



Society staff, 1954. Courtesy Frank Smith.



## Chapter 4

# Quest for Effectiveness, 1940–1960

Even though most Latter-day Saints were unforgettably aware of the importance of seeking out their ancestors, not all were involved in doing so. Only a small percentage, in fact, were actively engaged in research. Nevertheless, most were directly affected by the Church's commitment to genealogy. Genealogical classes for all age groups, genealogy home teachers, temple excursions, genealogy conventions, genealogy sermons in worship services, the genealogical magazine, and sermons on the doctrinal commitment of the Church were all basic elements of the LDS mosaic. In combination, these highly visible activities regularly pricked the conscience of every member.

Genealogical research took time and patience, and many Church members seemed not to have enough of either. Often they could point with pride to some family member, usually a sister, a cousin, or an aunt, who was the official or unofficial family genealogist, and who, in effect, was doing all the research for the entire family. They squirmed uncomfortably when asked about their own genealogical activity, but they were convinced of its importance, willing to work in the temple, and usually ready to contribute money for family research.

Between 1940 and 1960, the Society moved in some significant new directions. The major quest at midcentury was for more effectiveness, which meant striving for better classwork, more thorough correlation with other Church organizations, more efficient



record-gathering and research programs, improved public relations with Church members, and greater progress toward eliminating duplication and error. The major challenge was achieving a suitable balance between the needs and capacities of the central facilities of the Society in Salt Lake City and the desires and limited opportunities of Church members outside of Utah.

### **Correlation, 1940**

One important achievement was the integration of genealogical instruction into the Sunday Schools—something the Society had attempted previously but could not accomplish until Church leaders themselves began to press for consolidation of the Church's growing programs. The vested interests of the various organizations made earlier attempts at correlation extremely difficult. The late 1930s saw a renewal of the effort to correlate activities. By 1940 the Church had established a Church Union Board consisting of representatives from the Relief Society, Sunday School, Young Men's and Young Women's Mutual Improvement Associations, the Primary, and the Genealogical Society. One of the major purposes of the Union Board was to attempt to correlate study programs.<sup>1</sup>

The Society had been criticized for holding weekday classes that added to the already heavy meeting schedule for members. Society leaders continually proposed that genealogical instruction be incorporated into other organizations, particularly the Sunday School. As early as 1937, Archibald F. Bennett began negotiating with the Sunday School board regarding that possibility.<sup>2</sup> By mid-June 1940, they finally agreed that genealogical instruction should be incorporated into Sunday School lessons at the ten- and eleven-year-old level, the fifteen- and sixteen-year-old level, the missionary training course, the adult gospel doctrine class, "and in other courses as often as occasion is offered for emphasis upon the application of subjects of genealogical interest."<sup>3</sup>

The First Presidency quickly approved the plan. The Society had gained nearly everything it had been striving for with respect to genealogical instruction in the Sunday School. Moreover, representatives of the Society were officially placed on the Sunday School board.<sup>4</sup>



At the same time, the Society suffered the disappointment of losing its magazine. In May 1940, a subcommittee of the Union Board was formed to review the Church's publications program and to make recommendations to the First Presidency.<sup>5</sup> J. Reuben Clark Jr., a member of the First Presidency, had previously suggested that the *Improvement Era*, the *Instructor* (the Sunday School magazine), the *Weekday Religious Education* (a magazine for seminary and institute teachers), and the *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* be combined. The Union Board made the same recommendation. The officers of the Society were distressed, not only because they would no longer have their own magazine, but also because the Society would lose about \$1,000 per year in subscriptions. Joseph Fielding Smith suggested that if the *Era* became the combined Church magazine, the Society should ask to share in its profits. This idea was never seriously considered, and the decision was made to discontinue the genealogical magazine. In its place, the *Improvement Era* incorporated a genealogical section that began in 1940 and continued until 1954.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, the magazines were not fully consolidated. The genealogy and religious education magazines were both discontinued, but the *Instructor* continued for another thirty years. This situation did not sit well with some genealogical leaders, who made sporadic, but unsuccessful, attempts to get their magazine reinstated. As late as 1961, Joseph Fielding Smith was still complaining that even though the Society was required to give up its magazine, "virtually all the others still continue to publish their separate magazines."<sup>7</sup>

One goal of the correlation effort was to reduce the number of meetings members were expected to attend, and the Society cooperated fully. As soon as the Sunday School plan was announced, the Society canceled all local genealogical conventions, including those already scheduled. It also eliminated weekday classes. In October 1941, the genealogical meeting usually held in connection with general conference was also canceled. Eight years later, Archibald F. Bennett wanted to reinstitute a meeting at conference time, but Joseph Fielding Smith quickly vetoed the idea because of the continuing concern among Church leaders that too many meetings were being held.<sup>8</sup>



In August 1940, the Society board announced its plans for implementing the new program in the stake and ward genealogical committees. Genealogical home teaching was scaled down, so that these specialized home teachers would no longer be expected to visit and instruct every family. Instead, help would be given only to those who requested it. The board saw in the new program a chance to give Melchizedek Priesthood quorums more direct responsibility for temple work. Stake and ward committees, therefore, were each to have a chairman who was a high priest and two assistants, one of whom was a seventy<sup>9</sup> and the other an elder.

In October 1940, Elder John A. Widtsoe commented on these changes in an address to the last genealogical conference held in connection with a general conference. Referring to the genealogical class in Sunday School, he declared, "I am really thrilled, for here is not only the opportunity for a few to receive technical instruction in genealogy, but the possibility for every member of the Church to receive such instruction." Then, alluding to problems still perceived by the Society, Elder Widtsoe reminded his listeners that "we have had some difficulty in bringing about the establishment of classes in genealogy" and, further, that "only a small number of the membership of the Church [are] engaged in this work." With careful preparation, wise organization, good teaching, and cooperation between the boards of the Sunday School and the Society, the problems could be solved and all members, both young and old, could be taught the principles of genealogy.<sup>10</sup>

### **Retreat from Retrenchment**

Retrenchment did not last long, however. Despite the 1940 decision that local committees would no longer visit every home in the ward, when the officers of the Society perceived activity languishing, they renewed their efforts to get every Church member involved. By 1945 the Society had approved the enlargement of ward committees to enable them to do more effective home teaching.<sup>11</sup> The 1949 handbook outlined an elaborate training program and specified that, eventually, "every family in the ward should be visited by [genealogical] home teachers."<sup>12</sup>



Not all wards fully followed the Society's instructions—probably only a minority even came close. Many had difficulty simply staffing their committees, and it was a common complaint that bishops used the best people in other organizations. But regardless of such grievances, the expanded view of the mission of the genealogical committee had been officially reestablished.

Just as it was impossible to retrench for long in home teaching, it was also impossible to eliminate genealogical conventions. In spite of the official announcement, as early as 19 November 1940 the officers of the Society were discussing the possibility of again holding conventions,<sup>13</sup> though not at general conference and not as extensively as before. In less than a year after the conventions were officially canceled, the president of the Rexburg stake expressed concern over a decline in temple work. The board of directors agreed to hold a regional convention in Rexburg, as well as other places, if necessary. By September 1941, genealogical conventions had been held in a number of stakes.<sup>14</sup> The attitude, it appears, was one of general cooperation with the original retrenchment idea, but only so long as it did not seriously retard genealogical activity.

In December 1941, the United States entered World War II, and the Church had to curtail travel and other expenses. Stake genealogical conventions were again discontinued, as were excursions to temples outside one's own district.<sup>15</sup> When it became apparent that the Society was losing touch with its stake workers, it assigned Joseph Christenson to visit as many stakes as possible during the wartime emergency. He was not to hold conventions, but he was to maintain personal ties between the Society and local workers.<sup>16</sup>

The Society also found other ways to promote its interests during the war. In 1942 Church leaders allowed local genealogical committees to present ward sacrament meeting programs on the Sunday evening of stake conferences, although the committees were encouraged to cooperate with the Sunday School in doing so. The Relief Society, the Sunday School, the Mutual Improvement Associations, the Primary Association, and the Genealogical Society were also authorized to hold special meetings on the evening of "Fast Sunday"—the first Sunday of each month, when no other meetings were normally held in the wards.



The Society officers realized that another genealogical meeting would not be universally popular. In preparation for the meeting of 3 January 1943, therefore, they instructed local workers to announce the topic in such a way that it did not appear to be simply another genealogy meeting. The announced theme for the evening meeting was "Who am I and What is my Mission?" In a letter, Archibald Bennett advised the stake chairmen to "let the appeal of the question be the attraction. Some folks, you know, would absent themselves if they knew it was to be a genealogy program regardless of how interesting the message."<sup>17</sup> These special Fast Sunday evening meetings continued for many years after the war.

