

Family History Department, have been preserving copies of original documents on microfilm. In 1990 the library sponsored approximately 200 microfilming projects in various parts of the world. These efforts have added microfilmed copies of more than 5 million manuscripts to the library's collections. The microfilms show the original records of births, marriages, and deaths; military records; censuses; wills; notaries' records; cemetery records; and other kinds of documents that describe people and families from the past. Other resources include compiled genealogies, local histories, old maps, city directories, and name indexes. The largest collections are from countries in North America and Europe, with substantial collections from Latin America. The library has also acquired written and oral materials from Asia, Africa, Australia, and the islands of the Pacific Ocean.

Computer terminals give patrons access to the FAMILYSEARCH™ system, which guides researchers into the Family History Library Catalog, the INTERNATIONAL GENEALOGICAL INDEX™ (IGI), and ANCESTRAL FILE®. These computer files of family history information are stored on compact discs. The compact-disc edition of the catalog provides access to books and microfilms that contain original records, reference sources, and family histories and genealogies.

Library visitors can also learn how to use PERSONAL ANCESTRAL FILE®. This computer program enables families to manage family history records on their personal computers. In addition, users can easily exchange genealogical information with others who have compatible computer programs or with Ancestral File.

Another resource is the FAMILY REGISTRY™. This service helps both individuals and family organizations to share with others information they may have about deceased individuals and to ask for information about an ancestor who is currently the subject of their research. Library visitors have access to microfiche records listing the ancestors and family organizations that have been registered. This file eases coordination of research with others who may share the same family lines.

At the Family History Library professional genealogical reference consultants, library attendants, and hundreds of volunteers serve library visitors. They are trained to guide patrons to sources identifying their families and to help them interpret the information in these books and docu-



The Church's Family History Library (c.1988) houses the world's largest collection of genealogical records. More than 2,000 people come here daily to research their family histories. The five-floor library opened in Salt Lake City in 1985. Photographer: Marty Mayo.

ments. Staff members are multilingual and can read handwriting from many countries and time periods.

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FAMILY HOME EVENING

Family home evening is a weekly observance of Latter-day Saints for spiritual training and social activity, usually held on Monday evenings. In 1915, the FIRST PRESIDENCY of the Church wrote: "We advise and urge the inauguration of a 'Home Evening' throughout the Church, at which time fathers and mothers may gather their boys and girls about them in the home and teach them the word of the Lord. . . . This 'Home Evening' should be devoted to prayer, singing hymns, songs, instrumental music, scripture-reading, family topics and specific instruction on the principles of the Gospel, and on the ethical problems of life, as well as the duties and obligation of children to parents, the home, the Church, society, and the Nation"



An LDS family meets together for family home evening (Tokyo, 1986). Latter-day prophets encourage families to gather in their homes weekly to discuss and experience the gospel and build family unity. The Church provides a resource manual that families can use to prepare discussions. Courtesy Floyd Holdman.

(*IE* 18 [June 1915]:733). To assist parents in their STEWARDSHIP, the first home evening manual was prepared that same year and distributed to members of the Church.

This emphasis on home gospel instruction echoes the call of prophets throughout the ages who have instructed parents to teach their children diligently of love and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Deut. 6:5–7; Eph. 6:4). The Prophet Joseph SMITH received revelations that admonish parents to “bring up your children in light and truth” (D&C 93:40) and to teach them “to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost” (D&C 68:25) and “to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord” (D&C 68:28). President Brigham YOUNG urged parents to take time to “call their families together . . . and teach them the principles of the gospel” (*MFP* 2:288).

Between 1915 and the 1960s, a large proportion of Church membership shifted from a family-centered rural population to an urban one. With that change came renewed emphasis from the First Presidency on the importance of the family. In general conference, April 1964, President David O. MCKAY reminded parents that “No other success can compensate for failure in the home” (*IE* 67 [June 1964]:445). In 1965, the weekly family home evening program was more fully implemented, and a lesson manual was given each family to aid

parents in teaching their children. Families were encouraged to participate in a home night once each week, which could consist of scripture reading, singing, and activities suited to the ages of the children. In 1966, STAKES were urged to set aside a regular night for family home evening and to avoid scheduling Church activities on that night. In 1970, Monday evening was designated as family home evening, Churchwide, with no competing ecclesiastical functions to be held. Revised home evening manuals, with suggested weekly lessons and activities, were provided from 1965 to 1984.

In 1985, a *Family Home Evening Resource Book*, designed to be used for a decade, was introduced. It provided broader resource material for gospel instruction and additional ideas for family activities, and was designed to be adapted for use by single adults, couples, single-parent families, and families with children of all ages. In 1987, a family home evening video supplement was made available. Nineteen video vignettes were included, treating important educational and moral topics.

A typical family home evening might proceed as follows: A parent or older child, whose turn it is to plan the lesson, selects a lesson, such as “Heavenly Father Provided Us a Savior,” from the *Family Home Evening Resource Book*. After an opening hymn and prayer, the lesson material, adapted to the needs and interest level of the family members, is presented. After the lesson the family discusses family schedules, family business, and special concerns. A family activity follows that helps strengthen bonds of love among family members. This could be any activity that the family enjoys doing together, such as playing a game, helping the needy, gardening, or attending a cultural event. Following the activity, the family kneels together in family prayer and then often enjoys refreshments. Single adults or others who live alone may join as a group to participate in family home evening activities, or they may observe appropriately modified weekly activities individually. Home evening activities allow for considerable variation in the desires and needs of each family or group. Always, however, the emphasis is spiritual enrichment.

Family home evening is intended to be a regular event that helps parents teach, protect, and prepare children for responsible living. Family councils, personal parent interviews, scripture reading, serving or playing together, family prayer, and meaningful family home evenings all help to build quality family relationships. Families

who do these things are promised that “love at home and obedience to parents will increase, and faith will develop in the hearts of the youth of Israel, and they will gain power to combat [the] evil influences and temptations” that beset them (*Family Home Evening Manual*, 1965, p. v).

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FAMILY ORGANIZATIONS

Latter-day Saints think of families with respect to both this life and the next. They strive to organize family groups at the individual family level and in extended family relationships and organizations.

Family organizations provide social and familial support, historical awareness, instruction, and genealogical information necessary to bind generations together by temple ordinances (*see* FAMILY HISTORY; TEMPLE ORDINANCES).

From the early days of the Church, LDS families have regularly established family organizations, held reunions, and worked to make strong family identity. In 1978 the Church asked all families to organize themselves at three levels: immediate families, grandparent families, and ancestral families.

The immediate family consists of husband and wife, and begins when they are married. Later, if a couple is blessed with children, the size and concerns of this unit grow. When the children marry and have children of their own, the grandparent organization is initiated. Beyond that, each family is ideally involved in an ancestral organization, which consists of all the descendants of an earlier common progenitors couple.

The immediate family holds FAMILY HOME EVENINGS and family councils, encourages and assists in missionary work, family preparedness, family history, temple work, and teaching the gospel, and provides cultural and social activities for its members. The grandparent organization is involved in similar activities, but is also concerned



Platt and Wilma Ward (front row), with their children (second row), their children's spouses (third row), grandchildren and great-grandchildren (1988). Family reunions draw the extended family together to support and sustain family traditions and values. Courtesy Craig Law.