

Chapter 7

Simplification, Decentralization, Cooperation, 1975–1994

In 1975 the Genealogical Society of Utah became the Genealogical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—a move that more fully integrated it into the central administrative structure of the Church. As part of this reorganization, a number of administrative changes were made. These included the creation of a new priesthood genealogy division and later a priesthood area support division intended to define member responsibility more clearly, teach members how to do genealogical work, and help priesthood leaders perform their family history duties. This chapter provides an overview of all these administrative changes and of various new programs and policies developed from 1975 to 1994. Each of these developments had important consequences for the genealogical work of the Church.

The work of the Genealogical Department in this era was influenced by a number of significant events in the history of the Church. Two revelations that concerned concepts central to family history were added to the canon of LDS scripture. Between 1975 and 1994, the number of temples in operation around the world grew from sixteen to forty-six, greatly expanding the opportunity for Latter-day Saints everywhere to perform proxy ordinances. Finally, in 1981, President Spencer W. Kimball placed family history research and temple work on a par with other aspects of Church activity when he clarified the three-fold mission

of the Church as “to proclaim the gospel, to perfect the Saints, and to redeem the dead.”¹

Departmental Organization

Until 1975, the Genealogical Society existed apart from other units of the Church as a separately incorporated, tax-exempt body. While integrated in many ways into the structure of the Church, the Society’s unique status presented some administrative difficulties. In addition, it was distinctively different from other genealogical societies, for it not only supported research, but also regulated the identification of deceased persons for whom temple ordinances could be performed. By making the Society part of the organization of the Church, Church leaders hoped to streamline its operation and make it more effective.²

On 18 November 1975, Elder Boyd K. Packer and other General Authorities met with the Society’s staff to explain the change. Elder Packer noted that being a “department” of the Church rather than a “society” would expand the scope of the organization’s responsibility. He also stated that the change was in accordance with the status of other Church administrative units:

We’ve operated as the Genealogical Society for generations. *Department* just moves the boundaries out. There are a lot of things that the Genealogical Society does, but most of what we do really, we do here

at Church headquarters, and we need to reach way out into the Church now in many ways that we haven’t before, and we’re just joining the other departments. . . . So we’re just organizing just the way the whole rest of the Church is organized, only better.³



Elder Boyd K. Packer, 1975, ardent supporter of family history and temple work, served many years on the Temple and Family History Executive Council. Courtesy LDS Church Archives.

Beginning 10 December 1975, the Genealogical Society became the Genealogical Department of the Church, a fully integrated part of the central administration. The corporate entity of the Genealogical Society of Utah became another name under which the Church does business and is used principally for negotiating microfilming contracts.⁴

As a result of the reorganization, the title of the head of the Department changed from *president* to *executive director*. Nine people had served as president of the Society since its organization in 1894. The last one, Theodore M. Burton, became the first executive director of the Department. Since his release in 1978, there have been five other directors. The fourteen leaders of the Genealogical Society/Department during its first century are listed below. All except Junius Jackson were also General Authorities of the Church.

Franklin D. Richards	1894-1899
Anthon H. Lund	1900-1921
Charles W. Penrose	1921-1925
Anthony W. Ivins	1925-1934
Joseph Fielding Smith	1934-1961
Junius Jackson	1961-1962
Nathan Eldon Tanner	1963
Howard W. Hunter	1964-1972
Theodore M. Burton	1972-1978
J. Thomas Fyans	1978
Royden G. Derrick	1979-1984
Richard G. Scott	1984-1988
J. Richard Clarke	1988-1993
Monte J. Brough	1993-present

The new Department was charged with three main responsibilities: (1) to gather records that could be used for genealogical research, (2) to provide names for the temples and keep an official record of temple ordinances performed, and (3) to encourage Church members to do genealogical research as well as teach them how to do it.⁵ Five divisions were created within the Department to achieve these purposes: Acquisitions and Field Operations, Library Services, Temple Services, Priesthood Genealogy, and Administrative Services.

Acquisitions and Field Operations was responsible for acquiring genealogical sources by gift, purchase, or microfilming. Records specialists in this division began negotiating microfilming contracts in countries outside the United States, supervising filmers, acquiring books and book catalogs, and, in some areas, arranging the recording of oral genealogies.

Library Services organized, described, and made these sources available for use. This division supervised cataloging, reference, and collection development. Cataloging described the materials, reference assisted patrons in the use of the materials, and record specialists identified what sources could be added to develop the collection.

Temple Services processed all the names for temple work and maintained the official temple ordinance record. It set up temple service centers in several temple areas outside North America. These centers extracted the microfilms containing local information, cleared the names, and submitted them to the temples for the ordinance work to be done by local members. Only the finalized records of ordinances performed were sent to Department headquarters in Salt Lake City. Temple Services worked directly with the temples in answering questions about ordinance policies until 1981, when this responsibility was transferred to the Temple Department (created in 1979). Temple Services was then renamed the Names Processing Division.

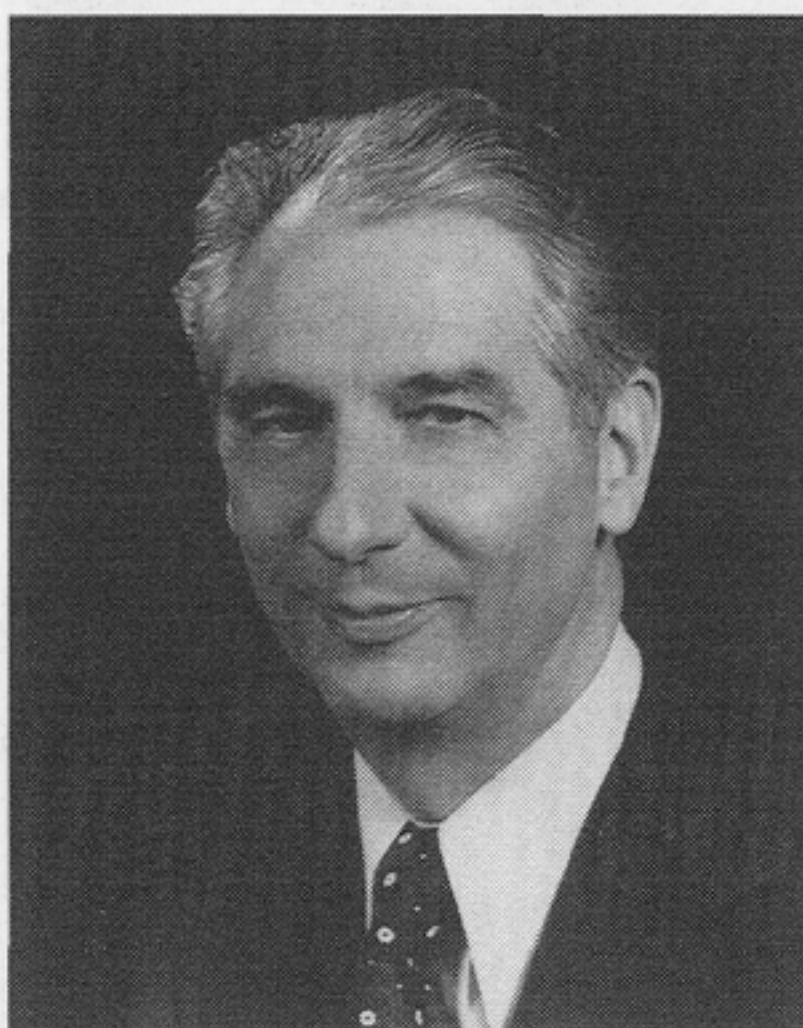
The fourth division, Priesthood Genealogy, was created to assist and encourage Church members in their own research.⁶ It was asked to simplify the genealogical procedures and forms used by the Church so that members would find them less intimidating.⁷ To accomplish this task, Priesthood Genealogy began to generate research and class materials, provide instruction, and otherwise assist Church members and the genealogical community at large in their research.

Administrative Services, the fifth division, handled hiring, budgeting, and other administrative tasks in support of the other divisions.⁸ It began to hire more people with advanced degrees and special skills. Language background was an important consideration because of the international nature of the collection and clientele.⁹

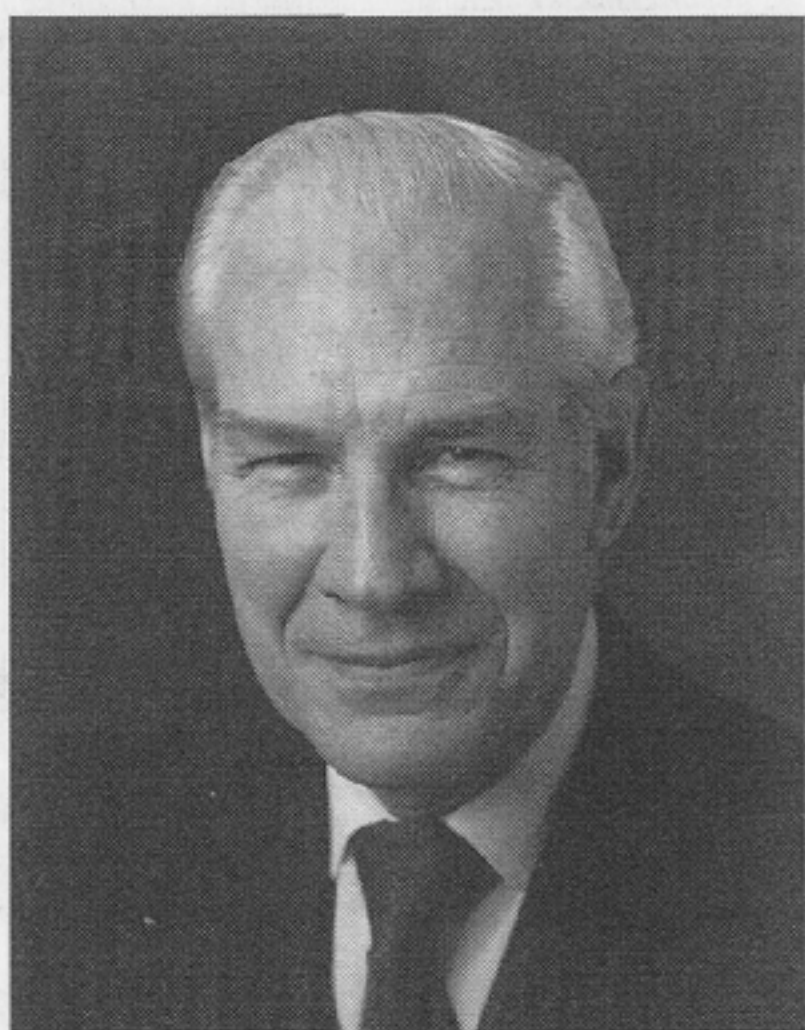
Executive Directors of the Family History Department, 1976–1994



