "a certain laxity has grown up in some of our methods." A great deal of temple work was being done for individuals not identifiable either as direct ancestors or as members of any family group. As a result, some genealogists had molded their methods to that attitude, "and devices are used by them to obtain numerous names of the dead, with just barely sufficient personal identification to get past the rules of the temples." These rules were so lax, they protested, that some "family group genealogies" were not really family groups in the spirit of true genealogical research. "The very success of research has come to be judged by the quantitative output of names, and by the cheapness or the speed of copying names from sources readily available."³⁸

In the minds of the directors of the Society, such slipshod methods were unjustifiable, even if more careful research would mean a decrease in temple work: "Such an attitude, if unchecked, would soon demoralize the whole system of research, and destroy the truth and sanctity of our temple records. It would deliberately teach our people to forget the necessity for making lineal connections with their ancestors."³⁹ The Society urged, therefore, that people do research first on their own direct family lines, and recommended that if they were to do research on related families, they should do it in connection with representatives from those families. Only as a last resort should permission be given for any other kind of name gathering and then only with the understanding that every effort would be made to connect the names within family groups.⁴⁰

The problem did not abate, however, partly because some Saints were so anxious to collect names for temple work that they would accept even the most tenuous proof of family connections, and partly because the limited supply of names provided by the

research process threatened to close down or limit the operation of some temples. In 1935 one professional researcher, who was also a member of the Los Angeles Stake genealogical board, exacerbated the debate when he solicited work by pointedly criticizing the Church policy of doing temple work only for names with identifiable family relationships. "Experienced genealogists know this cannot be done beyond a few generations," he argued, "and experienced temple workers know that it would be only a matter of a short time until temple work would be retarded as a result of this misguided effort. That time has now arrived." He claimed that his stake had received instructions to gather "not only the much maligned locality names, but surnames wherever they can be found." When this attitude was reported to the board of the Society, they quickly disapproved such counsel as "inconsistent with and contrary to the revealed word of the Lord on our responsibility in temple work and the established policy of the Church as to our responsibility."⁴¹

The next year it was discovered that a member of the Mesa Temple presidency had been promoting genealogical research in California, claiming that the current policy had almost stopped the flow of names from the California Mission. Without consulting the mission presidency, he arranged genealogical meetings in various branches, took with him various books, and encouraged the people to begin by extracting names, regardless of family relationship. When the mission president brought this to the attention of the Society, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, on behalf of the Society, fired back a strongly worded letter roundly condemning the attitude of the Arizona genealogist and reiterating the policy of the Society:

We have given instructions repeatedly . . . that members of the Church should confine their activities to their own lines. . . . We are taught that the work is not complete until parents are sealed and their children are also sealed to the parents. This makes it necessary that the family units be maintained. When names are gathered at random without any thought of family order and the baptisms and endowments are done, then what about the sealings? Our greatest difficulty in the genealogical work is in trying to unravel work of this nature for members of the Church. They too frequently gather names and go to the temple feeling that they are accomplishing something, and then find themselves in a tangle. We are unable, in many cases, to unravel the tangle. . . . Temple work must be orderly

and when it is not, it leads to endless confusion. We who are at the head of the genealogical work have protested, and do now protest, against the procuring of names at random and without due knowledge of relationship.⁴²

The solution to the problem in the eyes of the Society was to be found in "more and continuous research."⁴³ But the problem would not be solved so simply. It would persist for several decades until a new procedure known as "extraction" would reduce the requirement for research to generate the volume of names needed by the temples.

Stake and Ward Genealogical Organization

The growth of genealogical work was unavoidably accompanied by greater institutionalization in Salt Lake City and at the local level. "This organization . . . is not an auxiliary," Joseph Fielding Smith emphasized to an Idaho Falls genealogical convention in 1922:

Get that firmly fixed in your minds. The Sunday School, Primary, Religion Class, Mutual and Relief Society, these are auxiliary organizations, but this organization is a part of the great Temple work system of the Church. . . . It has a place which is unique—peculiar to itself. It has a position which is absolutely necessary in this Church and Kingdom.⁴⁴

With this attitude, the officers of the Society set about to strengthen local organizations and enlarge their sphere of activity. They organized a kind of correlation committee headed by John A. Widtsoe and including representatives from the Sunday School, Young Men's and Young Women's Mutual Improvement Associations, Church education, the Primary, and Brigham Young University. One objective was to place all Church organizations in close touch with the Society.⁴⁵ Over the next two decades, even though many, if not most, Church members still were not regularly doing genealogical work, apparently very few in the Church escaped being touched at least in some way by the influence of the Society.