Before the war was over, pressures were building to begin genealogical conventions anew. The Sunday School, MIA, and Primary were holding what amounted to conventions—so why not the Society? In November 1944, Elder John A. Widtsoe reported to the board that in his visits among the stakes he found little genealogical work being done, and he stressed the need for conventions as a remedy. A few stake conventions were held early in 1945. By December the board was approving them on a regional basis and had even appointed a convention committee. In August 1945, after wartime gasoline rationing had been lifted, the First Presidency officially authorized the resumption of regional meetings for all auxiliaries, including the Genealogical Society. The Society immediately drew up a schedule and proposed a budget for the 1946 conventions. Additional people were appointed to assist the officers of the Society in visiting conventions, which were held in most of the stakes or regions of the Church in 1947. That year the official convention slogan was "Trace the Forefathers of the Pioneers and Gather their records with our might from every land."<sup>18</sup>

The program for genealogical conventions was always outlined by the board. The 1959 conventions, for example, began with a stake leadership meeting emphasizing home teaching and planning for research and temple work, followed by a general assembly in which a filmstrip on the new microfilming program was presented.<sup>19</sup> Sometimes conventions would cover two days—Saturday and Sunday. In general, officers of the Society believed the conventions were among their most effective activities; they



motivated local leaders, involved large numbers of people in special training sessions, and provided opportunities for the presentation of special Church-produced filmstrips and movies. The first movie, "The Hearts of the Children," was produced in 1959 and shown at all the 1960 conventions.<sup>20</sup>

By the 1950s, the Society and its local committees were engaged in a wide range of activities. They were conducting classes, promoting research and temple activity, holding local socials, participating in various special programs and pageants, checking records, and doing whatever else seemed necessary to stimulate those who had not yet caught the vision. The Society also sponsored a project to copy information from gravestones for the library collection. Every stake was asked to check the cemeteries within its boundaries, and, if the Society did not have the cemetery records, to make arrangements to copy the sexton's records and the gravestones.<sup>21</sup> In August 1949, an article in the *American Cemetery Magazine* caught the flavor of this activity by reporting the avocation of Gertrude Jones of Buffalo, New York. Entitled "Tombstone Detective," the article noted that Jones had visited over one hundred old cemeteries in western New York and western Pennsylvania and had prepared over 10,000 records. "She takes her lunch basket, crowbar, trench shovel, wooden support and pads of paper and does a good deal of hill climbing in the pursuit which is not for the sedentary mind." As a member of the Church, Jones explained to the reporter the doctrinal basis for her interest and indicated that many volunteers as well as paid workers were collecting such data.<sup>22</sup>

### Cooperation with the Sunday School

Meanwhile, the correlation effort of 1940 gave the Society high hopes for the genealogical training class in Sunday School, which would use a text entitled *Out of the Books*. Originally designed as a one-year course for people over eighteen, within a year it was modified to be a two-year course. However, the Sunday School class could not sustain a high enough level of interest to hold many people for a two-year period; in 1944 only 48 percent of the Sunday Schools in the Church were holding genealogical



classes.<sup>23</sup> Many might be surprised to see nearly half the wards of the Church sponsoring regular genealogical instruction, yet the response was disappointing to the Society leaders, who felt genealogical classes by then should have saturated the Church.

In February 1945, Archibald F. Bennett reported that local Sunday School superintendencies were “lukewarm and half-hearted” in their support for the class and that they eagerly seized upon any pretext to discontinue it. Lack of space, repetition, and the elective nature of the course were all frequent excuses. The solution, Bennett believed, was to “promote” people automatically to the genealogical class after two years in the Gospel Message class, to design a better two-year course, and to press for “more authoritative Official Endorsement.” George R. Hill, general superintendent of the Sunday School, agreed with some of his suggestions but objected that a two-year course competed with the adult’s Gospel Doctrine class.<sup>24</sup>

Whatever the problem, clearly the class was not overwhelmingly popular in most wards, and complaints poured in during the late 1940s and the 1950s.<sup>25</sup> In 1945 a stake genealogical supervisor protested that the text was uninteresting and noted that some successful teachers were using alternate course materials. A. William Lund, chairman of the Sunday School’s genealogical training program, replied that others had found the text to be very good. He reminded the local leader that the first qualification of any supervisor or teacher was to be loyal to the prescribed course.<sup>26</sup>

There were other complaints: people were not interested, the same textbooks were used too frequently, there was not enough advanced material for people who had already been in the class for a year, and the course was not practical enough in its orientation. Nevertheless, the class continued, and the General Authorities gave it their full blessing and support. Considering the fact that the class remained elective in nature, it attracted a fair number of people, both young and old, throughout the Church.

### **Revival of Independent Classwork**

Another step toward the near nullification of correlation and retrenchment was the reinauguration of junior genealogical classes independent of the Sunday School, albeit not directly under the



supervision of the Society. Archibald F. Bennett pressed for junior classes as early as February 1945, but Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, remembering the problems of the 1930s, simply replied that it would not be wise to attempt to hold such classes on a week night. In August another member of the board of directors, James M. Kirkham, raised the issue again, and Elder Smith advised that they be patient for a while.<sup>27</sup> By December 1947, however, Elder Smith apparently had been patient long enough. Bennett raised the issue again, and Elder Smith agreed to have plans made for junior classes. A year later, he gave his support to both junior genealogical classes and regular classes for the ward committee. He did so, he said, because of "lack of enthusiastic support being given the classes in the Sunday School."<sup>28</sup> But the First Presidency rejected the idea, explaining that they did not think the juniors would be willing to meet either during the week or on Sunday afternoon and suggesting that the Society work out some adjustments with the Sunday School. The Society immediately set up meetings with the Sunday School superintendency, but with no results.

Dissatisfied with the progress being made, the Society began to branch out again beyond the Sunday School. In February 1949, Archibald F. Bennett and L. Garrett Myers, who had been appointed as a classwork committee, proposed new senior and junior genealogical classes to be held on Sunday afternoons at 3 P.M.<sup>29</sup> Three days later, Joseph Fielding Smith officially wrote the First Presidency of the Church urging a new look at the classwork program. After listing several compelling reasons,<sup>30</sup> he recommended a weekly class for genealogical leaders, a four-year course for youth ages twelve and over and asked that both these classes be held either Sunday afternoon or on a week night. After considerable discussion, however, the First Presidency decided not to adopt the plan.<sup>31</sup> In 1952 the board of directors was still making proposals for sponsoring junior classes outside the Sunday School.<sup>32</sup>

Many local wards, meanwhile, began holding their own junior genealogical classes outside the official auspices of either the Sunday School or the Society, although with the knowledge of both. Conducted under the direction of the ward genealogical committees and approved by the bishops, the classes were not bound by Sunday School time constraints and were not dependent



upon the Sunday School for teachers. In the Mesa Arizona Stake, for example, the ward and stake committees agreed that Sunday School was not the place for junior genealogical class work. By 1957 the stake had at least one youth class in each ward. Some wards had three classes: a beginning, an advanced, and a special research class. They used the two-year course of study provided for the Sunday School. The genealogical leaders of that stake felt their program was so successful that they urged the Society to sponsor a similar program Churchwide.<sup>33</sup>

Many of these classes began with great enthusiasm. A total of 150 youth were enrolled in the Mesa Stake in 1952. The classes in some wards, however, were short-lived. Certain bishops, much to the consternation of local genealogical leaders, complained that the Church's youth program was already full and that the junior classes were not officially recommended.<sup>34</sup> Apparently, whatever happened on a local basis was strictly outside the auspices of the Society, but from such scattered places as Logan, Utah; Mesa, Arizona; Los Angeles, California; and Cowley, Wyoming came reports of more or less successful youth classes outside the Sunday School.

The Society also began to hold classes again, independent of the Sunday School, in the 1950s. An evening course of twenty-eight lessons was taught at the Society's library for any stake that would send thirty to seventy people.<sup>35</sup> In some cases, stakes held their own genealogical schools and workshops, which the Society approved. It disapproved, however, of individuals going outside their own stakes on their own initiative to offer courses of instruction.<sup>36</sup>

Junior genealogical instruction resurfaced as an issue at the Society board meeting on 1 November 1957. A committee was appointed to make a list of the stakes where independent classes were organized, with the idea in mind of again seeking permission from the First Presidency for the Society to resume full responsibility for the genealogical training of the youth.<sup>37</sup> Even with the support of some Sunday School board members, however, nothing was done officially to reinstate junior genealogy as part of the program of the Society. Church leaders still opposed holding weeknight classes, even though many wards were doing just that and even though it was becoming increasingly difficult to find a time on Sundays when chapels were not in use.<sup>38</sup>



Junior classes continued for a few years where there were enthusiastic leaders, but they had disappeared almost completely by the end of the 1960s. At the same time, the original Sunday School program for youth was gradually discontinued, although the special genealogical training class in Sunday School for all ages was retained. It is also noteworthy that in many university wards, particularly those for young married students, the genealogical class was well attended.<sup>39</sup>

### **Corporate Reorganization**

The year 1944 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the organization of the Genealogical Society of Utah. It also marked the legal expiration of the original Articles of Incorporation. Church and Society leaders began to reconsider the organization of the Society and plan a major shift in its status.