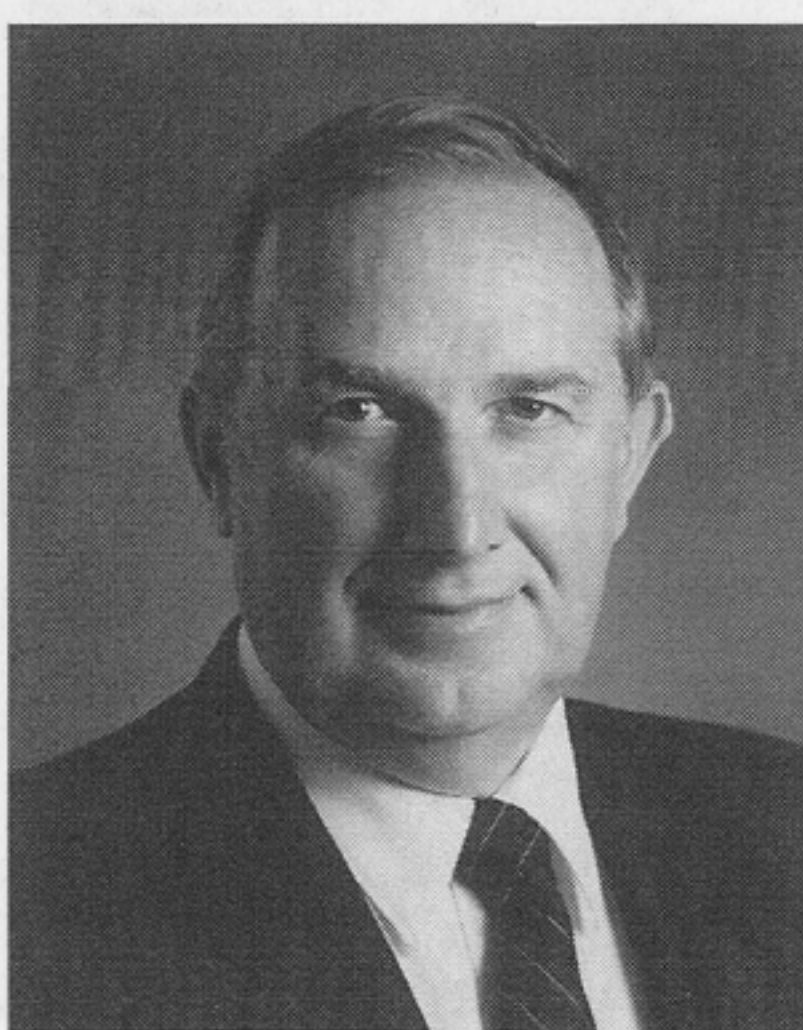
Theodore M. Burton, 1972–78



J. Thomas Fyans, 1978



Royden G. Derrick, 1979–84



Richard G. Scott, 1984–88



J. Richard Clarke, 1988–93



Monte J. Brough, 1993–

Photographs courtesy LDS Church Archives

The organization of the Department has continued to evolve. The Projects and Planning Division was created in 1981 to control the development of automation. The Priesthood Genealogy and Library Services Divisions were merged into the Member Services Division in 1985. In 1990 the Administrative Services and Projects and Planning Divisions were reconfigured into various support groups, leaving only three divisions—Member Services, Names Processing, and Acquisitions. In 1992, Member Services was renamed as Research Support Services. The same year a priesthood and area support division was organized to respond more effectively to the needs of priesthood leaders.¹⁰

Long-Range Planning

Another significant development after the creation of the Department was the integration of long-range planning into Department operations in 1976. Before that time, long-range planning was informal; department management dealt with issues singly rather than as part of an integrated plan that covered all facets of Department activity. The initial step towards the creation of a long-range plan was taken in 1974, when Elder Theodore M. Burton announced to Department leaders that he had been preparing data to show “long-range trends” and suggested a monthly meeting to consider the Department’s course and the effect of the activities of one area on another. Elder Burton desired to introduce a program that would produce action rather than guilt. He observed that “for many years we have stressed genealogy with the result that people feel guilty but have not felt impelled to do this.” Consequently, he proposed the expansion of extraction, the automation of temple ordinances, renewed emphasis on temple attendance, and support for family organizations, rather than individuals, to do family history research.¹¹

Elder Burton’s proposals were expanded over the next two years, and a plan was presented to the Quorum of the Twelve and the First Presidency in 1976. After its approval, the Department had a clear vision of what it sought to accomplish. Department leaders continue to use the long-range goals of the plan as a guide to measure Departmental accomplishments.

The plan anticipated many of the major accomplishments of the next two decades. These included the creation of multiple automated data files, such as those found in FamilySearch; the widespread distribution of genealogical information through personal computers; and the use of programs such as Family Record Extraction to involve a larger spectrum of Church members in family history activity; and other goals listed below.

The plan was updated regularly, milestones were identified by which progress could be measured, and annual status reports were made to higher management. New staff positions were also created

1976 Long-Range Goals

No.	Summary of Goal	Current Implementation
1	Develop and maintain a central genealogical file that shows family relationships and temple ordinance data for individuals	FamilySearch, Ancestral File
2	Design all name entry systems to place individuals in their proper family order	Ancestral File
3	Prepare a single index to all temple work for a given individual	International Genealogical Index
4	Make information in the central genealogical file available to Church members as a beginning point for their own genealogical research	FamilySearch
5	Establish genealogical service centers in temple districts, particularly overseas, and involve members in a records extraction program	Family History Service Centers, Family Record Extraction
6	Use modern technology in temple recording and enable service centers to process names locally	Ordinance Recording System, TempleReady
7	Transfer to families and local priesthood leaders the burden of determining the accuracy of name submission and responsibility for avoiding duplication of temple ordinances	TempleReady
8	Develop and maintain a family organization register to aid members in contacting other persons researching their same lines	Family Registry, Ancestral File
9	Provide a service to assist priesthood leaders in more difficult areas of genealogical research	Published research outlines
10	Continue the present program of gathering records of genealogical interest from around the world	Expansion of microfilm acquisitions

to support planned projects. In each case, a project administrator and a project manager were assigned. Teams of programmers, user specialists, and other staff were assembled to develop the plan. The Projects and Planning Division was given responsibility for development. Planning continues to be part of the current effort to make family history an integral part of the work of the Church.

Member Responsibility: Individual and Collective

When the Church's regional representatives gathered in Salt Lake City in the fall of 1975, they were presented with some startling information: member involvement in genealogical activity was not keeping pace with Church growth. In 1972, 66 percent of the names submitted for temple work had been provided by members, but in 1975 only 26 percent came from that source. Moreover, only 7.5 percent of the Church membership had participated in the four-generation program.¹² The reason for this situation, said Elder Boyd K. Packer, was that many members thought genealogical research was simply too hard:

Genealogical work in the Church for the most part is left to those few members who have taken a keen interest in it. . . . Genealogical work has, I fear, sometimes been made to appear too difficult, too involved, and too time-consuming to really be inviting. . . . We intend to streamline and simplify genealogical research and record clearance, to fit the needs and circumstances of the average member of the Church, rather than to accommodate the genealogical specialist.¹³

The Department attempted to reverse the trend by preparing materials for General Authorities to present in stake conferences held during 1977. They were to stress that member involvement in genealogy required little research expertise. Members were to be encouraged to (1) write personal histories, (2) establish or support family organizations, (3) complete the four-generation program, and (4) go to the temple regularly.¹⁴ The Department hoped to introduce members to family history basics with the expectation that some would take the next step into the more demanding requirements of original research and the identification of new names for temple work.

Under the Church correlation program, the high priests in each ward were responsible for genealogical activity. In 1976, Priesthood

Genealogy developed a program to help the high priests in their work. The new program provided closer correlation for genealogical activity between the stake president, the high councilor in charge of genealogy, the bishop, and the high priests group leader. Whenever a General Authority attended a stake conference, he emphasized the role of the stake president and the high priests group leader in genealogy. George Fudge noted later that this new effort, stimulated by President Spencer W. Kimball's interest in genealogy, was the first united effort by all of the General Authorities in behalf of family history.¹⁵

Significantly, the religious importance of genealogy was emphasized in a powerful way during the April 1976 general conference. At that conference, the members of the Church voted to sustain the action of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve in adding two important revelations to the canon of LDS scripture. One was a vision of the celestial kingdom, given to Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple in 1836 and concerning the salvation of those who die without a knowledge of the gospel (D&C 137). The other was President Joseph F. Smith's 1918 vision showing the Savior's visit to the spirit world and expounding the doctrine of redemption of the dead (D&C 138). As the first addition to scripture since the middle of the nineteenth century, this action was a dramatic reminder to Church members of the eternal significance of their family history labors.