In 1920 the Society made new recommendations for strengthening stake and ward genealogical committees. Each stake was to

appoint a genealogical representative with two assistants, and each ward was to organize a similar committee. These committees were to meet regularly, supervise genealogical activities within their stakes or wards, give assistance to families, conduct class-work, and organize temple excursions.⁴⁶ By 1932 committees were organized, most according to the "official plan," in every stake as well as in many missions.⁴⁷

The recommended plan for stake and ward organizations had become highly elaborate by 1937. Each committee consisted of a genealogical representative and two counselors (each of whom had charge of various subcommittees or departments), a secretary, endowment committee, sealing committee, baptism committee, temple project committee, senior class committee, junior class committee, research and records groups, home teaching committee, finance committee, social committee, and magazine and Society membership workers. Genealogy was highly visible, which was exactly what the Society had in mind.⁴⁸ The ideal plan, according to the lessons presented by the Society in 1934, would be to have one ward committee member for every twelve families. The hypothetical "Salt Lake City Ward" with 1,680 people and 400 family units was to have a committee consisting of thirty-six members, including the representative and his two counselors.⁴⁹ If the ideal plan were followed, everyone in the ward above the age of thirteen would soon be involved in some phase of genealogical work.

Presumably no stake achieved the ideal, but according to the reports a number of stakes showed some impressive activity. In the last quarter of 1937, for example, Ensign Stake in Salt Lake City reported 3,070 families in the stake. Of these, 1,140 were active in genealogical research. Eight wards were holding senior genealogical classes, and three were holding junior classes. A total of 1,299 people had attended the temple, performing 9,889 baptisms for the dead, 8,172 endowments for the dead, 2,486 proxy sealings of wives to husbands, and 5,850 proxy sealings of children to parents. Thirty-one families subscribed to the genealogical magazine. At the other end of the scale, many stakes had only a small number of families engaged in research and did little temple work, even if they were relatively close to temples. Some stakes did not report at all.⁵⁰

The directors of the Society were concerned that Church members in the missions have the same instructions and challenges as those in the stakes. Church programs in the missions, however, were usually less organized than those in the stakes. Members in the missions were more scattered and in areas where temples and the facilities of the Society were not readily accessible. Elder John A. Widtsoe, president of the European Mission from 1927 to 1933, attempted to organize genealogical work on that continent. His plan was used and met with some success in a few branches. Later the directors of the Society attempted to organize all the missions along the same lines as the stakes, wherever it was feasible.⁵¹

Some satisfying success stories emerged as members outside the United States became more and more involved. In 1935, after working for one and one-half years, a committee in the Czecho-Slovak Mission presented its first group of names for temple work. They sent the names of eighty-two relatives to Salt Lake City in what they proudly dubbed "The First Czecho-Slovak Temple Excursion." In 1936 some Saints in the Joinville Brazil Branch organized the first Church genealogical society in that country, began to hold classes, and set up correspondence with Europe, particularly Germany. The fifty-nine members in the branch had an average attendance of thirteen in the eleven classes held that year—probably a better average than most wards in Utah.⁵²

The success of the Church's genealogical program depended greatly on local genealogical leaders. They led the way in getting Church members involved in seeking out their ancestors and performing temple work. They were responsible for genealogical classwork. They recruited new members of the Society; sold subscriptions to the magazine; promoted various fund-raising activities, including a book fund for the genealogical library in Salt Lake City; organized research excursions to the library, especially when it appeared that names for temple work were running short; arranged for volunteers to help copy records, such as cemetery files; and helped index vital records. Their assigned activities included taking surveys of all ward families to ascertain what records the families had, whether they were converted to

genealogy, and whether they were temple attenders. They were then to assist families that needed help in any respect.⁵³ Committee members also functioned as genealogical home teachers, spending at least one night a week visiting homes and instructing families in genealogical methods. The results of all this activity did not meet the Society's expectations, for while some committees took their responsibilities seriously, others simply did not follow through.⁵⁴

Promotion of Local Activity

The Society supported the work of its local committees with a variety of programs and initiatives. These included regional genealogical conventions, genealogical classes in cooperation with the Mutual Improvement Association, separate genealogical classes on Mondays, genealogical Sunday, junior genealogical classes, and more. This program was designed to make genealogy as much a part of everyday Church activity as any other Church work.

At first, apparently, regional genealogical conventions consisted merely of meetings for stake representatives held in connection with general conferences in Salt Lake City. Then in the 1920s, the Society began to hold special conventions in the stakes, often with two or three stakes in combination. These conventions added to the demands placed on the time of Church members, but in the view of the Society, it was the most important time a person could contribute.⁵⁵ About half the stakes participated.⁵⁶

The problem of financing the stake conventions came up for serious discussion in 1928. The directors of the Society decided to ask all genealogical workers in each stake to donate \$.25 annually to a special fund to pay convention costs. Soon the Society established the policy of holding conventions only in those stakes that so contributed. In addition, the travel expenses of the representatives from Salt Lake City were kept at modest figures. In 1929, for example, fifty-four conventions were held at a total cost of \$745.25, or \$13.80 each. In 1934 sixty-three conventions cost about the same on average, and \$179.87 was spent for a trip through several missions. Clearly, the dedicated representatives of the Society had no tendency toward padded expense accounts.⁵⁷