As early as 1941, President J. Reuben Clark Jr. suggested that after 1944 the Society should be officially brought under the auspices of the Church. The board agreed. Even though the Society was incorporated under the laws of Utah as a separate entity, approximately 98 percent of its budget came from the Church. In 1943, for example, the Society had an income of only \$2,400 beyond what it received from the Church, yet it spent \$150,000.<sup>40</sup>

In March 1944, the members of the First Presidency officially advised the Society that they desired that it become "wholly a Church institution" and that all annual membership fees be dropped. With regard to people who had become life members, the First Presidency suggested that it would be better to repay their fees in full, if necessary, "so as to leave the library and records of the Society wholly under the control of the Church." This decision was made not only because the Church was footing the bills, but also because the Society housed certain confidential records that the First Presidency felt it important to control. As a public corporation, the Society would have a more difficult time restricting access to records, but as a Church institution, it could withhold or restrict the use of whatever seemed appropriate.<sup>41</sup> In November the Society became a Church corporation with a new name: the Genealogical Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The requirement for membership fees was rescinded.<sup>42</sup>



When the members of the Society voted to change the nature of the organization, they naturally recalled the struggles and concerns of those who founded it fifty years earlier. At the suggestion of John A. Widtsoe, Elder Mark E. Petersen composed a short statement of appreciation for those early stalwarts. The statement, along with their names, was placed in the minutes. Had any of the founders been at the 1944 meetings, they would have been astonished at what had happened to the organization they pioneered. The Society employed over one hundred people,<sup>43</sup> directed research in many parts of the world, housed an extensive library and research bureau, operated an impressive temple index bureau, and controlled \$109,000 in financial assets that would be turned over to the Church.<sup>44</sup>

A few seasoned genealogical leaders may have been slightly dismayed that the Society was giving up the technically independent status it had enjoyed for half a century.<sup>45</sup> If such concerns were felt, however, they were soon set aside, for the work of the Society continued to expand. Beginning in 1945, a number of assistants were assigned to help with the growing number of genealogical conventions and instructional programs.<sup>46</sup>

The work of the Society grew so much that organizational refinements were needed. In 1951 the board of directors formed an executive committee that would meet weekly to consider all activities of the Society. The full board would meet monthly. The primary full-time managers were Archibald F. Bennett, executive secretary and librarian, and L. Garrett Myers, superintendent and personnel director.<sup>47</sup> In 1961, Myers's assignment was enlarged. He supervised an office manager, A. Phillip Cederlof; an administrator of the Microfilm Division, T. Harold Jacobson; and an assistant superintendent, George H. Fudge. Fudge supervised the Records Division, directed by Elwin W. Jensen; the Library Division, directed by Ellen Hill; the Research Division, directed by Henry E. Christensen; and the information and public service program.<sup>48</sup>

The expanding work of the Society was dramatically reflected in its growing budgets. Like any Church organization, it was constantly being asked by the Church committee on expenditures to trim expenses and cut the annual requests. Nevertheless, the budget gradually expanded from \$743,000 in 1948 to over \$1 million



in 1955 and nearly \$2 million in 1960.<sup>49</sup> The increase in spending was due to an expanding library program, increasing temple attendance (which meant more time and expense to clear and process names), and the rapidly growing microfilm program. In 1957 it was reported that the amount of temple work had doubled in the previous four years alone.<sup>50</sup>

### **Name Submission Controls**

A major innovation in the process of submitting names for temple work occurred in the early 1940s. Many submissions for temple work remained incomplete and inaccurate. In 1938 the Salt Lake Temple presidency grew deeply concerned and appointed a "censor committee" to double check the information on names submitted there. The presidency observed that the temple was censoring (that is, correcting) half the records it received. They proposed that the Church establish a central auditing committee within either the Society or the Temple Index Bureau. The presidency even expressed willingness to transfer their censors to the bureau, thus preventing extra expense for the Church.<sup>51</sup>

The Society was already checking submissions against the Temple Index Bureau file to avoid duplicate ordinance work, but it was not willing to assure the accuracy and completeness of the submissions. Joseph Fielding Smith was cautious. He argued that the proposed procedure would slow down the work at the Index Bureau and require the additional expense of hiring younger, more alert, people. He was not convinced that the number of errors then being made justified the amount of time and expense necessary to correct them. He preferred greater effort in teaching people in general how to submit information correctly in the first place.<sup>52</sup>

Finally, in November 1939, an extensive report was presented to the Society that eventually resulted in the implementation of an entirely new program to control the submission of names for temple work. The new program augmented the Temple Index Bureau objective of preventing duplication of ordinances with three new objectives: (1) to make it unnecessary to copy and recopy records, with the attendant problem of continual proof-reading by patrons and temple staffs; (2) to avoid duplication of



research; (3) to eliminate “promiscuous name-gathering regardless of relationship.”<sup>53</sup> Two years were required to finalize plans and to acquire the needed supplies and equipment. On 1 January 1942, the new program was put into effect, and it remained in place for the next twenty-seven years until replaced by computerized names processing.

Under the new program, the Church Genealogical Archives was renamed the Church Records Archives and was merged with the Temple Index Bureau into the Record Department. A staff of record examiners was employed to review and correct all family group sheets submitted for temple work. This, in effect, was the censor committee that had been previously suggested. An elaborate procedure regulated the movement of family group sheets and Temple Index Bureau cards through censoring, indexing, correction, typing, and proofreading sections; to the temples for ordinance work; then back to the Society for permanent filing, with copies mailed to patrons for their records.<sup>54</sup>

The decision to use the family group sheets as the name submission form was an equally significant change in facilitating name processing for temple work. Prior to 1942, a deceased person’s name would appear on many separate forms before all of his or her required temple ordinances were performed. An investigating committee discovered that sometimes a name was recorded up to sixty different times before the temple work was complete. The family group sheet consolidated and replaced all other submission sheets, providing significant savings for Church members preparing names for temple work. Revised from an early family group sheet, the new sheet had spaces for vital information, such as birth and death dates, and space for recording the dates of temple ordinances.<sup>55</sup> Thus, the family group sheet became a single reference point for both research results and temple ordinance data.

When the ordinance work was complete, the clerks placed the finalized group record into a newly created file called the Main Record Archive. This archive served as the primary source of information for temple work performed after 1942 until computers took over the function of recording temple work in 1969. In addition, the Society used the Main Record Archive to provide





Staff checking the Temple Index Bureau card index, ca. 1960. Each name submission was checked against this index of temple endowments.

a new service known as the “research survey.” For \$2.50, the Society offered the services of a skilled researcher to compare information on a patron’s pedigree chart against the compiled records of the Record Department and to provide guidance from the library catalog on original sources for continued research.<sup>56</sup>

This new program was a giant step toward the continuing goals of keeping better records, promoting more efficient research, and offering improved service from the Society.

As a result of the increasing demand for temple names and the revamped name submission procedures, Society resources were strained. In the first five months of the new names submission program, 70,000 family group sheets were sent to the Index Bureau for checking. The Record Department found it impossible to handle the volume, and a massive backlog developed. This, in turn, led to a concern that there would not be enough names available for temple patrons. In this mild crisis, the Society decided to close the library to the public while the Salt Lake Temple was closed for vacation in July 1942. Employees of both the temple and the Society could then help catch up on the work. The Society also suggested that all the Utah temples temporarily decrease the number of temple sessions and that all temple typists who could be spared be sent to work in Salt Lake City.<sup>57</sup>