The key objective of the Department in renewing the emphasis on genealogy was to "streamline and simplify." One tool for reaching this goal was a new program that involved members primarily in name extraction at the local level rather than in extended research. For almost two decades, name extraction had been done at Church headquarters, but in February 1978, stakes were asked to assume primary responsibility for this ongoing work. At the same time, Church members were told they were no longer required to submit family group sheets or to provide names for temple ordinances for ancestors beyond four generations.¹⁶ Department employees were informed that name extraction was now the Department's highest priority.¹⁷ They were directed to explain to Church members that pursuing extended research is a "privilege" rather than a "responsibility" and that the stake record extraction program would handle temple ordinances for ancestors in earlier generations.¹⁸

This simplified program eliminated the need for a complex research process to identify ancestors. Research was time consuming, required uncommon expertise, and was virtually impossible to coordinate so as to avoid one researcher duplicating the work of another. Under the new program, extended research was replaced by the one-time extraction of all names from a family history source. As Elder J. Thomas Fyans explained in October 1978, genealogical activity was to become a cooperative effort rather than continue to be an emphasis on individual research beyond four generations:

It is apparent, then, that *ours* is a shared ancestry. . . [and] it has become apparent that genealogical research efforts are being duplicated. . . . It is for this basic reason that President Kimball has directed us that we should seek out our ancestors back four generations. After that we should work together as a Church through the records extraction program.¹⁹

President Ezra Taft Benson made a similar statement:

A second major change [of the new program] is that original research beyond the four-generation level will be accepted but will no longer be required of individual members or individual families in the Church. Instead, the Church has assumed the responsibility to begin a massive record-gathering and extraction program in order to prepare names for temple work.²⁰

This was a startling new message. Research had been the staple of family history programs from the inception of the Genealogical Society of Utah. While extraction was indisputably a quicker and more efficient method of providing names for the temples, it had not been so clear that the responsibility of Church members to seek after their own ancestors should be removed. The new policy was particularly devastating to private researchers, who soon lost legions of clients.

Church leaders soon became concerned that a vital link connecting generations was being overlooked in the new program. The feeling that something was not right crystallized in 1979, when the Department suggested filming and discarding the archive sheets that contained all names submitted for temple work between 1942 and 1969, prior to the time when name submission became computerized. The information would not be lost, but the elimination of the paper copy of the family group sheets seemed to

represent the de-emphasis on research. In a letter to the Presidents of the First Quorum of the Seventy, the Council of the Twelve stated that they feared the Department "might be straying from some of the ancient moorings to which we should be anchored."²¹ In council with the Presidents of the Seventy in February 1980, Elder Packer reiterated, "The name extraction program should be carefully managed so that it does not dominate the genealogical program of the Church." He recommended that the Department encourage a reemphasis of genealogical research among the members of the Church.²²

These statements caught Department leadership by surprise. They were disquieted to see the reversal of a program that had been approved on every level and had been publicly endorsed. However, Church leaders had apparently felt that the implications of emphasizing collective rather than individual responsibility had warranted reappraisal. In the April 1980 general conference, President Spencer W. Kimball reaffirmed that research should continue past four generations in order for families to redeem their kindred dead.²³ At the same conference, Elder A. Theodore Tuttle announced in the priesthood session: "Once you complete your four generations, you are not finished. Continue to search out all of your ancestral lines."²⁴ The responsibility for extended research that the new program had lifted from the shoulders of the members was set gently back into place. Many members, however, missed the reversal and for years continued to think that four generations was the extent of their individual responsibility.

Aside from the temporary emphasis on extraction rather than extended research, the renewed call for four-generation sheets and the implementation of stake record extraction revived genealogical activity in the Church. The four-generation program was not only renewed, but also revamped. The Church requested that new sheets be submitted and that the accuracy of the data be checked before submission. Numerous discrepancies had been noted in sheets submitted under the old program, and the Department hoped to improve the quality of the information they received. Also, there had been numerous duplicate submissions under the old program. To eliminate this problem, the Department requested that sheets be submitted by families (adult brothers and sisters) rather than individuals. The new program also required compilation

of a pedigree chart to accompany the sheets.²⁵ Consequently, everyone, even those who had submitted previously, had something to do. At the same time, stake record extraction provided a new opportunity for thousands to participate meaningfully in family history work.



Ancestral File submissions, 1981. A massive influx of family group sheets arrived in the two weeks preceding the perceived deadline for submissions. Shown are April Sams (left) and Lois Gardner (right).

Meanwhile, the rationale for the renewed four-generation program was expanded by the development of Ancestral File, a master file of completed research. The Council of the Twelve announced that submissions after 1 July 1979 would “become the foundation for a genealogical record of this dispensation.”²⁶ Because of advancements in computer technology, Ancestral File is easily accessible to members trying to avoid duplication of effort.

The new emphasis on genealogy had a weak link, however. No one at the local level was primarily responsible for explaining the technical issues involved in compiling a family history. Correlation had placed the responsibility for promoting the program on the priesthood, but technical information was difficult to transmit. The need for expertise at the ward and branch level spurred the creation of a new Church position—ward genealogical consultant (later the ward family history consultant). This position replaced and expanded the former position of ward genealogical forms examiner.²⁷ The consultant helped members fulfill their family history responsibilities as defined by the priesthood.

Renewed emphasis was again placed on the need for extended research. Elder Mark E. Petersen wrote in the August 1981 *Ensign*, “We must trace our own ancestry back as far as we can. The four generations are not enough. We have the extraction program and it will help, but it does not relieve us of our own personal responsibility.” This message was also sent out to stake conferences during the first half of 1982. The purpose was to reemphasize the importance of members doing their part in providing names for temple ordinances.²⁸

In the last half of 1987, family history was again stressed in stake conferences in connection with the introduction of a new manual for members, *Come unto Christ through Temple Ordinances and Covenants*. James E. Faust, a member of the Temple and Genealogy Executive Council, stated the objective of these conferences: “It is hoped that in these stake conferences we can simplify the approach to genealogy, and demystify it so that every member, regardless of training, will find it doable.”²⁹ Each member was asked to begin searching for at least one unendowed ancestor and to go to the temple for that person.

The stress on making genealogy “doable” led to a significant change in the name of the Department. Leaders felt that *genealogy*

reflected the means rather than the purpose of the Department. A decade earlier Elder Theodore M. Burton had stated, "It is not genealogy which is our goal and we ought to stop using this word as frequently and indiscriminately as we have done in the past. Our work really is that of family exaltation and I suggest we use this expression."³⁰ In August 1987, the First Presidency announced that the Genealogical Department would be called the Family History Department, and the name of the Genealogical Library (in Salt Lake City) would be changed to the Family History Library. Church leaders hoped this change would remove the implication that professional training was needed to pursue one's ancestry.³¹ The Department altered the names of subordinate divisions and departments to reflect this new approach. For example, branch genealogical libraries were renamed family history centers.

As the decade progressed, the opportunity for member involvement in family history activity was expanded by automation. In 1988, Family Record Extraction moved name extraction into members' homes and into members' home computers. FamilySearch, put into use in 1990, placed large automated research files at the disposal of members using computers at family history centers and local Church clerks' offices. In 1993, TempleReady made it possible for members to clear names for temple work. Automation expanded member participation as thousands of members contributed in ways not possible before the advent of the personal computer. (See chapter 8 for more information.)

Priesthood Administration

The Department's role in reaching all Church members with the family history program was aided by developments in the Church's administrative structure. In October 1975, the First Quorum of the Seventy was reestablished as the third presiding quorum of the Church. In subsequent years, a Second Quorum of the Seventy was added. Within the next few years, the Department came under the administration of the Seventy. Since 1978 the executive director of the Department has always been one of the Presidents of the First Quorum of the Seventy. Concurrent with this change, additional General Authorities from the Quorums of the Seventy have been appointed as assistant executive directors.

Changes also occurred at the next higher administrative level. In 1977 the Church created four executive committees (later called councils) among the members in the Quorum of the Twelve. These councils formalized the decision-making structure of the Quorum in administering the operations of the departments of the Church. One of these councils was the Temple and Genealogy Executive Committee,³² now known as the Temple and Family History Executive Council. The Council oversees the Department and, under the direction of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve, promotes family history efforts Churchwide through the administrative framework of Area Presidencies, headed by members of the Quorum of the Seventy. The Department obtains guidance and direction from the general Church councils regarding developments in the family history program.

Area offices, established in the 1970s where large numbers of Church members exist, have developed as extension centers for the headquarters offices in Salt Lake City. For the areas in which they are located, these offices have gradually assumed the responsibilities of Church headquarters. Since area offices are closer to local members, they are more responsive to their needs.

In 1985 the Church gave Area Presidencies and offices total responsibility for training and motivating members in family history work, processing names, supervising family history centers, ordering microfilm, and supervising family history staff.³³ The most notable exception to this large-scale transfer of authority was the retention of the Department's acquisitions staff. The Department suggested that Area Presidencies appoint an adviser (a paid staff person, volunteer, or missionary) to supervise their newly acquired responsibilities. To keep the advisers and the Area Presidencies informed on technical issues, in 1986 the Department appointed a person to serve in headquarters as first-contact for each area.³⁴

The responsiveness of area offices to their new role has varied greatly. In 1990 the Department learned that the Mexico/Central America Area had called an area adviser and was producing their own materials and training programs.³⁵ However, as of 1991, most Area Presidencies did not have trained family history personnel on their staff. Instead, they used either Church service

personnel (that is, people willing to donate their time to Church callings) or full-time employees with limited background in family history.³⁶ In response, the Department began training area family history advisers brought to Salt Lake City during general conference.³⁷

In 1992 the Department began to devote more resources to working with Area Presidencies. Five high-level staff members at Department headquarters were appointed as area coordinators. Through a newly created division, Priesthood and Area Support, the area coordinators began planning for the development of family history services in each area of the Church. They sent letters to Area Presidencies during 1992 requesting that family history plans be prepared by the Area Presidencies.³⁸ The objective of the plans was for areas to identify their needs and for the Department to respond to those needs as far as resources permitted.³⁹ Even though research guides and forms had been translated into a number of languages in previous years, one of the most pressing needs the areas identified was the cultural adaptation of these materials. In 1993 a pilot team was commissioned to design multicultural guides and forms.⁴⁰

Currently, the administration of the Department is organized to promote the family history mission of the Church anywhere members live. The primary line of communication for family history policy is through the Temple and Family History Executive Council and Area Presidencies to local leaders. A network of family history centers and family history service centers (both discussed below) provide the technical assistance and resources patrons need to accomplish their family history work.