At the suggestion of Elder John A. Widtsoe, the Society began to develop standardized programs for these stake conventions. Earlier programs emphasized doctrine, but eventually the standard programs also included practical instructions. Members of the board insisted that convention representatives be prepared to "give efficient, practical help and instructions, and not spend the time of the convention sermonizing on general doctrinal themes."⁵⁸

The Society entrenched itself even more firmly into established local programs through the expansion of classwork in the wards. Some conflict was probably unavoidable, as the Society appeared to be encroaching on the grounds of other organizations. In the 1920s, the Church priesthood quorum meetings were held on Tuesday evening, after which the Mutual Improvement Association (MIA) held its classes. In 1928 the president of the MIA, George Albert Smith, invited the Society to conduct a genealogical class as part of the Mutual program. The Society readily agreed, although some misunderstanding arose when the MIA left the impression in its handbook that the genealogical class was a division of MIA, whereas the Society wanted it made clear that the class was under the direction of the Society and the ward bishop. Some people felt the class should be taught once or twice a month, while the Society wanted it taught at least three times. Such disagreements naturally irritated the leaders of the Church, who were already having difficulty enough attempting to correlate the various burgeoning Church programs.

In October 1931, Elder Melvin J. Ballard, general secretary of the MIA, and Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, president of the Society, both spoke out. "There should be no spirit of rivalry between members of the two groups, nor any thought that the success of one group is a corresponding detriment to the other," Elder Ballard read from a statement prepared by the leaders of the MIA. "Surely we can cooperate in attaining the same grand objective, the saving of souls." "There should be no rivalry, no petty jealousy," Elder Smith affirmed. "It is the same Church, the same Gospel, and all work towards the same ends."⁵⁹ The solution in this period was simply, as originally planned, for the ward MIA to have two classes for adults, one of which was genealogy, making the choice of which to attend optional. It was also agreed that, if

the bishop saw fit, the genealogical class could be held on a night other than Tuesday.⁶⁰

The general trend in the 1930s moved toward setting aside a special night for genealogical work in lieu of the Tuesday night class. In 1932, Monday night was designated as the regular night Churchwide for genealogical classes.⁶¹ This schedule, too, did not work entirely smoothly. In 1936, for example, one stake president tried to persuade the genealogical committees to return to meeting with the MIA on Tuesday, so that Monday could be set aside as "Home Night" in the stake. A long discussion among the board of directors ensued, and a kind letter was sent from Joseph Fielding Smith to the presumably erring stake president: "It was reported that in your stake there was a move on foot to make Monday evening 'Home Night,' thus taking away from the genealogical workers the night on which they meet," he wrote. He then reported that the Council of the Twelve had recently decided to suggest that Saturday night be designated "Home Night" throughout the Church. This, they felt, would be good preparation for the Sabbath and also would "put a stop to Saturday night parties and dances, which interfere so materially with the Sunday Schools the following morning." He further reminded the stake president that they had already tried meeting with the MIA—unsuccessfully. "We hope," he said, "that the workers in the genealogical work will not be deprived of the night which they have chosen."⁶²

By the end of the 1930s, Monday night was generally accepted as genealogy night throughout the Church. While only a small percent of the ward members attended this class, those who did constituted a genealogical teaching force that was supposed to keep everyone else involved at least to some degree. The fourth Monday of each month was genealogical home teaching night, and the genealogical class was responsible to make the visits. "After the opening prayer," said the instructions from Church headquarters,

the members should go out to their appointed districts for home teaching, two by two, and make short but helpful visits. Ascertain something about the person you are going to visit beforehand, and find where he needs your help. Give that help in the most efficient way you can, and be ready to report your visit at the next meeting of the committee.⁶³

In the 1930s, the Society also established the fifth Sunday of any month that had five Sundays as "Genealogy Sunday." Local genealogical leaders planned and presented ward sacrament meeting programs on that day.

Even after all this activity, many local leaders were concerned that their ward members were not attending the temple often enough. As a result of this concern, some wards started a temple missionary program. Working with the ward genealogical committees, bishops called ward members on special missions to attend the temple at least once a week. In the Hillcrest Ward in Salt Lake City, for example, Bishop Oscar J. Harline in 1928 began to call groups of about twenty people on three-month temple missions. Later the time was reduced to two months. The results, the bishop reported, were greater spirituality, temple attendance, and temple worthiness. Many other wards had similar programs, sometimes involving especially the elderly or the unemployed in these callings.⁶⁴

In 1934, however, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith objected to such mission calls. It would be like calling people on missions to attend sacrament meeting or to pay tithing, he said; these were things that members were supposed to do without special calls. Even though Joseph Christenson pointed out that this practice had been going on for years and that its discontinuance would "be detrimental to temple work and would leave the temples almost empty," Elder Smith took the matter to the First Presidency and the Twelve. The decision as announced to the board in February 1935 was that bishops and stake presidents could instruct, advise, persuade, and encourage temple attendance in every other way, but that formal mission calls were not to be issued. As a result, temple attendance decreased after the temple mission calls ceased. Years later, in 1949, the Society learned that some stakes were again issuing regular calls for temple missions, and Elder Smith again instructed the board that such calls were inappropriate.⁶⁵

