

Find Your Ancestors in Official LDS Church Records (Session LDS1959-F)

The Church History Library is a research library that houses the sacred and valuable historical records of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. If your family has been associated with the Church in the United States or in other countries, these sources can help bring your family's story to life.

Records and Collections

The Church History Library houses millions of original, authoritative historical records, including official church records, diaries, memoirs, personal papers, letters, photographs, oral histories, and local-unit Church records. The records are stored in climate-controlled vaults and are accessible to researchers in the reading room. Many records have been digitized and are also available online.

Free Online Resources (churchhistorylibrary.org)

Church History Catalog

The **Church History Catalog** is the primary resource for searching the Library's archive, manuscript, and print collections. Simple and advanced searches for names, places, and topics yield results that may be narrowed by material type, date, and language. Wildcard and Boolean searches are also supported. Millions of digitized images are added to the catalog each year and users may recommend sources for future digitization. Materials in the catalog come from a wide spectrum of sources and represent numerous points of view. Users of the catalog should not assume that the Church or the Library endorses every item in the collection.

Database of Overland Pioneers

The **Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel** database attempts to document every Mormon overland pioneer who traveled to Utah between 1847 and 1868 and is the product of more than two decades of work. The database currently lists more than 57,000 individuals with links to thousands of original and authoritative records of pioneer experience. The database can be searched by name or browsed to find sources and photos.

Day-by-day Chronology of Church History Events

The **Journal History of the Church** is a chronological, day-by-day compilation of Church history events from 1830 to 2008. It was taken mostly from newspapers but also from correspondence, diaries, letters, sermons, minutes, and accounts—as a result, this 1200-volume collection contains valuable historical and biographical information. Indexes may be searched for names of individuals, places, church units, and events. Digital images of the index cards and the corresponding pages of the Journal History of the Church are available in the **Church History Catalog**.

Workshop Outline

1. New tools for researching in the Church History Library
2. Overview of the Library's records and collections
3. Research strategies for finding stories and experiences about your ancestors

About the Presenter

Keith A. Erikson serves as director of the LDS Church History Library.

Find Your Family in Church History

Find Your Ancestors in Official LDS Church Records | Erikson

CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY

Index of People Named in the Joseph Smith Papers

The **Joseph Smith Papers Project** is an effort to gather together all extant Joseph Smith documents and to publish complete and accurate transcripts of those documents with both textual and contextual annotation, including brief biographical sketches for selected persons mentioned therein. Names listed in this index include church leaders and members, Smith family members, people Joseph Smith encountered in his travels, parties involved in legal and business matters, and other acquaintances.

Index of Letters Written to Brigham Young

The **Brigham Young Office Files** contain approximately 15,000 letters from Church members who were seeking personal guidance, spiritual advice, or financial help from President Brigham Young between 1844 and 1877. Many letters report on missionary matters and colonization progress. The index to the names of those who wrote letters to Brigham Young together with digital images can be accessed through the **Church History Catalog**. Researchers should also consult letterpress copybooks for replies to letters.

Index to Periodical Articles by and about the Church

The **Church Periodical Index** enhances access to articles related to the Church and its history by indexing all significant articles in Church-produced, English language magazines, namely, the *Ensign*, *Liahona*, *New Era*, *Friend*, and *Church News*. The index also points to content in selected other periodicals, regardless of perspective, that contribute to the study of the history, doctrine and/or culture of the Church. As of 2015 the index contained approximately 160,500 entries and is searchable through the **Church History Catalog**.

Online Research Guides for Family History

The **Research Guide to Selected Latter-day Saint Family and Local History Sources** identifies records in the Library that offer historical context for your ancestors' lives. The guide describes and points to digital and web sources, journals and personal papers, photographs, published sources, Church membership records, and finding aids and indexes.

Answers to Church History Research Questions

ASK US

Click on the “Ask Us” button anywhere you find it in the **Church History Catalog** or on our web pages to submit a question to our archivists, librarians, historians, conservators, curators, or records managers.

Visit the Church History Library

15 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150-1600

Open to the public

Hours

Monday–Wednesday 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Thursday 9:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m.

Friday 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Saturday 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Closed on major federal and state holidays