Branch Libraries/Family History Centers

In 1964 the Department began to establish branch libraries (later called family history centers)⁴¹ at Church facilities in the United States and Canada. Eventually, other centers were established internationally. At the local centers, Church members had access to the Family History Department's microfilms. During 1977-80 the Department focused its resources on expanding the stake record extraction program. After that period, providing local centers with as many services as their circumstances permitted

was emphasized in order to facilitate research locally. As a result of these efforts, in 1994 over 2,000 centers ordered approximately 75,000 microfilm rolls per month.⁴²

Establishing and operating a center involved a number of problems that are illustrated by the history of the South Jordan Stake Genealogical Library. Established in 1976, the South Jordan center was the first in the Salt Lake Valley and was one of the first centers belonging to an individual stake in Utah. Local family historians struggled to acquire facilities in a building already used to the maximum, as well as to find competent staff members. The facilities were Spartan—the library was located in a classroom next to the regular meetinghouse library, and the classroom continued to be used for other Church programs. Microfilm readers and books were stored in cabinets which were locked when the center was not open so the room could be used by the three wards meeting in the building.

Marian Egbert, the librarian, had two assistants. One ordered the films, handled the finances, and took care of the microfilm reader. The other was in charge of the staff and gave individual assistance to patrons. The center also had a training supervisor, who held monthly meetings with the staff. Sixteen Church members, recommended by their bishops as among the most qualified and called by a member of the stake high council, worked three-hour shifts. The center was open from 9 A.M. to 9 P.M. on Fridays and 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. on Saturdays, though Egbert hoped to have longer hours when she could get a larger staff. The center could not advertise its services; it could not even have a sign on the door or a telephone. People learned about it from Church meeting talks and by word of mouth.⁴³

Notwithstanding these and other obstacles, local centers have become a major component of the family history program of the Church. By 1977 about 50 percent of those using the central collection were accessing it from family history centers. By 1992 this figure had risen to 75 percent, with approximately 2,500,000 patrons using the centers in comparison to 800,000 using the Family History Library. The average center was open an average of thirty-two hours and had thirty-five visitors per week. The fact that these were primarily volunteer operations is underscored by the average annual local budget allocation of \$567 per center.⁴⁴

Efforts to decentralize and simplify family history programs in 1978 had a significant impact on Department support for family history centers. Jurisdiction for the centers was transferred from the Department to local Church leaders.⁴⁵ No longer extensions of the Department, they did not receive direct guidance from Salt Lake City. During this period, the Department also began promoting the concept of using the center facilities for extraction rather than research. Indeed, in late 1978, the Department decided that approval for new centers would be granted for extraction projects only.⁴⁶ The Department even sought to reduce circulation support in 1979, when it advised centers to direct orders for U.S. census films to Federal Regional Archive Centers.⁴⁷

When the policy of giving priority to extraction was reversed in 1980, the research role of the centers was revived, and the Department began to improve support for them. David Mayfield, the director of the Department's library system, played a prominent role in providing resources for the centers. He obtained approval for distributing the microfiche version of the newly automated library catalog to the local centers. He appointed a branch library coordinator in 1981. In December, the coordinator published the first issue of a newsletter—*Branch Genealogical Libraries Memorandum* (later *Family History Centers Memorandum*)—to keep the centers advised of products and services they could receive.⁴⁸ In March 1982, prints of U.S. census films, restricted from circulation only three years earlier, were sent to large centers in Provo, Ogden, Mesa, and Los Angeles so that these films did not have to be ordered from Salt Lake City each time they were requested by a patron. In January 1983, a new *Branch Genealogical Library Operational Manual* was published. Beginning that year and lasting for the next four years, the library offered a semiannual introductory course in Salt Lake City for center staff. Many people responded, traveling to Salt Lake City at their own expense. In August 1984, over two hundred attended. In another support effort, the Department offered centers, at nominal cost, major research tools such as the International Genealogical Index (6,700 microfiche), the Accelerated Indexing Systems data base of U.S. census records (2,500 microfiche), and a selection of frequently used reference books (2,400 microfiche).⁴⁹

With increased support from the Department, the number of centers began to grow. In October 1982, the 400th center was opened in Lake Oswego, Oregon, representing an increase of only 200 centers during the previous six years. During the next six years, this growth quadrupled—800 centers were added, making a total of 1,200. Approximately 25 percent of these centers were established outside the United States. In December 1994, 2,278 centers were in operation—39 percent of them outside the United States (U.S. and Canada 1,397,881 elsewhere).⁵⁰

Over time, several centers in areas where there were temples or large concentrations of Church members developed extensive facilities. These included Mesa, Arizona; Idaho Falls and Rexburg (Ricks College) in Idaho; Ogden and Provo (Brigham Young University) in Utah; and Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Diego in California.

In 1985, the Department recognized that giving these large centers additional resources would greatly expand service to many members at minimum cost. Designated as multistake centers, they were given additional films, reference works, and computers.⁵¹ In time a new center was built in Mesa, and the facilities in Oakland and Idaho Falls were remodeled. Additional multistake centers were established in Orange, California, and in Boise, Idaho.⁵² With the additional material and with extended hours of service, these centers greatly increased the ability of the Society to serve Church members in their own areas.

Even though the centers were located in Church facilities, they were open to the family history community at large. Many people not affiliated with the Church made use of the research facilities in the centers. In some areas, as many as 80 percent of the patrons were not members of the LDS Church.⁵³ In return for the use of the facilities, they were asked to contribute copies of the results of their research to the Family History Library collection or to Ancestral File. Thus, the centers served as a point of cooperation between the Church and the many family history researchers outside the Church.

One of the unanticipated developments in the growth of the family history center network was the flourishing of centers at some penal institutions. The program, requested by inmates, involved any prisoners who found family history research to be

a productive and fulfilling use of their time. For some it was therapeutic, helping them to reestablish family ties which had been severed by the events that led them to prison.⁵⁴

Family history centers continue to make the huge collection amassed in Salt Lake City available throughout the world. However, they are not the only agents for decentralizing Department services. In addition, the Department has established family history service centers with a broader assignment to promote all family history programs in various areas of the Church.

Family History Service Centers

Establishment of service centers came in response to the need for decentralizing names processing. President Spencer W. Kimball explained the underlying concept in the Regional Representatives Seminar held September 30, 1976:

Saints in every temple district must be taught to provide their own names. Japanese people should provide the names for their own Tokyo temple. South American people should provide the names for their own Sao Paulo temple. Likewise, the Mexico and Seattle and in every other established area. If they do so, then they will save their own dead. If they do not, and depend on Salt Lake City to send names from, they do not save their own dead, but instead work on other people's ancestry.⁵⁵

Name extraction and names clearance would be performed at a temple service center (renamed Genealogical Service Center in 1981 and Family History Service Center in 1990) in the temple district where the temple ordinances were to be performed.

The first service center, supervised by Octaviano Tenorio, was established in Mexico City in January 1977.⁵⁶ Service centers were opened in Sao Paulo and Tokyo during 1978. New temples were being built in these cities, and the centers prepared for the opening of these temples by receiving names from members. Until the release of TempleReady in 1991, names for immediate family members were processed locally, while names for earlier generations were most often sent to Salt Lake City for duplication checking.

Along with names processing, film ordering also began to be decentralized in the late 1970s. Film circulation to countries

other than the U.S. was hampered by shipping delays and insupportable import costs. Supplying a print sometimes cost more than making it in the first place. The solution to such problems came from Church leaders in Australia, who established a microfilm ordering center in 1973. For circulation to local family history centers, the ordering center obtained via long-term loans film prints of the most significant sources microfilmed in that area.⁵⁷ Other ordering centers were established in other countries during the next decade.

In 1980 the Department assumed responsibility for ordering centers and made them part of the genealogical service centers which it continued to establish. By the end of 1983, service centers were functioning in Mexico, Japan, Brazil, Great Britain, Australia, Germany, New Zealand, Tonga, Tahiti, Chile, and Samoa. In addition to names processing and microfilm ordering, the centers began to provide services such as reference assistance, equipment purchases, and photoduplication. More importantly, they began to train newly called family history center directors and priesthood leaders. Thus the service centers performed the essential functions of the Department for the areas in which they were established. Decentralization went one step further in 1985, when service centers were placed under the direct administration of Area Presidencies. The Department continued to help in an advisory capacity.⁵⁸

At some centers, the film collection became substantial. In 1994 there were 124,023 films in Friedrichsdorf, Germany; 74,000 in Mexico City, Mexico; 74,000 in Sydney, Australia; 53,206 in Solihull, Great Britain; 59,704 in Auckland, New Zealand; and 48,100 films in Stockholm, Sweden. In addition, the service centers absorbed new functions such as Family Record Extraction and the implementation of FamilySearch. To reflect the expanding services of the centers, the name was changed in 1990 to family history service centers.⁵⁹ By that date, nineteen centers served 495 family history centers in fifty-five countries, territories, or colonies.⁶⁰ With the exception of acquisitions and cataloging, these centers performed all of the functions of the parent organization, substantially reducing reliance on resources in Salt Lake City.

Film Circulation

The demand for film circulation rose inexorably from 1975 to 1994. The Department was not prepared for the unexpected pressure. In time it took measures to reduce the long delay between the time a film was ordered and its arrival at a center.

The system for loaning films and other records to branch libraries was computerized in 1975, a change which greatly facilitated the circulation process. Since the films were more easily tracked by a computer, they could go to a branch library for a regular loan period of one month, for an extended period of six months, or for an indefinite loan if many users were expected to need the film over a long period of time. The six-month and indefinite loans were especially useful for outlying areas, such as Australia.