Another type of expansion occurred that the officers of the Society found undesirable. Apparently some missionaries were using genealogy as an approach to missionary work, and in 1939, President David O. McKay of the First Presidency questioned the

advisability of this practice. Archibald F. Bennett, secretary of the Society, fully agreed and made efforts to so instruct the proper missionary officials.⁶⁶

Genealogy and the Youth

The youth were not exempt from the work of the Genealogical Society. As early as 1922, the Primary Association of the Church, with the support and encouragement of the Society, sponsored temple excursions for children over eight to perform baptisms in behalf of the dead.⁶⁷ Nearly fifty thousand proxy baptisms were performed by Primary children in 1923.⁶⁸

In addition, the young men (at that time, between the ages of twelve and twenty-one) and young women of similar age were urged to take a greater interest in genealogical work. Predictably, some zealous ward committeemembers soon suggested a junior genealogical class. One such person was Karl Weiss of the Salt Lake City Third Ward in the Liberty Stake. After accompanying the youth to the temple for baptisms, Weiss discovered that none of them kept records of the names for whom they had been baptized and they did not seem to understand the full importance of what they were doing. He was soon made chairman of his ward committee, and under his direction, the first junior genealogical class in his ward was held on 5 February 1929. Other wards followed suit. "There is a vast field here being now hardly touched," the Society noted with satisfaction at the end of the year.⁶⁹

The board seized the opening quickly, and in October 1930, they officially approved a plan for junior genealogical classes Churchwide. Joseph Fielding Smith prepared the lesson material, which consisted of twelve lessons. Young men studied it as part of their weekly Aaronic Priesthood lessons, taking one lesson each month, and the young women participated through the weekly meetings of the MIA. The "Book of Remembrance" project received its start in these junior genealogical classes. As a place to record important personal experiences and collect genealogical records, the "Book of Remembrance" became an important tradition in households throughout the Church.⁷⁰

By 1935, due to the fact that genealogical instruction in the priesthood quorums was only partially successful, the Society was encouraging the formulation of junior genealogical classes separate from other activities. A full course of study was prepared. The Society also proposed that the Sunday Schools and seminaries be encouraged to present genealogical lessons.⁷¹ In at least one case, a bishop issued written "calls" to young people to attend the class. For a time in the early 1930s, even the Primary Association began to give genealogical and record-keeping instruction to children between the ages of eight and twelve.⁷²

Although some people objected to requiring additional activity from young people, success stories poured in from various places in the Church. In 1940, for example, Weber Stake reported that 103 students received certificates for completing a junior genealogy course, and thirteen received fourth-year certificates. Cache Stake reported that many of its young people found more interest in the genealogy lessons than any other subject. From the mission field, the Columbia South Carolina Branch reported ten "Books of Remembrance" completed within the year.⁷³

Not everyone, however, was convinced. Some stake and ward leaders were dismayed at the way such expanding programs were eating away at the time of the young people. Church activity on Sunday, MIA on Tuesday, the encouragement of at least one night a week as home night, along with studies and other school and social activities all combined to make enough activity. To take another night each week for a genealogical class seemed to go too far. So strong was the feeling among twelve stake presidents that, late in 1936, they wrote a combined letter to the First Presidency. It expressed the sentiments of all those who were concerned with the cumulative demands of the Church programs, as well as certain frustrations of Church leadership:

In recent years there has been a marked tendency to multiply the calls made upon the time of our people, both old and young, until it is next to impossible to find a time when we can meet our children in the home circle.

Our immediate problem has to do with the call made upon us to hold weekly junior genealogical classes for boys and girls. We recognize that there is great value in such training, but cannot a place be found for it in one of the organizations which is already functioning?

In addition to all the Church organizations and activities we now have, and besides the school work and school socials and other functions that our young people are expected to participate in, it appears to us too much to lay it upon them as a duty to attend still another weekly class. We find that in many cases we cannot consistently ask attendance at these new classes on the part of our own children in addition to what they are already doing, and yet if we cannot ask it of our own, how can we consistently urge it upon others?

If we demur to giving these new classes enthusiastic support, we are told by our genealogical workers that the movement is prescribed by the General Authorities of the Church, and we are thus placed in the light of being out of harmony with our leaders. We are, therefore, taking this opportunity to state our case to you in the hope that some way may be found to put this instruction in one of our present youth organizations, or if it may not at least be left optional with ward bishoprics depending upon local conditions and the kind of leadership available for such work.

Commenting on one bishop's practice of officially calling certain boys and girls to fulfill genealogical assignments, the presidents observed that these young people were usually the most active in other organizations and that parents felt they may well be overburdened "so that instead of finding pleasure in it, they will find it burdensome and distasteful. Yet parents are placed in the embarrassing position of having their children decline the bishop's call if the new activity is not undertaken. Such a situation appears to us very unfortunate."⁷⁴

On December 22, that letter stimulated a lengthy discussion among the directors of the Society. Joseph Fielding Smith insisted that such an attitude was a blow at one of the most important activities ever instituted among young people. Not convinced by the stake presidents, the directors ended their meeting with a unanimous decision to emphasize junior genealogical work in the forthcoming conventions "more than ever before!"

