

**Family History Library, Salt Lake City**  
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The Family History Library was founded by the Genealogical Society of Utah in 1894 and it now houses the largest collection of genealogical material in the world. The society is dedicated to acquiring and preserving copies of the records of mankind. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) has financed the society's methodical work. So that families may continue to discover their ancestors, specialist teams are sent around the world to locate and copy existing records. Since 1938, they have been using microfilm as the principal medium. The films preserve the land grant, deed, parish, will, marriage, cemetery and other public records that help to document the lives of many people. The collection is growing at a rate of more than 4,100 rolls of film a month.

The present library building was constructed in 1983-85, and contains microfilm, microfiche and paper copies of records in open access shelving and cabinets. There are about 2 million rolls of film, 400,000 microfiches, and more than 250,000 books available. There are an estimated two billion records on deceased persons.

You can take up to five films or five books to use at a time. There are hundreds of film readers available in the building, the largest portion of these are in the U. S./Canadian section. Most microfilms are available for immediate use. However, some lesser-used records are in stores and you may have to wait an hour or two for these. For countries other than the U.S., Canada, the British Isles, Germany, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Poland and the Netherlands you may have to write and request the films at least two weeks in advance. A few records are protected from public access by contractual arrangements.

The Library is located in what is known as the Temple Square District, on the north side of the downtown area of Salt Lake City. Temple Square is located to the south of the State Capitol. The square is a prime tourist attraction with two visitor centers, the Mormon Temple and the domed Tabernacle. Free guided tours are conducted regularly throughout the day, and free organ recitals are given, while the Mormon Tabernacle choir rehearse in public on Thursdays while their weekly Sunday broadcast is also open to the public. The Family History Libraries are all open to the public free of charge. Patrons are asked to optionally share their family information in return so it can be preserved for future generations. Information can be shared by means of contributions to the Ancestral File or you can donate or loan items such as family histories (which can be microfilmed), or you can offer to help by indexing names found in original documents.

The library records and resources may be consulted without charge, except the cost of photocopying or computer printouts and a small rental fee to cover the cost of shipping copies of films on request from the library to the centers. Some items can only be consulted in the library in Salt Lake City (e.g. Lloyd's Register of Shipping).

The Library is one of the nicest in the U.S. if not the world. As you enter the front door, you should turn towards the left and inquire about the short orientation presentation which will serve to introduce you to the facilities in the Library. This tells you a little of the purpose of the facility, how the place works and where you can generally find help. You will need lots of nickels, dimes and quarters (5, 10 and 25 cent coins). The copy machines are coin-operated. Change-making machines are available, and the library assistants are very helpful. The library hours (in 1998) are 7.30 AM to 6 PM on Monday, and 7.30 AM to 10 PM on Tuesday to Saturday inclusive. Apart from Sundays, and early closing on Mondays, the library is only closed on 7 days throughout the year. July 24th is a state holiday when EVERYTHING shuts down to celebrate Pioneer Days.

The International Genealogical Index (IGI) was compiled in 1980, and transferred to CD-ROM compact disk in 1986. It was issued on microfiche in 1988. The current edition is dated 1994. It contains the

names and some information on more than 300 million deceased persons. The Library Catalog was put on CD-ROM in 1987, and the current edition is dated March 1997, it too is available on microfiche. Both the IGI and Family History Library Catalog microfiches are available for sale, together with the Personal Ancestral File (PAF) software which can be used for compiling family genealogies. This software can also be used to obtain information from, and submit information to, the Ancestral File maintained by the library.

There are 72 public access computers available, some of which act as terminals connected to a mainframe, others are stand alone units with the indexes on CDROM. They work very well indeed. The FamilySearch software allows networked or CD-ROM access to the IGI, the Family History Library Catalog or FHLC (including locality, surname, author/title files), a collection of genealogies (submissions of pedigree charts) called the Ancestral File, the U.S. Social Security Death Index, the Military Index, and the TempleReady computer program which can be used to submit names for temple ordinances.

The Church has closed the former Hotel Utah and converted it into the Joseph Smith Memorial Building. It is situated one block away from the Library, just to the east of Temple Square. It has been designated an historic site, and contains more than 200 computers in the FamilySearch Center with off-site access to the Library indexes. **This is the place for the beginner/novice to come first**, in order to get used to the computer system. Some people may even find all the information they require on these! There are five floors in the Family History Library with four of them open to the public - each dedicated to a group of countries. Floor 3 is restricted to members of staff and contains the staff area and cataloguing Department. The British Isles are on Floor B2 Continental Europe and Scandinavia are on Floor B1 with the Latin American and International section and the North American section (US/Canada etc.) is on the Main Floor (books) and on Floor 2 (films). Stairs and elevators provide access to all floors.