In March 1976, films circulated numbered 22,137, a 45 percent increase from March 1975. The following spring, circulation increased "far beyond . . . expectations" immediately after the U.S. broadcast of the television miniseries "Roots."⁶¹ In 1978 circulation was double the 1975 figures. Additional staff members—one in 1976, eight in 1977, and fifteen in 1978—were employed to meet the demand. Still, the delay between film request and receipt lagged by as much as two to three months.⁶²

To pay for the actual costs involved in circulating a film, in 1979 the Department raised the cost for a two-week loan from \$.50 to \$2.00, and a six-month loan from \$2.00 to \$3.00. This measure temporarily decreased demand by 50 percent.⁶³ However, the increase in the number of centers during the early 1980s increased circulation 80 percent—from 150,000 rolls per year in 1980 to 272,000 per year by 1984.⁶⁴ But the time lag involved in receiving ordered film continued, constituting the "single most dissatisfying" problem in local centers.⁶⁵

The problem was finally resolved in 1987. Additional staff members were hired; the circulation function was changed from a single eight-hour shift to an around-the-clock, three-shift schedule; direct shipment from the vault via UPS was instituted; a new computer-based system known as the Microfilm Production Monitoring System was implemented to track film through all stages of

production and handling; and circulation fees were raised again. The circulation lag dropped from four weeks to four days in some centers.⁶⁶ Other improvements followed as technology permitted. In 1989 orders could be faxed. Ordering by modem began to be implemented in 1993. By 1994 films were being circulated at the rate of 900,000 orders per year, or an average of about 3,500 a day.⁶⁷

Publications/Videos

Circulating sources was not the only way the Department provided assistance to a worldwide audience; it also pursued a vigorous program of publication. In December 1976, the Department stopped sending representatives to stake family history seminars, making it increasingly important to publish information for distribution to the rapidly growing Church membership. The Department decided to produce a basic family history doctrine and research text for use in the Church's Sunday Schools. During 1977 two Department staff members, Glen Harris and Ed Platt, wrote *From You to Your Ancestors*. Other staff members worked on sixteen foreign language adaptations of the manual. In March 1978, 150,000 copies of the first English edition came off the press. The text was also published in other languages. By 1982, 518,000 copies had been sold.⁶⁸ *From You to Your Ancestors* served as the basic Sunday School genealogical manual for a decade.

To assist in the research process, the Department compiled research papers. Some of these short informational papers described sources and dates of material available in each country, and others dealt with a wide variety of genealogical topics such as paleography, emigration, research standards, and Department files and services. In July 1977, the Department published a list of 138 research papers.

In 1978 the Department publication program as well as all other Church publications came under the close scrutiny of Church leaders. They initiated a policy that Church publications be kept to a minimum, primarily in view of the increasing number of new members with insufficient background or literacy to read the huge amount of official Church material that had accumulated over the years. The watchwords were simplification and reduction.

This policy mitigated against specialized publications that attempted to clarify the complexities of family history research. As a result of the new guidelines, the publication of research papers ceased, but only temporarily.

In the 1980s, a new technology—videotape—came of age. In October 1982, the Church dropped 16 mm film in favor of videocassettes for the distribution of visual materials.⁶⁹ The Church soon established an Audio-visual Committee to control the production and distribution of videotapes. Working through this committee, the Department produced videos between 1985 and 1987 on how to use family history centers, how to research U.S. census records, and how to use the Family History Library catalog (available at family history centers).

After the focus on extraction shifted in the 1980s, the Department began to reemphasize the importance of individuals submitting names of their own ancestors. Three small manuals were developed over a three-year period and published in 1987 and 1988—one member guide, *Come unto Christ through Temple Ordinances and Covenants*, and two handbooks for local family history consultants, *Submitting Names for Temple Ordinances* and *Providing Temple Ordinances for Our Ancestors*. These manuals emphasized the identification of ancestors in recent generations rather than the distant past, an approach appropriate to the large number of new members who could readily identify ancestry in the recent past. This message also served as a reminder to older members to double-check their more recent ancestry to make sure that the temple work was complete. These publications introduced new forms and procedures, simplified to make a complex task as easy as possible. These aids included a basic task list for name submission, a letter-size family group sheet for name submission, a letter-size pedigree chart, and an ordinance pedigree chart that provided spaces to mark off when ordinances had been completed for all direct-line ancestors in the first eight generations.⁷⁰

Along with new manuals, the Department obtained permission to distribute other new research aids. Reaffirming the need to support family history research with some degree of detailed information and guidance, in 1989 the Department published research outlines for each of the fifty states in the United States. Four years

in process, these outlines distilled masses of information into digestible pieces to give family history center staff members, many of whom had limited genealogical experience, the information essential in aiding the novice researcher.⁷¹ At the same time, some of the research papers published in the previous decade were reissued in new editions. Unlike many Church publications, these aids were intended for a specific rather than a general audience and were published in limited editions.

Further simplification and reduction occurred in 1992 and 1993, when the Church replaced the 1987 booklets with two new handbooks—one for leaders, *Temple and Family History Leadership Handbook*, and one for members, *A Member's Guide to Temple and Family History Work*. The First Presidency authorized distribution of the latter manual to the homes of every Church member.⁷² These manuals identified the doctrinal basis of family history work and clearly identified leader and member responsibilities. The handbooks also explained ways in which automation had provided new tools to help members meet their family history responsibilities. Translations of these works are being produced to extend the information to members of the Church in many countries.

Name Submission

One of the primary goals of the Department has always been to assist Church members in obtaining and submitting names for temple work. Over the years, it has developed a number of name submission policies with the objective of reducing duplicate ordinance work. With the emphasis on simplification after 1975, however, the intricacies of name submission were gradually eliminated.

Name submission in the late 1970s was decreasing. Processing took four to six months for a name to be cleared for temple ordinances and returned to the submitter.⁷³ This lengthy process discouraged many members from submitting names. The de-emphasis of extended research during 1978 to 1979 also had a negative impact on name submissions, which dropped by approximately 20 percent during those years. With the renewed emphasis on extended research, name submission gradually increased from 1980 to 1987. Then the cumulative effects of family history

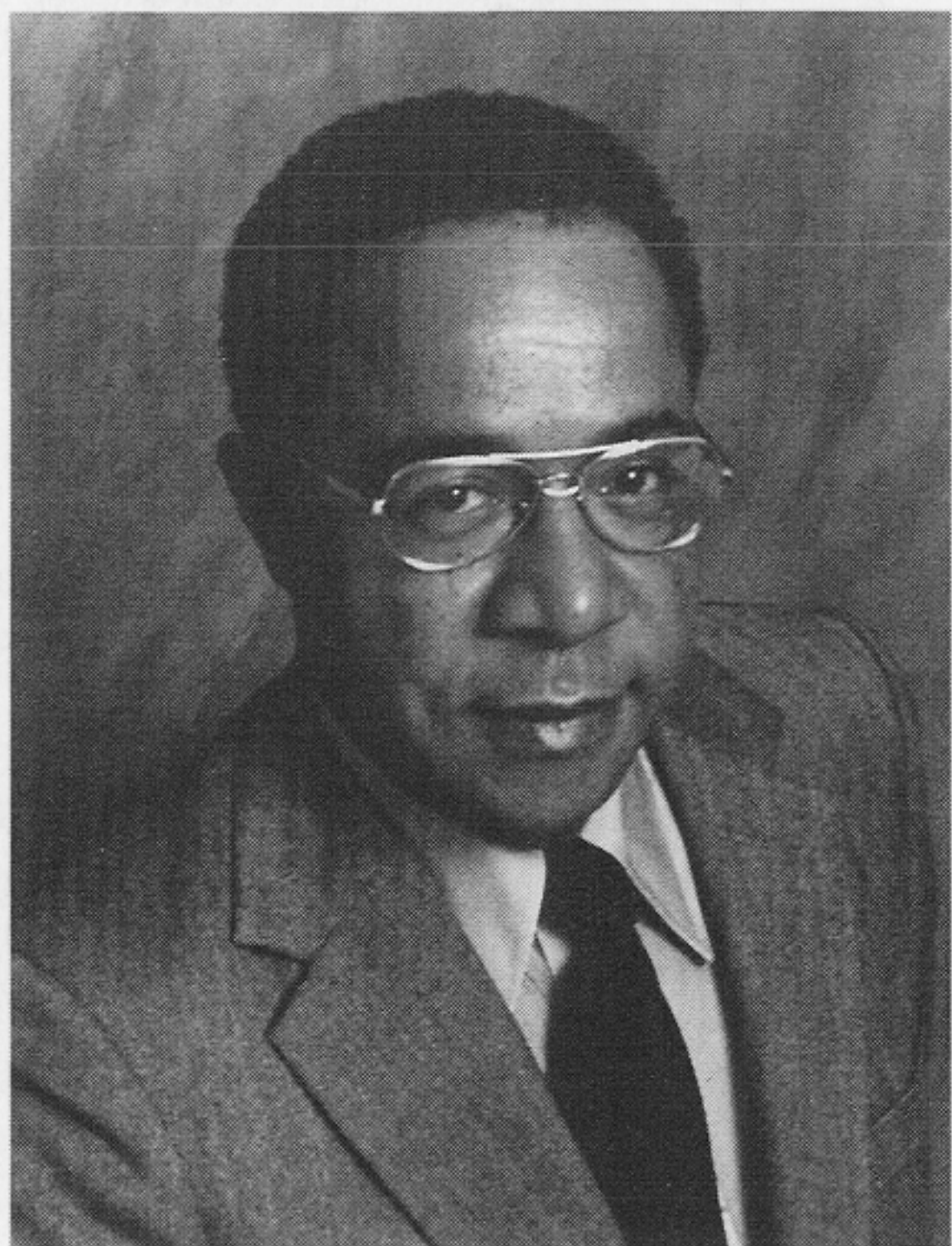
automation efforts introduced during the 1980s began to bear fruit. Beginning in 1987, name submission increased precipitously. By 1990, 3.2 million names were being submitted annually as compared to approximately 700,000 in 1980. These names constituted 57 percent of those needed in the temples.⁷⁴ In 1993, 70 percent of the temple names were submitted by members.⁷⁵ This trend continues as family files in many temples are overwhelmed by a dramatic increase of members doing temple work for their own ancestors.