The board also decided to send letters to forty-eight stake presidents in whose stakes junior classes had been conducted in order to obtain a wider sampling of opinion. Signed by Joseph Fielding Smith, the letter asked four basic questions: (1) What was the value of the junior genealogical program? (2) Had compulsory means been used to obtain attendance? (3) Were junior classes requiring too much time? (4): "In view of the vital character of the

training afforded," what other ward organizations require youth attendance at night, and how much time do they demand?

Most stake presidents polled were highly supportive, agreed that junior genealogy should not be combined with MIA, thought it not too much to ask the youth to meet on Monday night, and assured Elder Smith that no compulsory means were used. The president of Cache Stake, for example, reported an enrollment of about 260 in the genealogical classes, mostly young people from sixteen to twenty-five years of age, and a 70 percent attendance record. "There is so much social activity among our high school and college students," he observed, "that we think no harm can come if we persuade them to miss a social in order to spend an hour in learning something of their ancestors." A few stake presidents, nevertheless, expressed mild reservations, mostly because they felt that the young people were already too busy and that taking another night for a Church program was a little too much. "I believe if this class could be made part of the Sunday School classes," wrote the president of the Oakland Stake, "then all the youth of the Church would get the benefit."⁷⁵

The Society used these results to make an even stronger case for junior genealogy. On 18 January 1937, Elder Smith sent a circular to all stake presidents and bishops, reminding them of the importance of temple work in general and junior genealogical work in particular. "Strange as it may appear," he reported, "we have met with opposition, and there is a great deal of indifference shown by many officers in stakes and wards." He enclosed a list of twenty "invaluable and permanent benefits directly resulting from Junior Genealogical Classes" that had been "recently pointed out by a number of stake presidents." These were compiled from the responses to his earlier letter. He also included several impressive quotations from the supportive letters that had been received.⁷⁶

Although concerns continued to be expressed from time to time, junior genealogical classes continued for another twenty years or more. Many young people received awards and certificates for work completed, and it became an important Church tradition for them to make temple excursions to perform baptisms. Some young people completed special genealogical projects, compiled personal pedigrees, and frequented cemeteries to copy information

from tombstones for later compilation into genealogical records. Many people who later became prominent in genealogical work were first introduced to genealogy through the junior classes.

Other Genealogical Activities

The Society found many other ways to promote its interests. Genealogical conventions continued, speeches were sometimes broadcast over radio, and other genealogical programs of various sorts were presented whenever possible. Considerable energy was spent on pageants and other public productions. One of the earliest productions occurred in connection with the centennial of the first visit of the Angel Moroni to young Joseph Smith. It was celebrated on 6 October 1923 during general conference with the performance of an oratorio composed by B. Cecil Gates entitled *Salvation for the Dead*. The oratorio was prepared for performance under the auspices of Elder John A. Widtsoe and B. Cecil Gates and was sung by the Tabernacle Choir. Other pageants were presented on such themes as the ancestry of George Washington, Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and prominent political and Church leaders. In 1936 a pageant marked the one hundredth anniversary of the visitation of Elijah to Joseph Smith. A few years later, the Old Testament prophet was also honored in a Tabernacle Choir production of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

With all this activity, the rooms provided for the Society at the Church Office Building on South Temple Street became cramped. The Society moved to larger quarters in the Joseph F. Smith Memorial Building, part of a complex recently vacated by the LDS College. The new headquarters occupied three floors of the newly renovated building, just north of the Hotel Utah. On the first floor was a two-hundred-seat classroom and the Temple Index Bureau. The archives, the business department, and the research department were given ample space on the second floor, and the third floor was devoted to a public reading room with a capacity for three hundred persons. This move was far more complicated than earlier moves. The Temple Index Bureau alone had six million name cards and was acquiring more at the rate of 400,000 per year, the library contained some 16,000



Joseph F. Smith Memorial Building, December 1933, at 80 North Main, Salt Lake City, location of the Genealogical Society, 1934–62.

volumes as well as an elaborate index, and the Society had a large staff of men and women serving the public.

Formal opening of the new quarters came with an open house on 17 January 1934. It was attended by nearly 5,000 people, some 2,000 of whom stayed for the public meeting in the fourth floor auditorium at 8:00 P.M. and heard several General Authorities remind them of the importance of the work in which they were engaged. The Spirit of the Lord, remarked Elder David O. McKay, had been felt not only by the Saints, but also by many others, causing them to collect their genealogies. "These have been made available to the Latter-day Saints, and proves to us conclusively that this is the time of fulfillment of the prophecy of Elijah."⁷⁷

NOTES

¹*Deseret News*, 17 December 1927.

²*Deseret News*, 27 March 1928.

³*Deseret News*, 11 November 1931, 18 December 1937.

⁴*Salt Lake Tribune*, 14 January 1934.

