

Zion. Consequently, at each of the Saints' headquarters gathering places, a temple site was designated, and in KIRTLAND, Nauvoo, and Salt Lake City, temples were constructed. Gathering also provided a refuge, a place for mutual protection and spiritual reinforcement and instruction. It strengthened LDS communities and brought economic and political benefits as well (*see CITY PLANNING*).

The Kirtland area in northeastern Ohio was the first gathering place. But when converts from New York arrived there in May 1831, they learned that Ohio would be a gathering place only "for a little season" (D&C 51:16). Some left that same year for Missouri once it was revealed that Zion was to be built in Jackson County, Missouri, a land "appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the saints" (D&C 57:1-3; *see also MISSOURI: LDS COMMUNITIES IN JACKSON AND CLAY COUNTIES*).

For the following seven years the Church had two gathering places—Ohio, the site of the Saints' first temple, and Missouri, the site of the City of Zion. However, in 1838, less than two years after the dedication of the KIRTLAND TEMPLE, opposition drove the Ohio faithful from that temple-city. The persecution in Missouri that earlier had forced the Saints from Jackson County now forced them from their new headquarters in Far West, Missouri, before temples could be built (*see MISSOURI CONFLICT*). Between 1839 and 1846, Latter-day Saints gathered by the thousands at Nauvoo, Illinois, where they again completed a temple before leaving, in the face of violence, for a gathering place in the Rocky Mountains (*see SALT LAKE VALLEY; WESTWARD MIGRATION*).

Although the major current purposes for gathering the faithful into a single place have been accomplished, belief in the necessity of gathering the elect continues. Members in all parts of the world are now encouraged to remain in their own communities and "build Zion" in their own wards and stakes (*see IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION*). Temples have now been built in many countries, and missionaries further the establishment of Zion by gathering "the pure in heart" (D&C 97:21) to the stakes of Zion throughout the world.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cook, Lyndon, and Andrew Ehat, eds. *Words of Joseph Smith*, pp. 209-216. Provo, Utah, 1980.

RONALD D. DENNIS

GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF UTAH

The Genealogical Society of Utah, organized in 1894, became The Genealogical Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1944. In 1976 it became The Genealogical Department, and in 1987 the name was changed to The Family History Department. Each name change brought renewed emphasis and expanded resources to further the search for ancestors. The name Genealogical Society still continues as the microfilm section of the Family History Department of the Church.

The central purpose of the organization is expressed in a statement by Elder Joseph Fielding SMITH: "Salvation for the dead is the system whereunder those who would have accepted the gospel in this life, had they been permitted to hear it, will have the chance to accept it in the spirit world, and will then be entitled to all the blessings which passed them by in mortality" (DS 2:100-196). Provisions have been made, therefore, for the living to provide, vicariously, ordinances of salvation for their deceased family forebears and friends. This cannot be done without information about the dead.

In April 1894, President Wilford WOODRUFF said, "We want the Latter-day Saints from this time to trace their genealogies as far as they can, and to be sealed to their fathers and mothers . . . and run this chain as far as you can get it" (Durham, p. 157). On November 13, 1894, the FIRST PRESIDENCY of the Church authorized the organization of the Genealogical Society of Utah as an aid to genealogical research, and appointed Franklin D. Richards president. Of this beginning Archibald F. Bennett, a later executive secretary, gave the following historical summary: "It was to be benevolent, educational, and religious in purpose—benevolent in gathering together into a library books that would help the people trace their ancestry; educational in teaching the people how to trace their ancestry . . . ; religious in that they would do all in their power to encourage the people to perform in the temples all the necessary ordinances" (Genealogical Society of Utah, minutes, Nov. 13, 1894, Genealogical Department of the Church).

Some of the widely known facilities and resources that have been established over the past century to facilitate these purposes are: (1) the

FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY at Salt Lake City; (2) the extensive collection of microfilmed and microfiche records of family history; and (3) the INTERNATIONAL GENEALOGICAL INDEX™ (IGI).

1. The Family History Library is the largest of its kind in the world. Patrons come from all over the globe to search for information about past generations. More than 1,000 branches of this library have been established in forty-three countries to make these records available to all who are interested.

2. The microfilm and microfiche collection is continually expanding. From 1938 to the present, irreplaceable records have been preserved on microfilms. Some 1.5 million rolls of microfilm and approximately 200,000 microfiche containing the names of an estimated 1.5 billion deceased people are now available to researchers.

3. The IGI includes names and vital statistics of millions of people who lived between the early 1500s and 1875 in some ninety countries, alphabetized by surname and arranged geographically. Millions of names are added each year. This index is accessible on microfiche and is computerized.

These and other resources have aided millions of researchers in finding their “roots,” and have made possible the performance of TEMPLE ORDINANCES for millions who lived and died without that opportunity.

The continued commitment to identify ancestors and provide temple ordinances for them which began in this dispensation with divine revelations to the Prophet Joseph SMITH, and was furthered by the organization of the Genealogical Society of Utah, and has enabled millions of genealogists throughout the world to develop a strong association between family history and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Durham, G. Homer, ed. *Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, p. 157. Salt Lake City, 1946.

GEORGE D. DURRANT

GENEALOGY

[Genealogy is a record of lineage showing the descent of a person or family from an ancestor or ancestors. Searching for and compiling genealogical information

are sacred responsibilities to Latter-day Saints. Therefore, extensive activity is conducted by the Church and by members to obtain and record vital statistical information, to compile family histories, and to strengthen family ties both on earth and in the hereafter. In LDS doctrine the family is of eternal significance. Thus, three major purposes of compiling genealogical records are to identify one's roots, to perform saving ordinances in a temple for persons who did not receive them in mortal life, and to seal individuals together for eternity as families.

Articles relating to this subject are Ancestral File; Baptism for the Dead; Book of Remembrance; Born in the Covenant; Elijah, Spirit of; Family; Family History; Family History Centers; Family History Library; Family Organizations; Family Registry; FamilySearch; Genealogical Society of Utah; Granite Mountain Record Vault; International Genealogical Index (IGI); Name Extraction Program; Personal Ancestral File; Salvation of the Dead; Sealing; Temple Ordinances; Temples; World Conferences on Records.]

GENERAL AUTHORITIES

General Authorities are men called to serve at the highest levels of leadership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As general PRIESTHOOD officers of the Church, they have Churchwide rather than local stewardship and may receive assignments anywhere in the world. In order of precedence, the General Authorities include the FIRST PRESIDENCY, QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES, quorums of the SEVENTY, and PRESIDING BISHOPRIC (see ORGANIZATION). First Presidency members and the senior member of the Quorum of the Twelve are addressed as “President.” The Twelve Apostles and members of the quorums of the Seventy are addressed as “Elder.” Members of the Presiding Bishopric are addressed as “Bishop.” As a group, they are often referred to as “the Brethren.”

Like all who serve in the Church, these men are lay leaders and do not solicit their assignments. They are “called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority” (A of F 5; see LAY PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP). They are called by a member of the First Presidency; subsequently, their names are presented to the Church MEMBERSHIP for a sustaining vote each year during general conference and in WARD and STAKE conferences.

Members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve are sustained as PROPHETS, SEERS,