Submission rules were liberalized throughout this period. In November 1981, relationship restrictions on name submission were eliminated.⁷⁶ Previously, members were restricted to submitting only on their direct lines; now they could submit names regardless of relationship. The main exception was the rule of privacy, which required that work done for those born or married within the last ninety-five years be restricted to one's own relatives. In 1987 submission policies permitted the clearance of people with incomplete names, estimated dates, and place of birth or marriage unknown; this change meant that virtually any person known to have lived could be cleared for ordinance work. Even more dramatically, the role of clearing submitted names, absorbed by the Society in 1927 with the introduction of the Temple Index Bureau, was returned to Church members in the United States and Canada with the implementation of TempleReady in 1993—thereby fulfilling one of the long-range goals established in 1976.

Cooperation with the Genealogical Community

To promote family history work in general, the Department has sought the cooperation of many organizations outside the Church. This cooperation was aided by the widespread and growing popularity of genealogy as a favorite pastime.

Just after the Society became a Department in 1975, *Roots* by Alex Haley was published. The book was followed by numerous magazine and newspaper articles on genealogy, many of which referred to LDS genealogical efforts. These articles mentioned that the Church had the largest genealogical library in the world as



Alex Haley, 1980, author of *Roots*, popularized the cultural importance and traditions of genealogy. Haley credited the Society for its assistance in his research and spoke at the 1980 World Conference on Records.

well as a widespread system of family history centers.⁷⁷ However, genealogy still remained an obscure activity to the general public until the enormously successful television broadcast, of a miniseries based on Haley's

book, in January 1977. When Alex Haley appeared on the "Tonight Show" with Johnny Carson, he shared some of the limelight with the Department by discussing its genealogical resources and projects. Immediately, news agencies flooded the Department with inquiries and requests for interviews. In the months that followed, correspondence to the library doubled, on one day peaking at 3,700 pieces of mail. The library was flooded with an average of 3,500 visitors daily during the summer of 1977, up from a high of 2,000 per day in the previous year. The *Church News* referred to the widespread interest as an "international genealogy mania."⁷⁸ After public attention cooled, a new host of genealogical enthusiasts remained, desiring to take advantage of the resources the Department had been accumulating for over eighty years.

In its continued effort to reach a worldwide audience, the Department hosted a second World Conference on Records in 1980. The first conference in 1969 had focused on the preservation of sources used in genealogy. The second highlighted the use of those sources to compile family pedigrees and histories. When the Conference convened 12 August 1980, approximately 11,500 participants representing thirty nations were present.⁷⁹ A full range of family history topics was treated in nearly three hundred presentations by experts from around the world. The central theme of the presentations was "Preserving Our Heritage," meaning the

heritage of families. The stylized figure of a family served as the logo of the conference. At the second general assembly, Alex Haley highlighted this theme with his address, "Family: A Humanizing Force." Lord Teviot, a British genealogist, summarized his feelings about the conference in these words: "Absolutely marvelous. There isn't another genealogical or personal or family history conference in the world that can compare with the World Conference on Records."⁸⁰ While the first conference eleven years earlier had introduced the Department to the world, the second conference cemented its leadership role in promoting family history research in the international community.

To further its cooperative efforts with organizations outside the Church, the Department in 1976 decided to seek membership in the International Council on Archives. This body serves as the forum for coordinating worldwide archival activities. As an institution with extensive microfilming experience, the Department could offer training to nations just getting started in the process. The Department hoped that countries would establish record-preservation programs and share the filming burden, allowing the Department to purchase the microfilms it needed.⁸¹ In the meantime, membership in the council promised the benefit of increased international visibility and the accompanying potential of extending the Department's microfilming project into new countries where a local record-preservation program was not imminent.

Prior to the Department's decision to join the international council, Dennis Neuenschwander, then the Department's acquisitions agent for Eastern Europe, had attended the 1975 roundtable of the council in Kiev. As the representative of a private institution in a council of nations, he was regarded with suspicion and distrust. The Department sent a large delegation of twelve representatives in distinctive blue suits to the 1976 congress of the council (held every fourth year, while roundtables are held in intervening years) in Washington, D.C., to staff a display about the Department and to answer questions about its goals and purposes. This effort began a process of making the Department's purpose and objectives clear to the rest of the genealogical world. As a result of their participation in the congress, department employees were appointed to positions on the automation and micrographics

committees of the Council. The Department hosted another display at the 1980 congress held in London. In December 1980, Elder Neuenschwander was able to write, "From bare tolerance we now enjoy near full fellowship."⁸²

In the years that followed, the Department continued to make important contributions to the Council. In 1984 the Department completed a microfilming manual entitled *A Guide to Micrographics* that was later used as the basis for the Council's new manual. Concurrently, microfilmmers from around the world were trained by Department staff. In 1984, for example, trainees included operators from South America, the Middle East, and Asia. Membership was likewise beneficial to the Department. Contact with international archivists permitted the Department to initiate filming programs in countries such as Sri Lanka, India, and East Germany. In the 1988 and 1992 congresses, the Department demonstrated its automated databases of genealogical information in an effort to show the value of compiling and sharing this data worldwide.

By the mid-1970s, the Department was becoming increasingly visible to many people outside the Church who had many different kinds of interests. The *Los Angeles Times* carried a highly laudatory article, calling the collection a "genealogical gold mine."⁸³ Academicians in a variety of fields found the data available through the Department to be extremely useful in their research. In 1975, for example, Robert W. Fogel, a well-known American economic historian, working in the exacting field of cliometrics (quantitative history), reported on how he suddenly discovered what the Department was doing:

The biggest breakthrough in our effort to collect a representative sample took place in Atlanta. There we learnt that the court records of every county in Georgia were available on microfilms at the state archives. Upon examining some of the reels we made the further discovery that they had been donated by the Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, which was engaged in a Southwide microfilming project. And so it was that we learnt that the Mormons, for religious reasons, had photographed and stored in their archives near Salt Lake City microfilms of the very records that were so critical to us. With the assistance of Larry Wimmer and Clayne Pope, two faculty members of the Department of Economics at Brigham Young University, we established a team of

students that is still at work in Utah and which has been able to retrieve data for scores of counties throughout the South at quite moderate cost.⁸⁴

The desire of the Department to cooperate with governments, other organizations, and responsible scholars was featured by Ted F. Powell in an article published in *The American Archivist* in 1976:

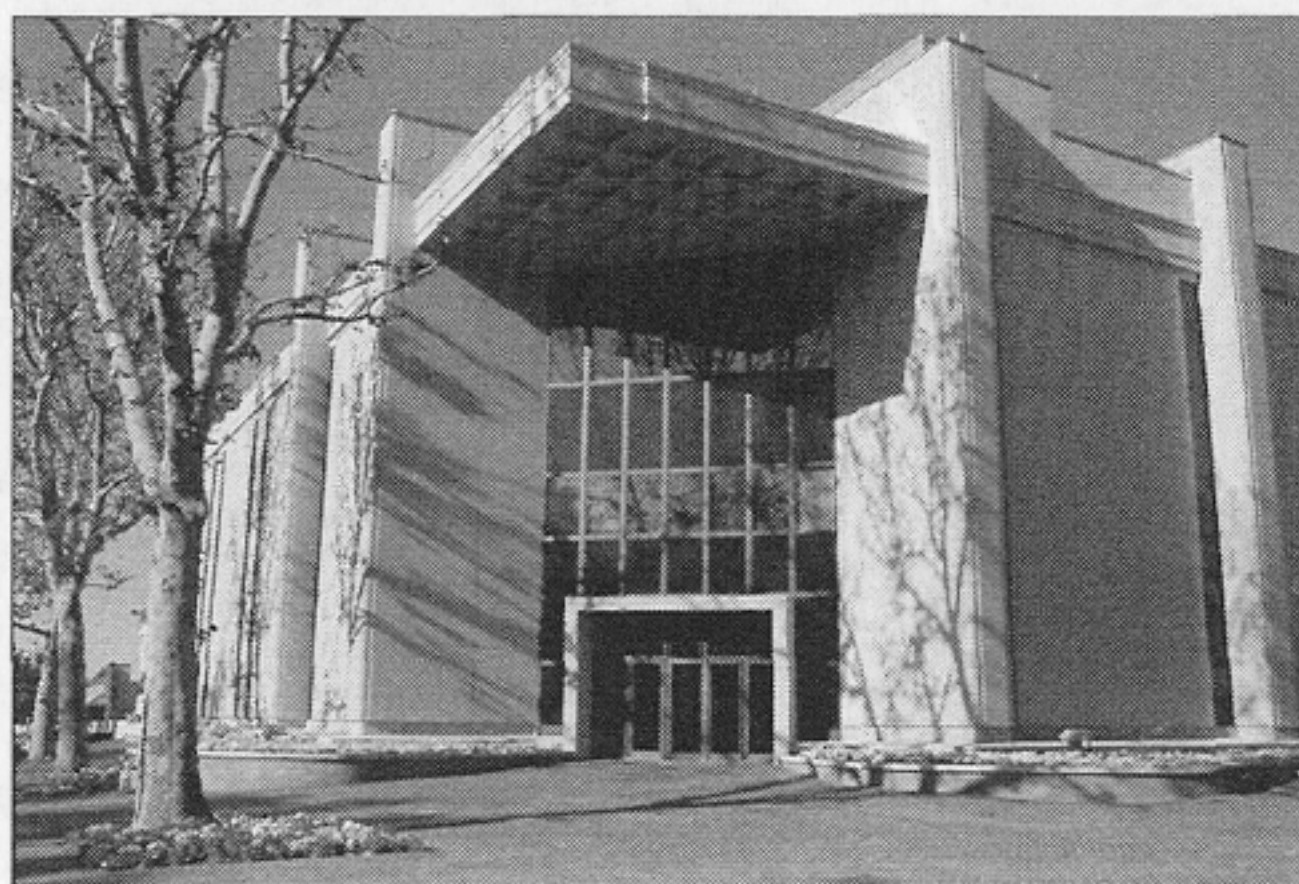
At present the society's collections are being used for study sponsored jointly by the American Cancer Society, the University of Utah, and the LDS Hospital endeavoring to determine whether cancer is hereditary and, if so, how we can predict it and warn living family members of the danger. The Yale University Medical School has spent many years in proving that twinning is based on heredity.