⁵L. Garrett Myers, oral history interviews by Bruce Blumell, 1976, typescript, James Moyle Oral History Program, interview 3, 2-3, Archives Division, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (cited hereafter as LDS Church Archives). Also L. Garrett Myers, telephone interview by Jessie Embry, 20 January 1977. See also James M. Black, oral history interview by Bruce Blumell, 1975, typescript, James Moyle Oral History Program, interview 4, LDS Church Archives. Black says he did a lot of genealogy during this period because it was hard for him to get a job.

⁶Archibald F. Bennett, "Research Finds 'Lost Girl,'" *Instructor* 91 (December 1956): 384.

⁷This seems to be one implication of a speech given by Benjamin F. Cummings at the Granite Stake Genealogical Convention, 11 June 1917, though the intent of his comments was to encourage genealogical researchers to consult the index, then communicate with the people working on the line before they continued. B. F. Cummings, "Research Work and the Genealogical Society of Utah," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 8 (July 1917): 135; 11 (January 1920): 44 (hereafter cited as *UGHM*).

⁸"The Library of the Genealogical Society of Utah," *UGHM* 10 (1919): 119.

⁹Mary Camenish, interview by James B. Allen, 3 March 1977, Provo, Utah, tape recording, LDS Church Archives.

¹⁰Camenish, interview.

¹¹Camenish, interview.

¹²Genealogical Society Minutes, 22 April 1921, Family History Department of the Church (hereafter cited as FHD).

¹³Genealogical Society Minutes, 16 June 1922; Joseph Fielding Smith to Joseph R. Shepherd, 28 October 1922, Joseph Fielding Smith papers, LDS Church Archives; Joseph R. Shepherd to Joseph Fielding Smith, 27 October 1922, Joseph Fielding Smith papers, LDS Church Archives.

¹⁴Archibald F. Bennett, "The Growth of the Temple Index Bureau—a Worldwide Clearing House," *Improvement Era* 39 (April 1936): 219-20.

¹⁵Harry H. Russell to Genealogical Committee, 31 July 1932, Joseph Fielding Smith papers, LDS Church Archives.

¹⁶Harry H. Russell statement, dated 5 January 1932, Joseph Fielding Smith papers, LDS Church Archives; Harry H. Russell to Joseph Fielding Smith, 15 May 1932, Joseph Fielding Smith papers, LDS Church Archives. The mention of Provo is an allusion to the state mental hospital in Provo.

¹⁷Genealogical Society Minutes, 12 October 1926; Joseph Fielding Smith to President Heber J. Grant and counselors, 1 November 1926, as reported in Genealogical Society Minutes, 19 November 1926.

¹⁸Heber J. Grant to Joseph Fielding Smith, 1 June 1935, Joseph Fielding Smith papers, LDS Church Archives; Joseph Fielding Smith to Harry H. Russell, 3 June 1935.

¹⁹Harry H. Russell to Joseph Fielding Smith, 4 June 1935, Joseph Fielding Smith papers, LDS Church Archives.

²⁰See discussion of "adoption" in chapter 1.

²¹Myers, interview 5, 1-2.

²²*Handbook for Genealogy and Temple Work* (Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1949), 13; Bennett, "The Growth of the Temple Index Bureau," 221; Archibald F. Bennett, *Saviors on Mount Zion* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1960), 176.

²³Genealogical Society Minutes, 23 November 1928, 22 March 1932; "Notice concerning the Gathering of Genealogy," *UGHM* 15 (July 1924): 144; "Questions Asked and Answered at the Inter-Stake Genealogical Convention, Idaho Falls, 12-13 December 1922," *UGHM* 14 (April 1923): 70; John A. Widtsoe, "Obtaining Scandinavian Genealogies," *UGHM* 19 (January 1928): 1; Clara J. Fargergren, "Ella Hecksher and Her Work," *UGHM* 19 (January 1928): 9; "Hans N. Ogaard and His Work: Genealogical Research in Denmark," *UGHM* 19 (January 1928): 12.

²⁴*Deseret News*, 23 March 1935.

²⁵Genealogical Society Minutes, 14 April 1936.

²⁶*Handbook for Genealogy and Temple Work* (Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1924), 318. There were numerous subsequent editions.

²⁷Joseph Fielding Smith, and others, to Lillian Cameron, 1 July 1920, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD.

²⁸Genealogical Society Minutes, 10 April and 8 November 1923; *Deseret News*, 24 April 1923.

²⁹Genealogical Society Minutes, 14 September 1924, 9 April 1928.

³⁰Andrew K. Smith, "The Genealogical Research Bureau: Its Organization and How to Cooperate with It," *UGHM* 19 (July 1928): 114-23. Andrew K. Smith, "Extending the Benefits of the Research Clearing House to Those Compiling Their Own Genealogy," *UGHM* 18 (October 1927): 151-53; Andrew K. Smith, "Vicarious Offerings: The Research Clearing House," *UGHM* 18 (January 1927): 9-16.

³¹*Handbook for Genealogy and Temple Work*, 1949 ed., 13, 67-69.