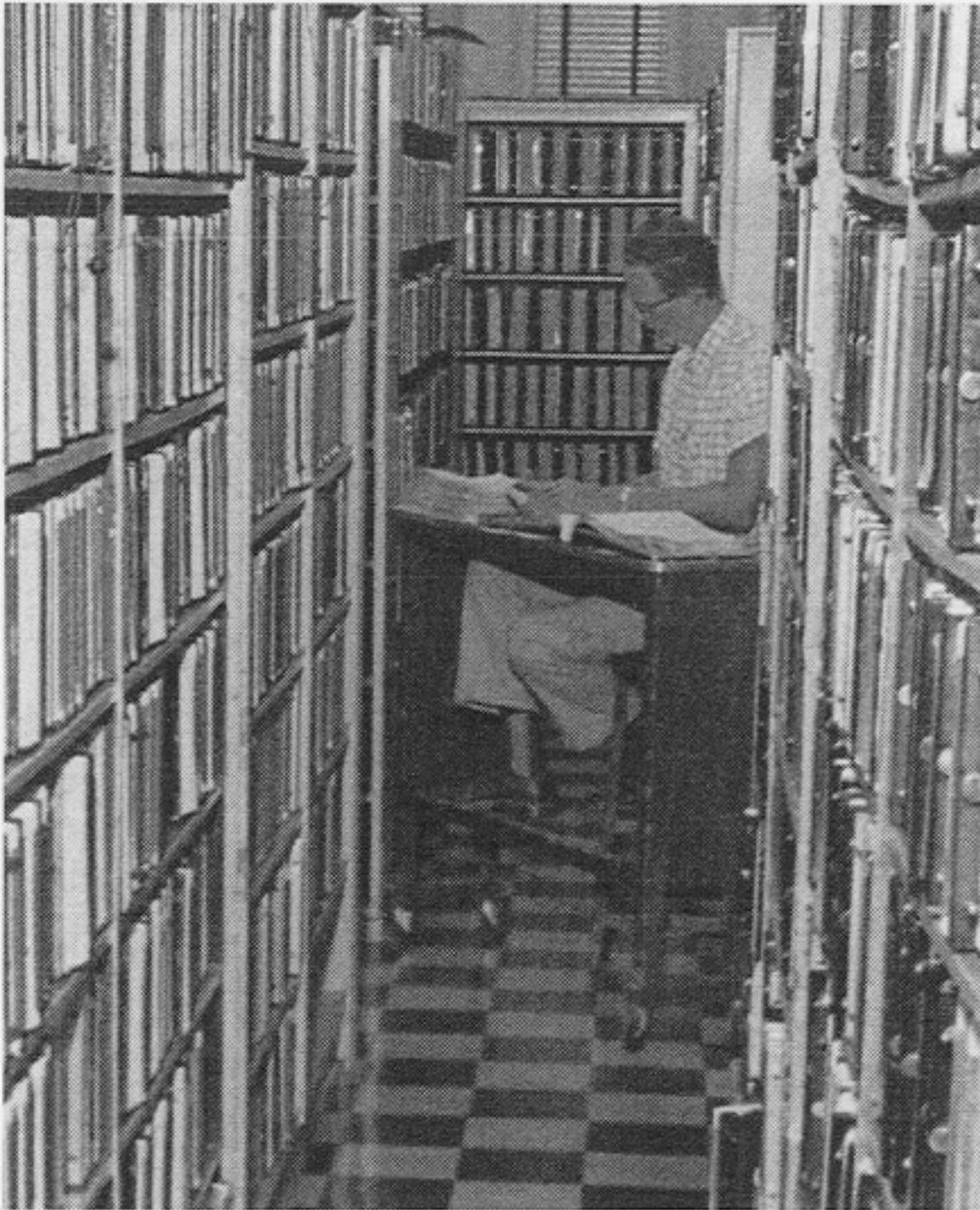


The process required to clear names for temple ordinances continued to move more slowly than the demand for names at the temple. In a lengthy response to a 1944 letter from Joseph Fielding Smith inquiring why the temple index file was not up to date, L. Garrett Myers rehearsed a litany of problems. Temple work had already been done for many of the names being submitted (320,000 out of the 781,500 submitted in 1943, for example). Many records submitted were incomplete and inaccurate, making it difficult to clear them. Poor record keeping had resulted in proxy ordinances for some individuals having been performed under as many as thirteen different names. Adding to these complications were the numerous “emergency” requests from people traveling through Utah who wanted temple work done immediately—often in behalf of young men who had been killed in military action. At times fourteen to twenty-five Society workers were engaged in such emergency service. Myers was sympathetic with these requests but less sympathetic with people who were gathering names and not doing genealogy. Some members simply wanted to do temple work for celebrities, even though such indiscriminate name gathering was strictly against the rules of the Society. Myers was particularly displeased with those who had what he called a “Royalty complex” and who delighted in trying to “effect a connection with and to perform temple work for every king and potentate of record.”<sup>58</sup>

By midcentury the Record Department was a beehive of activity as family group sheets poured in. In 1944 the archives added a total of 105,938 family group sheets to its holdings.<sup>59</sup> At one time in 1952, the archives were so heavily used by patrons that the recording work fell into arrears. Joseph Fielding Smith ordered the archives closed to the public for three months in order to catch up.<sup>60</sup>

The typing department maintained a staff of skilled employees qualified to type in English, Scandinavian, German, French, Swiss, and Dutch. At the beginning of 1944, the Society kept thirty typists busy on two shifts. They were capable of turning out nearly 3,000 record sheets a day. The proofreading department also kept busy, with its staff of linguistically competent people double-checking on the typists. Finally, the censor





Family Group Records Archive, ca. 1960, in the Joseph F. Smith Memorial Building. Family group sheets were prepared by the Society from names submitted for temple work, 1942–69.

department provided a final check on the accuracy of records, either clearing them for temple work or returning them to the patron for further research and verification.<sup>61</sup>

Clearing names for temple work was vastly more complicated than anyone had anticipated, and the reasons for the slowdown at the index bureau went beyond those outlined in Myers's letter. Its employees were highly transient, due, in part, to low wages as well as the policy of not allowing young women to work for the Church after they married. Training new workers slowed the pace of activity.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, people with the necessary research and linguistic skills who would work for the modest salaries paid by the Church were not always easy to find.

The complexities of the new procedures also necessitated the publication of a revised handbook that would draw instructions together in concise, easy-to-find form. The previous handbook had been issued twenty-five years earlier. Prepared by Henry Christiansen, the new handbook was published in 1949. It was bound in loose-leaf form so that deletions and additions could readily be made. The *Handbook for Genealogical and Temple Work* became an important guide to Church genealogical research for many years to come.

Because the work of the Society was so closely related to the work of the temples, the Society often established or modified policies that affected the processing of records for temple work. The "heirship" policy was one example. Until the 1950s, a family group sheet presented for temple work had to contain the name of the "heir," defined as the oldest member of the family, living or



dead, who had been baptized while living. Temple work was indexed according to this heirship system. But the process became cumbersome, for it was often difficult to determine the heir, especially in large families where relationships were frequently very remote. Eventually a new recording and indexing system eliminated the need for an heir. The rule was dropped in 1952.<sup>63</sup>

The pressure to provide names for the temples was temporarily assuaged in 1954 by the creation of the temple file. Before that date, it was assumed that the members of a particular family would perform the temple work for ancestors whose names they submitted unless they made other arrangements. When the people doing the temple work died or discontinued their efforts, names for whom the temple work was not complete remained on file awaiting the attention of other descendants. In the late 1940s, names still waited in the files for endowment and sealing, although the baptism had been performed twenty to thirty years earlier.

At the same time, those living far from temples were permitted to request that proxies be provided for the names they submitted. The list of names received in this way were known as "community" or "mission" lists. It was also considered appropriate for persons submitting these names to send in a donation that could be used to reimburse the proxies, who were paid moderate fees ranging from fifty cents to a dollar.<sup>64</sup> However, this recommendation did not preclude accepting names from those who could provide no reimbursement.

This situation changed with the creation of temple and family files in each temple. The names that had been in the pending files for years, the old mission lists, and any new names submitted after April 1954 were automatically assigned to a temple file. This file was used to provide names for those who came to do proxy work but who did not have their own family names at the temple. Those submitting names needed to specify that they wanted the names kept in the family file at a particular temple if they desired to do the proxy work themselves.<sup>65</sup>

## **Research Difficulties**

The Research Department also experienced growing pains during these years. Established to assist those who could not do



their own research, the department charged a fee for the services of trained researchers. The department maintained contacts with researchers throughout the United States and in many foreign countries. After 1948 Church members were urged to submit their genealogical research orders for Europe through the Society. These requests were then channeled through the missions to reputable researchers, whose work was returned to the patron after scrutiny by the department. The Society did not claim responsibility for those researchers, but it did try to make certain that patrons received responsible assistance.<sup>66</sup>

The Research Department had particular problems in the early 1940s due to the effects of World War II. Contact with most European researchers was cut off, except with those in the British Isles. Many European archives were closed to research because of the war. Correspondence was lost—in one case some eighty letters, together with money for research, went down when a ship was sunk. Immediately after the war, Archibald F. Bennett traveled to Europe to reestablish research connections in several countries.<sup>67</sup>

Like the Record Department, the Research Department was plagued with frequent personnel turnover. In addition, the Research Department was supposed to be self-sustaining, with researchers being paid from funds deposited by patrons. Despite a healthy surplus in the mid-1940s, serious financial problems existed by the mid-1950s. Researchers were initially paid between \$85 and \$105 a month. Patrons were charged \$.80 per hour, but salaries continued to rise as the work demanded more qualified researchers with special linguistic skills. By 1954 the Society was charging patrons \$1.50 per hour, the former surplus was gone, and the deficit was growing.<sup>68</sup> By 1955 the deficit had reached nearly a thousand dollars a month,<sup>69</sup> and the Society was asking the Church for greater subsidization.<sup>70</sup> By 1960 the problem still was not solved, but Church leaders knew that many people who needed research assistance were already sacrificing to pay for genealogical research. The Church did all it could within reason to assist. Still, it could not afford to pay a major portion of the research expenses even for hardship cases.