The list of master's and doctor's candidates using our records for thesis preparation is too long to report. Their disciplines include anthropology, economic history, demography, population movement, and medieval family reconstitution. One scholar, who was trying to determine the economic status of typical English families during Shakespeare's time, was able to accomplish his task in less than a month in Salt Lake City, whereas it would have taken a year and a half to two years in England. The probates and wills are cataloged and readily available, without his having to wait or travel from shire to shire in order to gather information and record on his own.⁸⁵

Powell concluded with a plea for continuing cooperation in the process of preserving the past: "We hope to continue to help archivists, government officials, and record custodians and preserve the irreplaceable records. . . . Through cooperation we can save the past for the future."⁸⁶

The Department has been involved in the activities of many other genealogical societies. Department members have contributed substantially to the work of the National Genealogical Society; some members have been granted status as fellows of that institution. In an effort to keep other genealogical societies and genealogical periodicals informed of its activities and programs, the Department began to publish a newsletter, *News of the Family History Library*, in August 1989. The newsletter officially announces many of the Department's products and policies. Published quarterly, it is mailed to many genealogical and family history organizations in the United States. At the beginning of its second century, the Department is also developing initiatives to work closely with organizations that collect lineage-linked data, a primary result of family history research.⁸⁷

Brigham Young University assisted the Department in its mission by introducing family history programs to students who could then serve as the future family history leaders in local church units. The Religion 261 course, Introduction to Family History, was revamped between 1987 and 1990 to accomplish this purpose. Students taking the course are involved in the extraction program and are introduced to FamilySearch at a newly completed computer lab in the Joseph Smith Building at BYU. It has become a popular course. In 1987, 250 students took the course each semester, and by 1993 this number had risen to an average of 900 students per semester. A new syllabus was introduced in January 1994, the result of a mutual effort of BYU and the Department. The new course was designed with the intent of motivating students to pursue family history work for a lifetime and not just for the duration of a semester.⁸⁸



Genealogical Society Library, 1985, at 35 N. West Temple, Salt Lake City, was renamed the Family History Library in 1987.

Supporting the Work

Over the past two decades, the Department has initiated several significant changes to better support its worldwide programs. Service missionaries have enabled the Salt Lake City headquarters to expand services without greatly increasing expenses, and long-range planning has focused Department efforts. A new library and an automated database-searching facility have been built to provide better and more complete assistance to the genealogical community at large. While Department services have grown significantly, the increased responsibility has been met without major increases in staffing (approximately 700–750 staff positions were added over 1975–94).

In 1977 the Department began to discuss using volunteers to aid in its acquisitions program. The first effort, put into effect that year, was to have these volunteers help locate and analyze genealogical sources.⁸⁹ Eventually, however, they were made responsible for negotiating, microfilming, and teaching local members and priesthood leaders about genealogy. In 1980 the Department decided to have couple missionaries (that is, married couples called to full-time missionary service) rather than volunteers perform this work.⁹⁰ In 1981 sixteen missionary couples were serving in such diverse locations as Sri Lanka, India, Germany, Australia, Chile, Israel, New Zealand, and the United States. As the decade progressed, the functions performed by missionaries were expanded to include working in family history centers and family history service centers and participating in extraction projects. These couples usually served for eighteen months. In 1993 there were 400 family history missionaries serving outside Salt Lake City.⁹¹

At Department headquarters, meanwhile, part-time volunteers had served for many years, primarily on indexing projects. In October 1977, Benjamin L. Bowring was appointed to preside over the volunteers. He expanded the role of the volunteers the following year, making them fully responsible for a guide service created to provide new visitors an introduction to the library.⁹² In 1981 an average of 351 volunteers served in the library, donating 103,484 hours of service.⁹³

In 1981 the use of full-time Church service personnel was initiated at headquarters, starting with seven couples. Unlike the volunteer workers, Church service couples came not only from the local area, but from throughout the United States. Beginning in October 1983, the use of full-time Church service personnel was expanded into most operations of the Department.⁹⁴ Concurrently, the role of part-time volunteers was expanded to include all the functions performed by those in full-time service. By 1989 these groups were contributing over a million hours of service annually to the central operations of the Department.⁹⁵

At first, Church service personnel and part-time volunteers all worked under the Department's Church Service Organization Presidency. In 1990, however, both the full- and part-time volunteers were called as family history missionaries and were organized

in much the same way as those on a Church proselyting mission. During 1993 an average of 800 family history missionaries (350-400 full-time) served at Church headquarters.⁹⁶ What was once only an adjunct service had become a major part of the Department's work, with the missionaries and employees serving together as equal partners.

Family History Library/FamilySearch Center

The research collection housed in the Family History Library in Salt Lake City has consistently attracted thousands of people daily from all corners of the globe. The average number of visitors in March and April 1975 was 1,662 per day. The number peaked during 1977, in the wake of the *Roots* phenomenon, at an average attendance of 2,580 visitors per day.⁹⁷ By 1992 the count was consistently equaling the 1977 high, with over 2,500 people entering library doors daily.⁹⁸ This number reflects both the religiously motivated activity of Church members and the continuing popularity of genealogy as an avocation.

As elsewhere in the library world, properly serving the growing patronage has been a continuing problem. In 1976 library hours, which were from 8 A.M. to 9 P.M., were extended so the library was open from 7:30 A.M. to 10 P.M.⁹⁹ That same year, library staff began to teach classes to provide the necessary background for effective use of genealogical sources.¹⁰⁰ In 1977 patrons were asked to refile their own films, leaving the staff with more time to do other important things.¹⁰¹ In addition to walk-in users, the library received thousands of requests for information by mail each month. Reference consultants answered these requests along with fulfilling their other duties. In July 1980, a correspondence section was organized from existing staff, who responded to the mail full-time, providing answers as complete as staff time would permit. In 1993 this unit answered 2,000 research requests each month as well as an additional 3,000 photocopy requests.¹⁰²

At the 1980 World Conference on Records, President Spencer W. Kimball announced that a new library would be built to house the Department's collection. Groundbreaking occurred in May 1983. The building was dedicated two and one-half years later, in October

1985. The \$8.5 million facility encompasses 136,000 square feet and at that time held 250 more patron seats than the old facility. Facilities to provide book and microfilm copies were also expanded. In the words of the library director, David Mayfield, the new library is "undoubtedly the largest, most modern and best-equipped genealogical library in the world."¹⁰³

In 1993 a new facility dedicated to promoting family history work was finished. This new facility was the FamilySearch Center in the newly renovated Joseph Smith Memorial Building (formerly the Hotel Utah). At the heart of the center are 133 individual FamilySearch workstations, each equipped with a computer. Additionally, the facility houses 15,000 archive binders containing compiled genealogies received by the Department prior to automation.¹⁰⁴ In the year since the opening, an average of two out of three patrons have found data on their families in the center's automated files. The center hosts 1,500 to 2,000 visitors per day.¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

With an eye to helping more members become actively involved in providing ordinances for their ancestors, the Family History Department has decentralized and simplified many of its programs in response to the needs of a growing Church. Another benefit realized by the many who have been involved in this work was noted by Elder Richard G. Scott in 1987:

There is substantial refining, spiritual activity associated with identifying your ancestors. It does something to you. It makes of you a more Christ-like person. . . . We must not simply speak of all the dead who must be redeemed, but we must speak of the work of helping ourselves become the kind of people we need to become to be worthy to receive the Savior.¹⁰⁶

The efforts of individuals to advance the cause of family history have been enhanced by the Department for a hundred years. It intends to continue this role in the future. The envisioned partnership between the Department and its patrons may be underpinned by a religious motive, but the information it holds can be shared by all and enjoyed for a variety of purposes. Thus, the Department offers its facilities and holdings to the world and hopes mutual benefits will occur from the exchange of ideas and information.

NOTES

¹Spencer W. Kimball, "A Report of My Stewardship," *Ensign* 11 (May 1981): 5.

²George Fudge, oral history interview by Bruce Blumell, 1977, James Moyle Oral History Program (hereafter cited as JMOHP), Archives Division, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives), 68; Theodore M. Burton, oral history interview by Bruce Blumell, 1977, JMOHP, 38.

³Thomas Daniels, oral history interview by James B. Allen, 1977, JMOHP, 2-3; *Church News*, 27 December 1975; Boyd K. Packer, transcript of talk given in a meeting with Genealogical Department employees, 18 November 1975, Family History Department of the Church (hereafter cited as FHD), 3-4 (hereafter cited as Packer, meeting with Genealogical Dept.).

⁴Henry Christiansen files, 1975, FHD.

⁵Henry Christiansen, oral history interview by Bruce Blumell, 1977, JMOHP, 72.

⁶Packer, meeting with Genealogical Dept., 12.

⁷Daniels, interview, 3-7.

⁸Fudge, interview, 64-65; *Church News*, 27 December 1975.

⁹Arlene Eakle, personal interview by Jessie Embry, 17 January 1977; Daniels, interview, 14-15; Frank Smith, interview by Bruce Blumell, 1976, typescript, JMOHP, 45.