³²Genealogical Society Minutes, 20 December 1929, 11 April 1932, 9 April 1934, 26 March 1935, 21 January, 25 February 1936.

³³Genealogical Society Minutes, 19 November 1931, 18 December 1934, 17 September 1935, 14 April 1937, 15 March, 20 November 1938, 7 November 1939.

³⁴"Memberships," *UGHM* 30 (January 1939): 25.

³⁵Genealogical Society Minutes, 22 March 1929; Myers, interview 3, 17.

³⁶Archibald F. Bennett to Heber J. Grant in Genealogical Society Minutes, 25 September 1928.

³⁷See, for example, Genealogical Society Minutes, 26 June 1926.

³⁸Genealogical Society Minutes, 25 September 1928. Many other minutes in this period of time suggest the same concern, and some disapproval of the name gathering process. See also, "Our 'Responsibility' in Research and Temple Work," *UGHM* 20 (January 1929): 46-48.

³⁹Genealogical Society Minutes, 25 September 1928.

⁴⁰Genealogical Society Minutes, 25 September 1928.

⁴¹Genealogical Society Minutes, 2 July 1935. See also, minutes for 17 September 1935, where the board discussed the problem of the same researcher providing that kind of data for Saints in Idaho.

⁴²Genealogical Society Minutes, 19 March 1939, which include a copy of the letter from Joseph Fielding Smith to Nicholas G. Smith, 6 March 1936.

⁴³Minutes of the Board of Directors, 21 April 1942, 5:72, FHD.

⁴⁴Joseph Fielding Smith, "The Genealogical Society, Its Purpose and Mission," an address to the Idaho Falls Genealogical Convention, 17-18 January 1922, *UGHM* 13 (April 1922): 75.

⁴⁵*Deseret News*, 18 December 1920.

⁴⁶One set of instructions clearly suggested the Society's negative attitude toward the lack of genealogical activity of many Church members. The ward committees, it said, were "to assist and supplement the work of the ward teachers in converting the negligent or the unconverted to the need of so living that they may become worthy of entering the House of the Lord." "Instructions for Stake and Ward Genealogical Workers," *UGHM* 14 (January 1923): 29. See also Genealogical Society Minutes, 18 June and 16 July 1920; *Handbook for Genealogy and Temple Work*, 1924 ed., 237-47.

⁴⁷Genealogical Society Minutes, 11 April 1932.

⁴⁸"Organization Chart for Stakes and Wards Recommended by the Genealogical Society of Utah," *UGHM* 28 (October 1937): 167.

⁴⁹"Lesson Five: The Wise Appointment of Responsibilities," *UGHM* 25 (October 1934): 174.

⁵⁰"Stake Genealogical Activities, 1 October, to 31 December 1937," *UGHM* 29 (April 1938): 82-83.

⁵¹Genealogical Society Minutes, 22 March 1929, 14 April 1931, 18 October 1932; *Millennial Star*, 19 September 1929; John A. Widtsoe, "European Program for Genealogical Study, Research and Exchange," *UGHM* 21 (January 1930): 33-34; John A. Widtsoe, "Genealogical Activities in Europe," *UGHM* 22 (July 1931): 97-106.

⁵²Spencer L. Taggert, "The First Czecho-Slovak Temple Excursion," *UGHM* 26 (October 1935): 183; *Deseret News*, 23 January 1937.

⁵³Nephi Anderson, "Duties of Ward Committees," in report of Idaho Falls Genealogical Convention, *UGHM* 13 (April 1922): 59-62.

⁵⁴Genealogical Society Minutes, 21 May 1926; Richard B. Summerhays to stake representatives, 11 August 1926, Genealogical Society circular letters, LDS Church Archives; "Field Notes for Genealogical Committeemen: Home Teaching," *UGHM* 24 (July 1933): 112-18; Part II of a lesson outline, "The Art of Home Teaching," *UGHM* 26 (January 1935): 17-48; "Senior Classwork Department: Teaching One Another, Lessons 31-38," *UGHM* 31 (January 1940): 40-45; home teaching department in various issues of *UGHM*, 1930s especially.

⁵⁵Genealogical Society Minutes, 15 November 1924, 14 April 1936; George D. Pyper to Archibald F. Bennett, 16 October 1936, copy in Joseph Fielding Smith papers, LDS Church Archives.

⁵⁶In 1930, for example, there were 104 stakes. Sixty-four had contributed to the convention fund and sixty conventions were held. In 1935 there were 115 stakes and seventy-nine conventions were held. Genealogical Society Minutes, 23 January 1931, 21 January 1936.

⁵⁷Genealogical Society Minutes, 30 October and 23 November 1928, 20 December 1929, 23 January 1931, 28 January 1933, 9 April 1934, 5 February 1935, 21 January 1936; Letter from Archibald F. Bennett to stake representatives, 7 December 1928, Genealogical Society circular letters, LDS Church Archives.

⁵⁸Genealogical Society Minutes, 2 April 1935. See also the program for one of the early conventions as outlined in *Deseret News*, 25 November 1922, and compare with later programs as outlined in *Deseret News*, 14 January 1933, and "Convention Program for 1939," *UGHM* 30 (January 1939): 23-24.