Amid all this activity, the Society faced inevitable personnel problems. Three problems seemed to plague it most: the constant



need for competent transcribers and typists with bilingual skills; the high turnover caused by the Church policies of not hiring married women and of dismissing young women once they married; and relatively low salaries, which made it difficult to keep the most highly skilled employees. In the first seven months of 1957, for example, the Society lost 72 employees: 19 because of marriage, 25 to other employment, 7 who were called on missions, 7 who moved away, and the rest for miscellaneous reasons.<sup>71</sup> Two months later, the total turnover for the year to date reached 137—a new record.<sup>72</sup> The Society continually petitioned for higher wages for its employees in order to alleviate the problem, but the personnel committee of the Church responded that current income and other budgetary requirements simply would not permit raising salaries. Elder Joseph Fielding Smith pressed the First Presidency to relax the restriction on women working after marriage. By 1960 they had relented somewhat; a young wife could work for six months after her marriage.<sup>73</sup> This policy, together with a new training program inaugurated in 1957, helped a little, but in 1960 the Society was still complaining of a great backlog of work and a shortage of skilled employees.

Even though Myers and other supervisors seemed very concerned about the morale and personal problems of the employees, the general personnel policies of the Society were sometimes rather stringent. Vacation policy, for example, insisted that an employee take both vacation weeks at the same time: he or she could not take a week off at one time of the year and another week off at another time, nor even take two or three days off and charge it to vacation allowance.<sup>74</sup> On the other hand, a hospitalization and surgery plan was adopted in 1944, an employee credit union was operating by 1955, and by 1958 employees were on the federal Social Security program. These benefits provided some inducements and helped the Society keep pace with the benefits offered by competing employers.

The rapidly expanding use of the library and archives exemplify the mounting work load of the Society. In 1944 approximately 13,766 patrons used the library, which then housed 42,000 volumes. Three thousand books, 10,637 rolls of microfilm, and 125 manuscripts were added that year alone. The addition of books,



films, and manuscripts as well as the number of patrons mounted dramatically each year. In 1960 a total of 85,381 patrons (an average of 291 per day) registered at the library and 24,607 at the archives. Including Society employees, one thousand persons were using the facilities of the Society each working day.<sup>75</sup>

During this period, library patrons were almost exclusively Church members. A 1955 survey by a graduate student in library science at the University of Chicago indicated that the majority of patrons—52 percent—came from Salt Lake City and vicinity. Another 30.9 percent, including BYU students, were from the Provo and Ogden areas. The rest were largely from other parts of Utah, and only a few were from out of state. Fully 99 percent of the users were Church members.<sup>76</sup> This ratio changed in later decades when interest in genealogy dramatically expanded outside the Church.

While the Society assisted thousands of patrons, some requests caused frustrations. In his 20 October 1944 letter to Joseph Fielding Smith, L. Garrett Myers commented on some of these problems. Now that the Society was so well known, some people apparently expected it to perform vast amounts of free service. “Some of our people who would not think of asking the Presiding Bishop’s Office or some other department of the Church for special favors, have no hesitancy in asking us to give them, free of charge, from \$5.00 to \$5,000 of free service,” Myers complained. He was also concerned with a certain overzealousness on the part of some people who perhaps should not have been doing genealogical research in the first place. “We do not mean to infer that their motives are not correct,” he explained, “but they are actually not mentally qualified to do the research work. They bombard us with thousands of sheets which we cannot accept; they drive our workers to distraction and sour their own relatives on genealogy and temple work.” Finally, Myers commented on the “fallacy prevalent in the Church” that genealogical research was mainly for elderly people. They could be engaged in no finer service than temple work, “but it is not proper to begin training an individual for research work after he or she has reached seventy or seventy-five years of age. Poor eyesight, and above all, lack of technical training disqualify them for this type of work.”



### **To Branch or Not to Branch**

As interest in genealogy grew, numerous requests were made for the establishment of branch genealogical libraries or, at least, for some kind of lending service from the Salt Lake City library. In 1941, for instance, a member of the Hawaii

Temple presidency inquired about a branch library in Hawaii. The board was reluctant to approve such expanded responsibilities, though it did agree to provide Hawaiian Saints with microfilm copies of records obtained in Hawaii.<sup>77</sup>

The question of branch libraries continued to recur and to precipitate serious policy discussions among the officers of the Society. In 1944, Joseph Fielding Smith suggested that a branch library be established in the Idaho Falls area, but L. Garrett Myers objected. First, he argued, a library was not really the key to research, for it contained only a few of the necessary research tools. Other sources, such as parish records, had not been published and therefore were not available in libraries. Furthermore, the expense of opening a branch seemed prohibitive. A good library needed many sources, and even if the local library could afford to get them, the cost of cataloging and indexing the books was too high. The Society had a budget that year of \$160,000, and Myers wryly asked if a stake could afford such a thing. His main objection, however, was that branching would lead to duplication of research. He evidently felt that, even if people did some research locally, they must eventually get help from the library in Salt Lake City and that whomever they hired to help them would simply do much of the work over again.<sup>78</sup>

The Society had definitely established the policy of not approving branch libraries. Their objective was to have a large central library for the benefit of all Church members, although they had no objection to local civic funds being used for local genealogical library purposes.<sup>79</sup> But requests continued to arrive, and Myers frequently had to defend the policy.<sup>80</sup> In 1952 the president of the Phoenix Arizona Stake proposed that the library in the Arizona Temple become a branch of the Society library and that it secure copies of microfilms from the central library as well as book loan privileges. A blue-ribbon committee appointed to evaluate



this request rejected the proposal. Besides the problem of cost, the committee was fearful that approving a library in Arizona might set a precedent that the Los Angeles area would soon want to follow. The Society simply could not afford it.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, more requests came from such places as St. George, Utah; the Florida Stake; the Santaquin-Tintic Stake; and even Holland. The policy remained firm, although in 1960 the Society had seriously considered the possibility of lending books to local genealogical organizations. Private genealogical groups had been established in Provo, Logan, St. George, and Mesa, as well as Northern California. The Society still did not officially encourage them, but by this time Joseph Fielding Smith was suggesting that the time might come when the Society would establish branch libraries.<sup>82</sup> It would not be long before this possibility would materialize.

## **Outreach**

Although the Society still had no official branches outside Salt Lake City, it was nevertheless deeply involved in encouraging genealogical research in other parts of the world. The Church asked all missions, particularly those in Europe, to establish mission and branch genealogical organizations similar to those in the stakes.<sup>83</sup> By 1960 new European mission presidents were given instructions in genealogical organization as part of their orientation program.<sup>84</sup> The Society prepared a course of study especially for the European missions. It was translated into German in 1956. In 1960 the Society had 169 research correspondents in Western Europe (that is, people who worked either full- or part-time filling orders for the Society, though they were not necessarily official employees of the Society). In February alone, the Society's research staff exchanged 1,268 letters and sent 307 money orders to Europe for research.<sup>85</sup> The Society even had its own small research staff in England, under the direction of Elder Frank Smith (which was phased out in the early 1960s).<sup>86</sup>

The Society promoted the message of genealogy among Latter-day Saints with missionary zeal, taking every reasonable opportunity to integrate genealogy into other Church programs. The annual Leadership Week (later called Education Week) held in the late summer at Brigham Young University (BYU) offered a



perfect opportunity. Genealogical sessions, conducted by official representatives of the Society, were designed at first for stake genealogical committees only, but in 1953 they were expanded so that anyone attending Education Week could participate. Archibald F. Bennett, who conducted many of the classes, noted with pleasure that the participants in Education Week that year rated genealogy as the third most valuable program. Beginning in 1960, the offering included special classes for youth.<sup>87</sup>

As Education Week expanded beyond the Provo campus, the Society went with it. The first Education Week program in the Los Angeles Area was held in 1958. Archibald F. Bennett conducted two genealogical classes each day. In 1958 and 1959, Education Week programs were held also in Salt Lake City, Ogden, Idaho, Arizona, and Northern California, with the Society participating in all of them. However, by the early 1960s, it became apparent that the Society simply did not have a staff large enough to give Society employees time off to keep up with the burgeoning BYU program. In 1964 the Society officially provided faculty for the last time. Genealogical training continued in Education Week programs, but the faculty was obtained independently by Education Week officials.<sup>88</sup>

Genealogy also found its way into the curriculum of other Church educational programs without the administrative involvement of the Society but always with its cooperation. In the early 1950s, Archibald F. Bennett taught classes both at BYU and in the Church's Institute of Religion adjacent to the University of Utah. Genealogical classes became a permanent part of the BYU curriculum, which, in 1960, began offering a two-year technical genealogical degree. BYU's extension program also provided classes in various Utah cities, taught by representatives of the Society. It even offered an "Ancestral Research Certificate" upon completion of a specified series of courses. In the fall of 1953, fifteen lessons on genealogy were introduced into the curriculum of the early morning seminaries for high school students in Southern California, as part of a three-week genealogical project. Seminaries distributed thirty thousand genealogical forms to the students, who were each encouraged to complete a book of remembrance consisting of a pedigree chart, four family group sheets, various personal records,



and a life story. Those who completed the requirements received a genealogical award. A thousand books had been turned in by 7 December. Although genealogy did not become a permanent part of the seminary curriculum, projects such as these reflected the broadening interest in genealogy throughout the Church.<sup>89</sup>