¹⁰Some information not specifically documented in this and later sections is based on the personal knowledge of Kahlile Mehr, who had discussions with various Genealogical Society administrators over time, who was personally involved in some of the events and programs discussed, and who has studied the various internal reports of the Department that are compiled for official use only.

¹¹Management Meeting Minutes, 19 March 1974, FHD.

¹²Packer, meeting with Genealogical Dept., 4-5.

¹³Packer, meeting with Genealogical Dept., 7.

¹⁴Managing Director's Minutes, 23 December 1976.

¹⁵Fudge, interview, 53-54.

¹⁶Lynne Hollstein, "New Program Speeds Temple Work," *Church News*, 22 April 1978, 3.

¹⁷Historical Report, a monthly report compiled for use in the Department, March 1978, FHD.

¹⁸"Our Genealogical Responsibility," attached to Managing Director's Minutes, 24 April 1978, FHD, typescript, 2-4.

¹⁹J. Thomas Fyans, "Ours Is a Shared Ancestry," *Ensign* 8 (November 1978): 28.

²⁰Ezra Taft Benson, "Worthy of All Acceptation," *Ensign* 8 (November 1978): 30.

²¹Council of the Twelve to the Presidents of the First Quorum of the Seventy, 15 November 1979, copy in the possession of Kahlile Mehr.

²²Extract from minutes of the meeting of the Council of the Twelve with the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, 26 March 1980, copy in the possession of Kahlile Mehr.

²³Spencer W. Kimball, "No Unhallowed Hand Can Stop the Work," *Ensign* 10 (May 1980): 5.

²⁴A. Theodore Tuttle, "Eternal Links That Bind," *Ensign* 10 (May 1980): 40.

²⁵Benson, "Worthy of All Acceptation," 30.

²⁶Council of the Twelve to All Stake, Mission, and District Presidents, Bishops and Branch Presidents in the United States and Canada, 21 June 1979, LDS Church Archives. This letter was intended for reading in all sacrament meetings.

²⁷Ezra Taft Benson, 9 July 1981, cited by David Ottesen, "Priesthood Family History Program," 23, document in possession of Kahlile Mehr.

²⁸Management Meeting Minutes, 26 July 1982.

²⁹*Memorandum*, July 1987, FHD.

³⁰Theodore Burton to George Durrant, 11 January 1977, attached to Managing Director's Minutes, 13 January 1977, FHD.

³¹*Memorandum*, August 1987, FHD.

³²The other committees were Melchizedek Priesthood, Missionary, and Correlation.

³³*Memorandum*, July 1985, FHD.

³⁴Managing Director's Minutes, 18 February 1986.

³⁵Planning Meeting Minutes, 6 March 1990, FHD.

³⁶Planning Meeting Minutes, 24 May 1991.

³⁷Leadership Council Minutes, 23 March 1992, FHD.

³⁸Coordination Meeting Minutes, 14 September 1992, FHD.

³⁹Globalization Team Minutes, 3 May 1993, 5, FHD.

⁴⁰Globalization Team Minutes, 3 May 1993, 4.

⁴¹See chapter 5 for a discussion of branch libraries. The name was changed in 1987 in connection with renaming the Genealogical Department to the Family History Department.

⁴²"Family History Center Microfilm Circulation, 1978-1994," internal FHD document, typescript in possession of Kahlile Mehr.

⁴³Bradley Stewart, personal interview by Jessie Embry, 22 February 1977; Fudge, interview, 50-51.

⁴⁴*Family History Centers Memorandum*, May 1994, FHD.

⁴⁵Management Meeting Minutes, 24 April 1978.

⁴⁶Management Meeting Minutes, 13 November 1978.

⁴⁷Historical Report, September 1979, FHD.

⁴⁸A newsletter known as the *Genealogical Observer* was published from 1964 to 1972.

⁴⁹Management Meeting Minutes, 27 June 1983.

⁵⁰"Total Number of Family History Centers" and "Family History Centers: 1964-1994," internal FHD documents in the possession of Kahlile Mehr.

⁵¹"Audit of Multi-Regional Branch Genealogical Libraries," 12 April 1985, attached to Managing Director's Minutes, 7 May 1985, FHD, typescript; also Glade Nelson, previously the director of library extension services, telephone interview by Kahlile Mehr, August 1994.

⁵²Multiregional centers were redesignated as multistake centers in 1991.

⁵³Genealogy Department to Joseph Wirthlin, Europe Area President, n.d., in Managing Director's Minutes, 9 April 1985, FHD.

⁵⁴Leadership Council Minutes, 17 December 1991.

⁵⁵Typescript excerpt in the possession of Kahlile Mehr.

⁵⁶Management Meeting Minutes, 13 December 1976.

⁵⁷"Microfilm Ordering Centers Background Detail," internal FHD document in the possession of Kahlile Mehr. "Genealogical Society—Quarterly Historical Report, Library Division, Quarter Ending 23 June 1973," internal FHD document in the possession of Kahlile Mehr.

⁵⁸"Genealogical Department 1983—Semi-annual Report (Prepared 18 August 1983)," internal FHD document in the possession of Kahlile Mehr; *Memorandum*, July 1985.

⁵⁹David Mayfield, telephone interview by Kahlile Mehr, 20 July 1993.

⁶⁰"Family History Service Centers: Serving the Member of the Church in International Areas," September 1990, internal FHD document, typescript, in the possession of Kahlile Mehr.

⁶¹Historical Report, March 1977, FHD.

⁶²Historical Report, September 1978.

⁶³Historical Report, June 1979.

⁶⁴*Memorandum*, May 1985, FHD.

⁶⁵"Audit of Multi-Regional Branch Genealogical Libraries," 12 April 1985, attached to Managing Directors Minutes, 7 May 1985, FHD, typescript.

⁶⁶*Memorandum*, October 1989, FHD.

⁶⁷"Family History Center Microfilm Circulation, 1978-1994," internal FHD document, typescript in possession of Kahlile Mehr.

⁶⁸Management Meeting Minutes, 22 November 1982.

⁶⁹Management Meeting Minutes, 25 October 1982.

⁷⁰*Memorandum*, January 1988, FHD.

⁷¹*Memorandum*, May 1989.

⁷²"Suggestions for Priesthood Leaders," attachment to First Presidency to General Authorities, Regional Representatives, Stake Mission and District Presidents, Bishops, and Branch Presidencies in Countries Where FamilySearch Is Authorized, 8 November 1993.

⁷³Management Meeting Minutes, 9 January 1978.

⁷⁴"Names Provided by Church Members," internal FHD document in the possession of Kahlile Mehr; "Temple and Family History Executive Council: Family History Quarterly Report, 15 May 1991," FHD; also, "Patron Endowment Entries Received," graph for 1980-88, internal FHD document in the possession of Kahlile Mehr.

⁷⁵Hartman Rector Jr. address given at employee meeting, 3 November 1993, FHD, notes in the possession of Kahlile Mehr.

⁷⁶Managing Director's Minutes, 2 November 1981.

⁷⁷*Memorandum*, December 1988, FHD.

⁷⁸"Thousands Research Daily in Library," *Church News*, 17 September 1977.

⁷⁹Of the registered participants, 38 percent were from outside Utah, and 4 percent were from outside the United States.

⁸⁰Thomas E. Daniels, "A Brief History of the 1980 World Conference on Records," typescript in the possession of James B. Allen, 28.

⁸¹Historical Report, May 1976, FHD.

⁸²Dennis Neuenschwander to Ted Powell, 2 December 1980, Management Meeting Minutes, 5 January 1981, FHD.

⁸³Charles Hillinger, "Cave Hides Genealogical Gold Mine," *Los Angeles Times*, 29 September 1976.

⁸⁴Robert William Fogel, "From the Marxist to the Mormons," *Literary Times Supplement*, 13 June 1975, 669.

⁸⁵Ted F. Powell, "Saving the Past for the Future—Tales of International Search and Cooperation," *American Archivist* 39 (July 1976): 314.

⁸⁶Powell, "Saving the Past," 317–18.

⁸⁷Coordination Meeting Minutes, 6 December 1993.

⁸⁸*Memorandum*, December 1993, FHD.

⁸⁹Ted F. Powell to Wm. Grant Bangerter, 26 April 1977, in Management Meeting Minutes, 25 March 1977, FHD.

⁹⁰"Statement of Understanding: Missionaries with Other Missionary Assignments," Management Meeting Minutes, 12 April 1980, FHD, typescript.

⁹¹Don Jessee, telephone interview by Kahlile Mehr, January 1994.

⁹²Management Meeting Minutes, 6 February 1978.

⁹³Historical Report, January 1982, FHD.

⁹⁴Zelda Merritt, comp., "Experiences and Impressions of Genealogical Missionaries, 1981–1986," typescript, preface, FHD.

⁹⁵*Memorandum*, March 1990, FHD.

⁹⁶Leadership Council Minutes, 10 April 1993.

⁹⁷Historical Report, April 1976, April 1977, FHD.

⁹⁸*Memorandum*, January 1993, FHD.

⁹⁹Historical Report, February 1976.

¹⁰⁰Historical Report, June 1976.

¹⁰¹Historical Report, October 1977.

¹⁰²Jimmy Parker, telephone interview by Kahlile Mehr, July 1994.

¹⁰³R. Scott Lloyd, "Genealogical Library Moves into New Home," *Church News*, 20 October 1985.

¹⁰⁴The archive binders contained the family group sheets submitted for temple work and the group sheets turned in as part of the Church-sponsored three- and four-generation programs. Of course, such records, compiled by researchers with varying levels of skill, were not perfect. However, they at least provided a good starting place for those interested in genealogical research.

¹⁰⁵Paul Brooks, telephone interview by Kahlile Mehr, July 1994.

¹⁰⁶*Genealogical Church Service Mission Journal: 10 Oct. 1986–10 Apr. 1987*, Mission Journals, v. 3, 157, LDS Church Archives.