The International Genealogical Index (IGI) microfiche is available on each floor. The computers on each floor give access to the FamilySearch software where you can put in a certain surname, county, state or whatever and generate all the references available for that particular subject. You can also specify very particular search criteria by using what is called a 'filter' option e.g. Patrick Murphy, born 1830 in Co. Cork - if there is matching information the computer will display it for you. The software uses the Soundex matching system, which enables it to display similarly sounding names to the one you are looking for. This is an important consideration where there are a lot of variant spellings of a particular name. The computer system is quite straightforward and easy to use but there is also personal guidance available for anyone who needs it. There are printed guidance leaflets available that cover almost every aspect of the system used in the library, as well as instructional booklets or research outlines on conducting genealogical research in particular areas. Some printed materials are free, and there is a small charge for others. Patrons are asked to limit themselves to from 5 to 20 minutes on the stand-up computers or one hour on the sit-down machines at busy periods in the Library. The stand-up computers are meant just to check up quickly on something. Each computer also has its own printer attached or is connected to a shared laser printer so that you can have the information you requested printed out from the database.

You pay 5 cents per sheet to the Library Attendant. Blank sheets are free. You can also bring your own computer disks with you, and use these to take away copies of the information that is on file. Most computers are equipped with two kinds of disk drive so that they can be used to make file copies on any standard type of PC floppy disk (no MACs). Formatted floppy disks are also available for purchase in the Library. The 3.5 inch disks cost 1 dollar, and the 5.25 inch cost 50 cents. There is always at least one volunteer assistant or staff member at the main desk on each floor and an expert consultant is available too. They are very helpful. The copy machines are good and cheap. Prices are 5 cents a page for photocopies and 20 cents per page for printout from microfiche or microfilm. There are change machines that take a one or five dollar bill or if you have larger bills the Library Attendant can make change for you. The photocopiers can be worked very hard at times, and there may be queues of

people waiting to use them - in which case patrons are asked not to photocopy more than five pages at a time. The quality of some copies from microfilm may not be very good, though legible. In addition to staff members and volunteers (who mostly work in the separate family history centers), consultants provide expert advice. The consultants specialize in the records of a specific area, teach classes in research techniques, and take phone call queries from volunteers in family history centers. The library also provides lists of accredited researchers who can carry out research on commission for clients. Advice sheets give guidance to patrons on how to approach this.

A free introductory orientation session is provided throughout the day. In addition, classes are typically held regularly several times a day. These classes are conducted by experienced volunteers and staff members. There is no charge, but patrons are asked to sign an attendance sheet. The topics include: Using FamilySearch, Writing Family Histories, Using the IGI, Personal Ancestral File (PAF) software, Using the Family History Library Catalog, Using TempleReady software, and Bulletin Boards. As well as these, more specific topics are also covered such as British or English Canadian Research, U.S. Census / Civil War / Church / Immigration Records, Research in records of specific U.S. states, Large City Research, etc. Other classes are conducted on: How to research Sensitive Issues in your family; Beginning Genealogy; The difference between Genealogy and Family History, etc. Some topics are dealt with on a monthly rotation basis and it is advisable to obtain the list for the current month in advance of your visit.

All the materials in the library are non-checkout. You can spend at least half a day on your first visit getting oriented. The holdings are segmented into reference materials, mostly indexes, and the actual detailed holdings. Most records belong to the period 1550 - 1910 or so, although there are a few earlier and some later materials. Generally, there are vital records (birth, marriage, death), census and probate records, deed records, passenger lists, military records, and court proceedings. There are also some Church Records, Bible Records, DAR & SAR (Daughters and Sons of the American Revolution) materials. The library has some local history publications, but does not have such things as newspaper files. The major indices are divided into a surname index and a locality index. The indexes are also on microfiche, with many copies available, so you just select the one you want, put it in the machine, and off you go. The index will give you the microfilm roll number which contains the records you want. You then go retrieve the film or fiche, put it in the reader and start looking. Users of the library are not even asked if they are a member of the LDS church. Everyone is welcome.

***If you write, or have access to a family history they do not have in their holdings, you can lend it to them to be microfilmed They will give you a free copy of the microfilm as well. One thing to bear in mind is that if you produce a history, this is probably the one place where it will be guaranteed to be around for a couple of hundred years.***

The computerization carried out by the FHL since 1986 is extremely efficient and user-friendly. The latest version of the Personal Ancestral File (PAF) and the FamilySearch software are very impressive. The PAF has also established a standard (called GEnealogical DAta COmunication, or GEDCOM) for the exchange of genealogical information via computer files. At present, the CD-ROM and microfiche versions provide off-site access to the indexes and catalog for the separate Family History Centers.

For quick meals or snacks right within the Family History Library there are vending machines available in a small room on the Main Floor where you can stop to eat. No eating is allowed in the rest of the library. There are also several family-style restaurants within walking distance.