The Society also found other ways to reach the public with its message. Television presented a golden opportunity. Beginning in January 1954, Brigham Young University and the Society jointly sponsored a series of twenty programs on KDYL-TV. Hosted by the popular Archibald F. Bennett, a series called "What's Your Name?" was aired on Sundays from 1:00 to 1:30 P.M. Each program featured the lineage of some prominent person (U.S. president Dwight D. Eisenhower was first), followed by an informal discussion on genealogical concerns. Joseph Fielding Smith publicized the series by writing to all the stakes within the broadcast area, asking the genealogical chairman to announce the program in stake and ward meetings and to encourage people to get together in groups to watch it. The program was successful enough that it continued into 1955.<sup>90</sup>

### **Flourishing of Ethnic Genealogical Groups**

As the emphasis on genealogy and temple work became increasingly significant in the LDS consciousness, the special genealogical concerns of ethnic groups within the Church spawned at least three ethnic genealogical organizations.<sup>91</sup>

**Native Americans.** The Lamanite Society was organized in 1919 to help Native American Church members gather their own ancestral records and prepare them for temple work. Although it did not officially come under the direction of the Society, the Church took an interest in it, and Melvin J. Ballard of the Council of the Twelve was appointed to act as advisor. By 1926 the Lamanite Society no longer existed, but during its short life it succeeded in gathering numerous family names and in performing a considerable amount of temple work.

**Polynesians.** The Polynesian people had genealogical traditions that made it impossible to collect and prepare their records for temple work in the same way European genealogies were



compiled. Much of the information concerning Polynesian families had to be gathered from oral traditions that did not provide the precise documentation required by the Temple Index Bureau in order to clear names for temple work.

Before the Society's Polynesian Department was organized, missionaries from the United States did much to assist in compiling Polynesian genealogies. In 1933, William A. Cole, an experienced genealogist, was called to serve a second mission in New Zealand. During his years there, he spent much of his time working on Maori genealogies, gathering over 60,000 names and compiling them into thirteen volumes. On his way home in April 1936, he showed a copy of his work to Edward L. Clissold, president of the Hawaiian Temple. A year later, Elder Cole and his wife were called on a third mission—this time to serve in the Hawaii Temple. As might be expected, they spent their spare time preparing Maori genealogies for temple ordinance work.<sup>92</sup>

Other Church members interested in the Polynesian people saw the need to compile and record their genealogical research more efficiently. Early in 1937, William M. Waddoups, president of the Samoan mission, proposed to the First Presidency that a genealogical association, something like the genealogy committees in the stakes, and a genealogical clearinghouse be established in each of the South Seas missions. The officers of the Society agreed that it would be beneficial to have an association in each mission under the direct supervision of the mission president. They opposed, however, the establishment of a clearinghouse in each mission. The Hawaii Temple already had a clearinghouse for Polynesian names and any additional clearinghouses would each require the employment of trained genealogists who were skilled in record keeping and typing. A better plan, they suggested, would be to improve the organization of the Hawaiian clearinghouse.<sup>93</sup>

Still not satisfied, Church leaders in the Pacific began to discuss the possibility of organizing a Polynesian Genealogical Society. Again the officers of the Society disapproved, primarily on the basis of cost. Disappointed, in 1937 the Pacific leaders complained to President David O. McKay that the North Americans simply did not understand the genealogical problems of the Polynesian people.



The champions of the Polynesian proposal did not easily give up. As soon as William M. Waddoups was released as president of the Samoan Mission, he returned to Salt Lake City prepared to argue the case in person and to present another plan. Each Polynesian mission, he proposed, should have a genealogical organization similar to those in the stakes, a filing system similar to that at the Index Bureau, and a plan to generate interest and enthusiasm among the members. An archives and a research bureau for all Polynesian missions should be established at some place considered mutually favorable and accessible. Waddoups urged that the Polynesian archives be established at Laie, Hawaii, rather than in Salt Lake City. After all, he observed, the temple for the Polynesian people was at Laie, and any complications that might arise for members traveling to do temple ordinances for their ancestors could be quickly solved if the archives were near by.<sup>94</sup>

On 28 September 1937, the Society board met, approved the plan, and sent it to the First Presidency with the recommendation that the central index bureau and library be established at the temple in Laie.<sup>95</sup> The plan was not approved—possibly for economic reasons. Instead, a Polynesian Research Department was organized as part of the Society, headquartered in Salt Lake City. William W. Waddoups was appointed as supervisor.<sup>96</sup> Although Waddoups and the Church leaders in Hawaii were undoubtedly disappointed with the compromise, nevertheless, they saw one advantage: Waddoups had the full and enthusiastic support of Archibald F. Bennett and access to all the facilities and support of the Society.

By 1940 the department had received information on over five thousand family groups from Hawaii, Samoa, New Zealand, Tonga, and Tahiti and had arranged them on proper sheets. All of the names had been indexed, many had been sent to the Hawaii Temple for ordinances, and efforts were being made to complete all the appropriate temple work as soon as possible. Approximately ninety volumes dealing with Polynesian genealogy and history had been collected for the library, and various articles and lessons in genealogy were being published in the official periodical of the New Zealand Mission, *Te Karere*.<sup>97</sup>

The Polynesian Department encountered problems, but they accomplished many things with the continuing support of Society leaders and the dedicated work of Waddoups, Cole, and others.



On 26 January 1957, L. Garrett Myers wrote the First Presidency of the Church pointing out the need for a clearinghouse exclusively for Polynesian records and recommending the employment of William Cole and M. V. Coombs.<sup>98</sup> In July 1957, President David O. McKay interviewed William Cole. They reviewed the earlier proposals for establishing a series of clearinghouses in various Polynesian islands. They discussed microfilming Polynesian records, organizing a new Polynesian Department in the Society, and establishing a library in the Polynesian area. In August, Cole was appointed chairman of the Polynesian Committee and hired by the Society as head of the Polynesian Department.

Cole went to work eagerly. First, he had all the Polynesian genealogical sheets in the archives copied in triplicate: one for his department, one for the clearinghouse being planned in New Zealand, and one for the appropriate Polynesian mission in preparation for the eventual establishment of clearinghouses within each mission. In March 1958, just a month before the dedication of the New Zealand Temple, Cole arrived in New Zealand and began making preparations for the clearinghouse. Soon it became a small research center with a small reading area and donated books. Cole started microfilming Polynesian records and obtained microfilm readers. Before he returned to Utah in 1957, Cole and other genealogical workers toured New Zealand instructing the Saints in genealogical techniques. Finally, in 1961 he and Elwin W. Jensen published a book, *Israel in the Pacific*, that was intended for use in genealogical classes in the South Pacific.

The Polynesian Department at the Society, meanwhile, continued to expand its work as it obtained permission not only to check the temple sheets, but also to process them for temple work, thus almost completely bypassing the regular Index Bureau. At its height, the department employed eight people.

In 1961 a major reorganization of the Society took place, and several programs were reassessed, including the Polynesian Department. Eventually, the department became the Pacific Isles Processing Section of the Records Adjustment Department, and in 1965 it became a small unit within another section.

**Germans.** Another ethnic organization, the German Genealogical Society, was founded in 1926 by a group of German Saints living in Utah. The group consisted largely of first-generation



German immigrants and met once or twice a month in Salt Lake City. By 1930 it had received the commendation of the Genealogical Society for their "most excellent work" in performing 5,613 baptisms, 5,485 endowments, and 469 sealings in 1930.<sup>99</sup> Seven years later, the German society reported that since 1926 it had been responsible for over 140,000 baptisms, nearly 49,000 endowments, and over 32,000 sealing ordinances. In addition, 284 people had attended eleven genealogical classes sponsored by the German society during the year.<sup>100</sup>

The German Genealogical Society cooperated closely with the Genealogical Society of Utah. In the early 1930s, it conducted various fund-raising activities in order to purchase German genealogical books for the library.<sup>101</sup> After the Society moved to the Joseph F. Smith Memorial Building in the 1930s, a special room was given to the German society where it could keep its records and hold committee meetings. The German society also submitted annual reports to the Society. After the major reorganization of 1961, however, the German society, like the Polynesian organization, was absorbed by the Genealogical Society, and was no longer identified as a separate entity.

There may have been other genealogical associations organized for the sake of various ethnic or other special interest groups, though historical records identifying them are missing. The history of these three groups, however, is an impressive illustration of the variety of activities resulting from the Church's emphasis on genealogy.

