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Tampa's LDS Church and Genealogical Library

WHERE TO FIND YOUR ROOTS IN THE TAMPA BAY AREA

By Phyllis Belnap and Marjorie Hazel

How should beginning genealogists approach the task of seeking their ancestors? After taking the first step of identifying and having documentary evidence of your parents and possibly, your grandparents, the next step appears giant sized. Generally, the problem is one of direction and location. Where do you go from here – literally – and how do you get there? With the modern nomadic nature of mankind, locations are usually far away, and you think the hunt is not worth the effort. However, Tampa contains one of the most accessible collections in the Branch Genealogical Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (Often called the “Mormon” church, and hereafter referred to as the church.) As one of over 200 branches of the main library located in Salt Lake City, Utah, this branch location has the facilities to borrow microfilms of many records available from the main library. Still, there are records not on microfilm and even some on microfilm are not available because of contractual agreements with the archives where they were filmed. The church, realizing the importance of vital records, has traveled to many countries and has offered to film the records at that location, making two copies. One of these copies remains in that location; the church has possession of the other copy. Because of this policy, many records from remote areas are now available to patrons of a branch library. With these copies as a start, branch libraries begin to gather their own resource material:

books, family histories and records, and facilities for using the wider depositories of the Salt Lake library.

These sources are now available to anyone within traveling distance of the church's branch library in Tampa. Located at 4106 East Fletcher Avenue, north of the University of South Florida campus and between the twin highrise buildings, John Knox and Fontana Halls, the L.D.S. Genealogical Library is administered by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but it is open to everyone interested in genealogy. For the hours call (813) 971-2869, because the hours do fluctuate according to seasons and demand. There are no fees for using the library; the only fees are for ordering microfilms or photocopying. As with other programs and facilities of the church, the library is manned by volunteers. They are not there to do your research, but they are pleased to help in using any facilities available and in suggesting possible avenues for exploration.

After entering the larger of the two rooms used for research purposes, you will find one entire wall utilized for storing the growing collection of books. The first section is devoted to family histories. These are published volumes which have usually been placed in the library by supporting patrons. The books are divided into countries: England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Norway, Denmark, Germany, and United States. Volumes for the United States include *Confederate Records*, *Military Records*, *Compendium of American Genealogy*, *Pension Roll* and *Pension Applications*, and *Genealogies in the Library of Congress*. Book subjects are further divided into states. Since funds are limited and contributions often sporadic, the number of books is not too great, and there are more available for some locations than others. A noteworthy item might be the printed volumes of state-wide indexes to the national censuses. These also are located according to state.

Another part of the library collection to be appreciated is the collection of print-outs of Parish Registers of England. These are computerized lists of all names and dates within that parish, and for more convenient use, they have been alphabetized. The parishes covered by this collection are:

Amplhill Parish	----	Bedfordshire
Arncliffe Parish	----	Yorkshire
Bentham Parish	Christenings 1673-1812	Yorkshire
Billingham Parish	Christenings 1570-1875	Durham
Birtley Parish	Christenings 1728-1875	Northumberland
Bishopwearmouth Parish	(2 books)	Durham
Bishopwearmouth Parish	Christenings 1567-1812	Durham
Castlechurch Parish	Christenings 1568-1812	Staffordshire
East Rounton Parish	1595-1837	Yorkshire
Fewston Parish	Christenings 1593-1812	Yorkshire
Gargrove Parish	1558-1812	Yorkshire
Grinton Parish in Swalesdale	Christenings 1569-1814	Yorkshire
Halifax Parish	Christenings 1538-1593	Yorkshire
(Coley and North Oworm Congregational Christenings 1644-1752)		
Haydon Bridge Parish	Christenings 1654-1812	Northumberland

Hexham Parish	Christenings 1643-1813	Northumberland
Hexham Parish	1643-1813	Northumberland
Holy Island Parish	----	Northumberland
Kilkhampton Parish	Christenings 1539-1839	Cornwall
Linton in Craven Parish	----	Yorkshire
Newburn Parish	----	Northumberland
St. Giles Parish	1584-1812	Durham
Snaith Parish	----	Yorkshire
Skelton Parish	----	Cumberland
Ryton Parish	1581-1812	Durham
Warleggon Parish	Christenings 1548-1812	Cornwall
Washington Parish	----	Durham

An exciting facet of the genealogical collection located in the main room is the Computer File Index (CFI). The index consists of individual names and dates collected from several sources which have been used for church information and stored in the giant computer in Salt Lake City. While all the details one might wish for are not necessarily there, much is, with the further possibility that the information located there may guide you to other people interested in the same line. These records are found on microfiche cards, and two microfiche readers are available for use. To use this file, you must first locate the proper locality. The index is divided into regions, such as: North America (United States and Canada), England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and the Channel Isles. Within the regions for England, the microfiche cards are arranged by shire (county), for the United States by state, and Canada by province. For all other areas the microfiche cards are arranged by country.

After determining the location, you can find names of specific individuals arranged alphabetically by surname and then by given name. The surname will be found alphabetized under the standard spelling for that surname. A cross reference is found from the actual spelling to the standard spelling, which is marked with an asterisk (*). Each name has been assigned a Batch Number, and from this you can obtain additional information on the individual entry, as well as the name and address of the person submitting the information. As further information becomes available to the church, this file system will be updated. Therefore, it is a reference tool that should be used continuously.