⁵⁹*Deseret News*, 5 October 1931.

⁶⁰*Deseret News*, 5 October 1931; "Weekly Genealogical Classes," *UGHM* 19 (October 1928): 181-82; "Weekly Genealogical Classes," Lesson Department, *UGHM* 20 (January 1929): 45-46; Ethel I. Bird, "A Successful Class in Genealogy," *UGHM* 20 (April 1929): 86-87; "Genealogical Classes in the MIA," *UGHM* 21 (January 1930): 31-33; *Deseret News*, 15 November 1930; Joseph Fielding Smith to ward bishopricks, 30 August 1928, Genealogical Society circular letters, LDS Church Archives; Genealogical Society Minutes, 21 September 1928, 10 June 1930.

⁶¹Archibald F. Bennett to stake representatives, 1 June 1932, Genealogical Society circular letters, LDS Church Archives.

⁶²Genealogical Society Minutes, 7, 14 April 1936. The lessons offered by the Society were not limited to the "how-to" aspects of genealogy. In 1924 the Society published its *Handbook for Genealogy and Temple Work*, prepared by Susa Young Gates. Its twenty-nine chapters contained both doctrinal and practical instruction. The lessons for 1928 were based on the text *Seeking after Our Dead*, much of which was doctrinal in nature. In 1931, Joseph Fielding Smith's *The Way to Perfection* was published. This series of purely doctrinal essays provided lesson material for nearly a year and a half. Lesson outlines, based on the forty-nine chapters in the book, were published in the genealogical magazine. Then came a three-year instruction program in which the first year (1933) consisted of doctrinally oriented lessons entitled *Our Lineage* and the second was a practical series of administrative lessons, *Church Service on Genealogical Committees*. The rotation began again in 1937 with *The Way to Perfection*, then in 1939-40 a new manual, *Teaching One Another*, was added. Written like a story, each lesson centered around an episode in the life of the fictional George Brown, who became a genealogical worker and, finally, chairman of the genealogical committee in his ward. It contained a mixture of doctrinal and practical lessons.

⁶³Genealogical Society of Utah, *Teaching One Another* (Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1938), 24.

⁶⁴Oscar J. Harline, "What Temple Work Did for Our Ward," *UGHM* 25 (October 1934): 150-51; Walter M. Everton, "Devices for Increasing Temple Attendance," *UGHM* 24 (April 1933): 72-73; Joseph Christenson and Archibald F. Bennett to Joseph Fielding Smith, 18 December 1934, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD; Myers, interview 3, 2-3.

⁶⁵Genealogical Society Minutes, 18 December 1934, 5 February 1935, 19 May 1936, 15 March 1949.

⁶⁶Archibald F. Bennett to David O. McKay, 3 November 1939, David O. McKay papers, LDS Church Archives.

⁶⁷Schedule accompanying letter from Genealogical Society to stake representatives, 31 October 1924, Genealogical Society circular letters, LDS Church Archives.

⁶⁸Clara W. Beebe, "Temple Work," *Children's Friend* 23 (November 1924): 342.

⁶⁹Harold Lundstrom, "Silver Jubilee . . . for Junior Genealogists," *Church News*, 6 February 1954; Genealogical Society Minutes, 20 December 1929.

⁷⁰Genealogical Society Minutes, 10 October 1930, 11 November 1930; "Instructions on Junior Baptismal Work for Stakes within the Salt Lake Temple District, 1 January 1931," *UGHM* 22 (April 1931): 72-73; "Genealogical Activities for the Lesser Priesthood," *UGHM* 22 (July 1931): 111-12; *Deseret News*, 31 October 1931.

⁷¹Genealogical Society Minutes, 27 May 1932, 5 February, 8 and 22 October 1935, 20 October and 3 November 1936; "Field Notes for Genealogical Committeemen," *UGHM* 24 (April 1933): 65-72.

⁷²Genealogical Society Minutes, 25 November 1932; *Deseret News*, 3 December 1932.

⁷³Lloyd T. Kidd, "Junior Classes in the Southern States," *UGHM* 31 (January 1940): 46-47; "Our Slogan," *UGHM* 31 (January 1940): 47.

⁷⁴Genealogical Society Minutes, 22 December 1936. Interestingly two future General Authorities were among the signers of the letter: Marvin O. Ashton and Harold B. Lee.

⁷⁵Elder Smith's letter plus many of the replies, and some excerpts from the replies, are found in the Joseph Fielding Smith papers, LDS Church Archives.

⁷⁶Joseph Fielding Smith to presidents of stakes and bishops of wards, 18 January 1937, Joseph Fielding Smith papers, LDS Church Archives.

⁷⁷Genealogical Society Minutes, 27 February 1932, 28 January 1933; *Deseret News*, 19 August and 29 September 1933, 6, 16 and 18 January 1934; *Journal History* 21 July 1933; Widtsoe, "Opening of Our New Home," *UGHM* 25 (April 1934): 51-60.