## **Summary**

The two decades between 1940 and 1960 were decades of rapid growth in genealogical research, increasing visibility for the Society, and greater effectiveness in research and recording. The Society operated between two poles, being drawn inexorably into the center of Church organization, correlation, and consolidation on the one hand and reaching outward to the proliferating stakes, branches, and ethnic groups of the expanding Church on the other hand. Two new temples were dedicated in the United States, two in Europe, and another in New Zealand, contributing to even greater genealogical interest abroad among the Saints in the areas



they served. In addition, the Society's vast microfilming program discussed in chapter 6 began to have a powerful impact on the nature and effectiveness of research.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>A. Hamer Reiser to Archibald F. Bennett, 3 May 1940, Genealogical Society correspondence, Family History Department of the Church (hereafter cited as FHD). See also Genealogical Society Minutes, 4 May 1937, FHD, for a discussion of the function of the Genealogical Society in connection with the proposed General Priesthood Activity Board.

<sup>2</sup>See Genealogical Society Minutes, 7 December 1937, 1 February, and 29 January 1938; Archibald F. Bennett to Joseph Fielding Smith, 21 January 1938, Joseph Fielding Smith papers, Archives Division, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives). The latter includes a resolution adopted by the Genealogical Committee of Taylor Stake in Alberta, Canada, urging the Society to put genealogical classes in the Sunday School because of the difficulties involved in meeting at other times.

<sup>3</sup>See Archibald F. Bennett papers for summary of decisions reached by the Church Union Board in 1940; Genealogical Society Minutes, 15 May, and 18 June 1940; George Q. Morris to the First Presidency, 20 June 1940, in Archibald F. Bennett papers, LDS Church Archives; Genealogical Society Minutes, 18 June 1940.

<sup>4</sup>Archibald F. Bennett to stake genealogical representatives, 3 June 1940, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD; *Deseret News*, 5 and 6 July 1940; Genealogical Society Minutes, 13 August 1940, which include a letter from Archibald F. Bennett to stake presidents. A. Hamer Reiser, oral history interview by William G. Hartley, 1974, vol. 1, 209-10, LDS Church Archives. Eventually, according to Reiser, A. William Lund, Joseph Christenson, Archibald F. Bennett, and Joseph Fielding Smith were all placed on the Sunday School Board.

<sup>5</sup>A. Hamer Reiser to Archibald F. Bennett, 6 May 1940, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD.

<sup>6</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 16 July, 10 September, and 31 December 1940, 14 January, and 4 February 1941.

<sup>7</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 16 January 1951, 16 June 1961.

<sup>8</sup>Archibald F. Bennett to stake representatives, 3 July 1940, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD; Genealogical Society Minutes, 9 September 1941, 14 March 1949; *Deseret News*, 6 July 1940.

<sup>9</sup>Traditionally, stake seventies quorums were responsible for missionary work in the stakes. They were eliminated from Church organization in the 1980s, however.

<sup>10</sup>*Deseret News*, 26 October 1940.

<sup>11</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 15 February 1945.



<sup>12</sup>Genealogical Society, *Handbook for Genealogy and Temple Work* (Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1949), 35-36. The Society published many editions of this handbook.

<sup>13</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 19 November 1940.

<sup>14</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 25 March, 6 May, and 9 September 1941.

<sup>15</sup>Joseph Fielding Smith and Archibald F. Bennett to stake genealogical chairmen, Genealogical Society circular letters, 6 March, and 15 April 1942, LDS Church Archives. Genealogical Society Minutes, 3 March 1942, which include a letter to stake chairmen, dated 2 February 1942.

<sup>16</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 1 December 1942.

<sup>17</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 16 March, 5 May, and 1 December 1942; Archibald F. Bennett to stake chairmen, 10 June, and 7 December 1942, 18 January 1943, Archibald F. Bennett papers, FHD.

<sup>18</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 26 September, 21 November, and 5 December 1944, 9 January, 12 June, 14 August, and 23 October 1945, 14 January 1947; Joseph Fielding Smith and Archibald F. Bennett, "Letter No. 51" 1947, Genealogical Society circular letters, LDS Church Archives; Joseph Fielding Smith and Archibald F. Bennett to stake chairmen, 23 August, and 10 January 1945, Genealogical Society circular letters, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>19</sup>Archibald F. Bennett to stake presidents and genealogy chairmen, 1 December 1958, Genealogical Society circular letters.

<sup>20</sup>Henry E. Christiansen, oral history interviews by Bruce Blumell, 1975-76, typescript, James Moyle Oral History Program, LDS Church Archives; James M. Black, oral history interview by Bruce Blumell, 1975, typescript, James Moyle Oral History Program, LDS Church Archives; George H. Fudge, oral history interview by Bruce Blumell, 1976, typescript, James Moyle Oral History Program, LDS Church Archives; L. Garrett Myers, oral history interview by Bruce Blumell, 1976, typescript, James Moyle Oral History Program, LDS Church Archives; notes in Archibald F. Bennett papers, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>21</sup>Joseph F. Smith and Archibald F. Bennett to stake chairmen, 9 January 1950, Genealogical Society circular letters, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>22</sup>Copy of article in David O. McKay papers, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>23</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 21 November 1944.

<sup>24</sup>A. William Lund to A. Hamer Reiser, 10 December 1940, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD; Genealogical Society Minutes, 27 September 1941, 15 February 1945.

<sup>25</sup>The Archibald F. Bennett papers contain several such letters.

<sup>26</sup>Myrtle R. Zundel to A. William Lund, n.d.; A. William Lund to Myrtle R. Zundel, 7 December 1945, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD.

<sup>27</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 15 February, and 14 August 1945.

<sup>28</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 9 December 1947, 21 December 1948.

<sup>29</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 8 February 1949.

<sup>30</sup>It was necessary to provide supplements to the Sunday School, he argued, for (1) many Sunday Schools did not have classes, (2) the classes were too short anyway, (3) many people lacked the devotion necessary to insure success in the classes, (4) the Sunday School wanted a new text every year, and (5) many young people were simply not receiving the training.



<sup>31</sup>Joseph Fielding Smith to the First Presidency, 11 February, 17 March, and 22 April 1949, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD.

<sup>32</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 8 February, and 24 May 1949, 13 February, and 12 March 1952.

<sup>33</sup>E. E. Brundage to Archibald F. Bennett, 3 March 1957, Archibald F. Bennett papers, FHD.

<sup>34</sup>Mrs. W. Howard Millett to Archibald F. Bennett, 26 January 1957, Archibald F. Bennett papers.

<sup>35</sup>Archibald F. Bennett to stake chairmen, 22 January 1953, Genealogical Society circular letters, LDS Church Archives; Genealogical Society Minutes, 27 March 1951.

<sup>36</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 21 April 1954.

<sup>37</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 1 November 1957.

<sup>38</sup>See L. Garrett Myers to Mark E. Petersen, 13 December 1957, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD, for more statements on the problems of Sunday School instruction, attempts to hold instruction at other times, and Myers's views as to what should be done.

<sup>39</sup>This conclusion is based on our personal observations in the 1970s and 1980s.

<sup>40</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 29 September 1941; Archibald F. Bennett to J. Reuben Clark Jr., 6 November 1941, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD; Myers, interview; Genealogical Society Minutes, 18 April 1941.

<sup>41</sup>The letter from the First Presidency to the Genealogical Society is incorporated in the Genealogical Society Minutes, 21 March 1944.

<sup>42</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 18 April, and 20 November 1944; Articles of Incorporation in Genealogical Society papers, FHD; Joseph Fielding Smith to the First Presidency, 8 June 1944, Joseph Fielding Smith papers, LDS Church Archives. In his letter to the First Presidency, Elder Smith says that the members voted in a meeting on 11 April, but the minutes of the Genealogical Society in which this vote took place are dated 18 April.

<sup>43</sup>In 1943 there were 106 employees at the Society. Genealogical Society Minutes, 27 September 1943.

<sup>44</sup>The assets are appended to the letter from Joseph Fielding Smith to the First Presidency, 8 June 1944, Joseph Fielding Smith papers, LDS Church Archives. They included the following: assets of the Society and the magazine (cash, stocks, and first mortgage loans), \$40,000; assets of the Genealogical Research Association, \$7,000; restricted bequests to be used for specified purposes (consisting of cash, real estate, stocks, and first mortgage loans), \$20,000; monies belonging to patrons to be used for researchers at home or abroad (consisting of cash and some U.S. government bonds), \$42,000.

<sup>45</sup>This seems apparent from oblique comments in Genealogical Society Minutes, 16 June 1961, and Fudge, interview. These comments suggest that Joseph Fielding Smith may have had some slight misgiving, though not serious enough to create an issue.

<sup>46</sup>Christiansen, interview; Joseph Fielding Smith to the First Presidency, 12 December 1945, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD. The assistants appointed in 1945, according to this letter, were Benjamin L. Bowring, Harold A. Dent, Henry E. Christiansen, and W. Henry Chase. They met often with the board, though they had no voting power.