The large room also contains a number of genealogical aid books which patrons of the library can use as reference or which they may purchase. However, this is not a lending library and books cannot be removed from the building. The room is equipped with a copy machine, and desired material can be duplicated for a nominal cost.

The second room of the library is a genealogist's treasure house. In addition to six microfilm readers, this room houses several large file cabinets containing a wide scope of microfilms. Of prime interest is the card catalogue file on microfilm. You will find cards for all family history books currently on film that are located at the Salt Lake Library and available on loan to the local branch facilities. In addition to family histories there are card catalogues' of additional sources, listed according to locations. Some locations categorized include: Albania, Andorra, Antiqua, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, the Azores, Bahamas, Belorussia, Bermuda, Belgium, Bulgaria,

Cyprus, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands, Netherland Antilles, New Zealand, Poland, Romania, Russia, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland, South Africa, United States and the West Indies.

After discovering the location of your search, you can read the catalogue entry of each book under that location, determine whether it will contain the information you are seeking and whether the film of that book is available to be ordered. By filling out an order form and paying the cost of obtaining the film, you will be notified upon the film's arrival in the library. Then you can call and reserve a microfilm reader. Films are available for a two week period, but for an added charge they can be placed on indefinite loan. Such films may be made available to other researchers in the building, provided the original borrower is not using them. For this reason, check the films already filed under specific locations to see if they might be related to your needs.

The Tampa branch library has a variety of microfilms on different countries. For Great Britain and Scotland, there is an 1851 census and copies of parish information from a wide area. Available is Boyd's Marriage Index of England. Although Boyd was unable to complete the recording of all marriages in England, this is still an excellent resource tool. It is indexed according to both bride and groom. For Sweden there are District Court Record Registers (Indexes) and church records – births, marriages, deaths – for a number of areas, including Stockholm. Norway's section includes some parish registers. There are films on the Orkney Islands and Western Scotland. Italian records cover the Protestant Churches of the Piedmonte Parish as well as early records (1699-1888) of Villara Pellise and others of Ville S'eché for 1838-1841. There are several films containing birth records of the Netherlands from 1721 through 1842. You should be aware that, inasmuch as the films are copies of record from the various countries, they are written in the language and style of that country and may require additional assistance in reading and translation. This is your responsibility as the patron ordering the film.

Films on indefinite loan for areas of the United States are placed according to location, and the Tampa library has quite a number of these currently available for the use of visitors. A number of national and state censuses are on microfilm. These are generally not complete censuses but may be sporadic and confined to areas of interest to the person who placed them on indefinite loan. Many states and counties have films of early court probate records and vital records of marriages, births and deaths. For the South, there are Florida films on deceased veterans for some areas, cemetery records, tombstone inscriptions, tax rolls, prints of early newspapers, family records, town meetings minutes, records of deeds, sales of ships and crew listings of English and Spanish vessels. In addition to census records, the Georgia section has vital records for some counties, deeds and mortgages, church records, wills, indexes to land and property, cemetery records, homestead records, land lottery grants, probate records and administrators' bonds. Kentucky has quite a few rolls of county censuses, plus marriage records, school censuses, guardian bonds for Hancock County, and records on Franklin, Boone, and Mercer counties. Louisiana films are almost non-existent; there is only one soundex roll. Mississippi has census records. Along with government and state census records, North Carolina contains pension applications, pension roll indexes, and a tax list for 1720-1779. There is an index to wills

and an inventory of estates and wills for Duplin County. North Carolina also has muster rolls, soldiers of the War of 1812 and records and correspondence of the Church of England dated in the 1700's. Also, there are numerous rolls on information for Ashe, Anson, Beaufort, Bertie, and Warren counties. South Carolina has a limited number of census records as do Tennessee and Texas. Virginia has census information and indexes to patent and land grants. West Virginia has some census records along with films on vital records, wills and inventories.

Dealing with the Midwest, Illinois material primarily consists of census records. In addition, there is a microfilmed copy of the *Warsaw Newspaper Signal* from 1847 to 1853, and an adjutant general's report concerning the Civil War. For Indiana there are a number of census records, an index to marriages (1848-1920), and an index to death records, birth records and registered voters for Fountain County. Indiana films are limited and seem to cover only Jasper county, with marriages, deaths and births from 1865-1920. Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Michigan, Nebraska, and Missouri have census records. Wisconsin has only 1860 records. An interested person has obtained films containing national censuses for Ohio, with others on grave registries and soldiers buried in that state, vital records, tombstones, probate records and guardian dockets.

In the Northeast, Maine and Vermont have limited census records primarily of York and Penobscot counties, and there are some limited vital records, rolls on meeting minutes, intentions of marriage, civil records and land and property taxes for some areas. Maryland has limited census films, inventories, an index to various counties around 1754, and a slave schedule. The Massachusetts section contains census and vital records. There are town records, cemetery records, and census and vital records for New Hampshire. New Jersey has rolls on church records and historical quarterlies. New York is limited to some census rolls along with one small section of a passenger index. Quaker church records, along with births and burials, grantor indexes, marriage records, wills, orphan court records and mortality schedules are available for some Pennsylvania areas. Rhode Island has DAR records, family records, bibles and wills.

Although this composes the bulk of information in the second room, local genealogists hoping to save vital information as well as to perform a community service have been given permission to copy funeral home records of the J. L. Reed and the A. P. Boza funeral homes. These are also available for the researcher.

This is only an introduction to the services available at the Tampa branch of the Genealogical Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. To really get the picture, visit it!