<sup>47</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 16 January 1951; Myers, interview.

<sup>48</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 24 February 1961.

<sup>49</sup>First Presidency to Joseph Fielding Smith, 13 April 1948, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD; L. Garrett Myers to Joseph Fielding Smith, 16 November 1955, Genealogical Society correspondence; Genealogical Society Minutes, 30 October, and 9 December 1959. The Society requested a budget of \$2,095,000 for 1960 but was required to reduce it by \$150,000.

<sup>50</sup>L. Garrett Myers to Joseph Fielding Smith, 30 October 1957, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD.

<sup>51</sup>Salt Lake Temple Presidency to Joseph Fielding Smith, 3 June 1938. Genealogical Society correspondence. Genealogical Society Minutes, 7 June 1938. The discussion on this letter went unresolved for so long that the Society did not reply to the temple presidency for some time. On 31 October, the presidency again wrote the Society, noting that no reply had been received and asking for consideration of their plan.

<sup>52</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 7 June 1938.

<sup>53</sup>Genealogical Society miscellaneous minutes, 7 December 1938, FHD; Joseph Christenson, A. William Lund, Archibald F. Bennett, James M. Kirkham, George F. Richards Jr., and Orson Rega Card to the Board of Directors of the Genealogical Society, 28 December 1938, Genealogical Society papers, FHD; Genealogical Society miscellaneous minutes, FHD, 21 November 1939; Genealogical Society Minutes, 28 November, and 8 December 1939.

<sup>54</sup>*Handbook for Genealogy and Temple Work*, 1949 ed., 72.

<sup>55</sup>See L. Garrett Myers and O. Henry Christiansen, interviews, for comments on the significance of this change.

<sup>56</sup>*Handbook for Genealogy and Temple Work*, 1949 ed., 74–80.

<sup>57</sup>Meeting of the Temple Archives Committee, 3 June 1942, in Genealogical Society miscellaneous minutes, FHD.

<sup>58</sup>L. Garrett Myers to Joseph Fielding Smith, 24 April 1944, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD.

<sup>59</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 5 February, and 24 May 1960.

<sup>60</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 25 April 1952.

<sup>61</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 11 January 1944.

<sup>62</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 26 February 1958.

<sup>63</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 19 December 1947, 25 April, 11 June, and 8 December 1952; Joseph Fielding Smith to First Presidency, 8 December 1952, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD; Joseph Fielding Smith to Stake Presidents and Genealogical Chairmen, 28 April 1954, Genealogical Society circular letters, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>64</sup>Edna B. Allen, former assistant recorder, Logan Temple, telephone interview by James B. Allen, 5 January 1995. This policy is referred to in Genealogical Society Minutes, 5 November 1940. The people who accepted these donations were usually retired people who were devoted to temple work and who needed a little extra income.

<sup>65</sup>*Handbook for Genealogy and Temple Work*, 1956 ed., 113–23.

<sup>66</sup>See Christiansen, interview; and Frank Smith, oral history interview by Bruce Blumell, 1976, typescript, James Moyle Oral History Program, LDS Church Archives. See also *Handbook for Genealogy and Temple Work*, 1949 ed., 71–73.

<sup>67</sup>Myers, interview.



<sup>68</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 11 January 1944, 9 January 1945.

<sup>69</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 25 April 1952.

<sup>70</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 11 January 1944. See also Robert Peterson, oral history interview by Jessie Embry, 1977, typescript, LDS Church Archives. Peterson became supervisor of the typing department in 1952.

<sup>71</sup>L. Garrett Myers to Committee on Personnel, 6 August 1957, Genealogical Society correspondence. For example of concern over low wages and the inability to compete with outside employers, see Genealogical Society Minutes, 11 March 1947, 19 February, and 24 March 1960.

<sup>72</sup>L. Garrett Myers to Joseph Fielding Smith, 19 October 1957, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD.

<sup>73</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 5 February, and 24 May 1960.

<sup>74</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 9 March 1948.

<sup>75</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 9 January 1945, 9 January 1951, 20 January 1961; Memorandum by L. Garrett Myers, 23 January 1961, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD.

<sup>76</sup>William Raymond Brace, "The Utah Genealogical Society" (master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1956), 45-52. Of the users, 56.7 percent were fifty years of age or older, and 73 percent had found what they were looking for in the library.

<sup>77</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 29 September 1941, 21 April, and 1 December 1942.

<sup>78</sup>L. Garrett Myers to Joseph Fielding Smith, 20 October 1944, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD.

<sup>79</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 6 August 1946.

<sup>80</sup>For example, in response to a complaint that people in lower income brackets needed the local service, Myers argued that the Society could still help them and that with proper desire and faith even the poorest people could obtain the names they needed. L. Garrett Myers to Philinda Keeler Naegle, 26 August 1949, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD. See also L. Garrett Myers to Joseph Fielding Smith, 15 September 1950, Genealogical Society correspondence.

<sup>81</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 25 April, and 11 June 1952. The investigating committee consisted of Mark E. Petersen, A. William Lund, Archibald F. Bennett, James M. Kirkham, and L. Garrett Myers. In a later letter to Joseph Fielding Smith, Myers commented that one proposal had been to film all books in the library and make copies of all microfilms for distribution on request. This, he said, would take ten years, the cost of filming the books would be \$425,883.76, and the increased salary costs for branch library services would be \$300,000 per year. See Myers to Joseph Fielding Smith, 4 November 1952, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD.

<sup>82</sup>L. Garrett Myers to Santaquin-Tintic Stake Presidency, Attn. Max E. Nelson, clerk, 28 January 1958, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD; Genealogical Society Minutes, 22 March 1960.

<sup>83</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 9 March 1948.

<sup>84</sup>First Presidency to Archibald F. Bennett, 8 February 1954, Archibald F. Bennett papers, FHD; Alvin R. Dyer to Archibald F. Bennett, 5 August 1959, Archibald F. Bennett papers; Genealogical Society Minutes, 19 February, and 24 May 1960, 20 January 1961.



<sup>85</sup>"Memorandum to the First Presidency," prepared by L. Garrett Myers, 25 March 1960, LDS Church Archives, 2.

<sup>86</sup>See Genealogical Society Minutes, 14 August 1945; Junius M. Jackson to Hugh B. Brown, 3 August 1961, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD; Smith, interview.

<sup>87</sup>The most valuable was "Improvement of Teaching," and number two was a class on the bible by W. Cleon Skousen.

<sup>88</sup>Archibald F. Bennett papers, FHD, boxes 1 and 2, contain various programs, notes, and correspondence dealing with BYU education weeks. Bennett himself was apparently a very popular drawing card in these programs.

<sup>89</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 26 August, 28 October, and 9 December 1953; Ray L. Jones, "A Successful Book of Remembrance Project," *Improvement Era* 57 (July 1954): 503. See also Archibald F. Bennett papers, FHD, box 3, for information on BYU technical and extension programs.

<sup>90</sup>*Church News*, 23 January, and 30 January 1954, 19 February, and 26 February 1955; Joseph Fielding Smith to stake genealogical chairmen, 11 January 1954, Genealogical Society circular letters, FHD; Joseph Fielding Smith to stake presidents and genealogical chairmen, 11 March 1954, Genealogical Society circular letters.

<sup>91</sup>These organizations are not discussed at length here because they did not become a permanent, integral part of the Genealogical Society. However, some extended information about them may be found in chapter 8 of James B. Allen and Jessie L. Embry, "Hearts Turned to the Fathers: A History of the Genealogical Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to 1975," on file in the Family History Department and in the LDS Church Archives.

<sup>92</sup>William A. Cole, "Brief History of the Polynesian Department," typescript, 1966, copy located in files of Henry Christiansen, FHD. This history is basically the reflection of Cole, and his personal disappointments and biases are clearly evident in it.

<sup>93</sup>First Presidency to Joseph Fielding Smith, 24 March 1937, Joseph Fielding Smith papers, LDS Church Archives; Joseph Fielding Smith to President Heber J. Grant and counselors, 26 March 1937, Joseph Fielding Smith papers.

<sup>94</sup>William W. Waddoups to Joseph Fielding Smith, 24 September 1937, Joseph Fielding Smith papers.

<sup>95</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 28 November 1937.

<sup>96</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 9 November 1937. See also Cole, "Brief History of the Polynesian Department," but note that his dates are slightly different than those reflected in the correspondence.

<sup>97</sup>William W. Waddoups, "Genealogical and Temple Work in Polynesia," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 31 (July 1940): 161-63.

<sup>98</sup>L. Garrett Myers to the First Presidency of the Church, 26 January 1957, Genealogical Society correspondence, FHD.

<sup>99</sup>*Deseret News*, 1 November 1930.

<sup>100</sup>*Deseret News*, 23 October 1937.

<sup>101</sup>Genealogical Society Minutes, 10 June 1930; *Deseret News*, "Genealogy" section, 1 November 1930.