

Tracing the Saints: Introducing Latter-day Saint Church Records

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History

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has one of the most sophisticated and organized systems of record-keeping and reporting of any similar organization in the world. However, it did take them several years from their beginning as a church to get a good system down.

The church was organized in 1830 in Fayette, New York in 1831 they moved to Kirtland, Ohio and established their headquarters there. Later that same year they sent members to Jackson County, Missouri and established another home base. In 1837 the first foreign mission was opened in the British Isles. In 1838-1839 Most church officers and members left Kirtland. Others were forced out of Missouri. Which led the Latter-day Saints to settle in Nauvoo, Illinois. By 1840 the first company of Latter-day Saints sailed from England to the United States. In 1846 the Latter-day Saints were driven out of Nauvoo and forced to start over again. They created three temporary settlements while migrating west, Winter Quarters in Omaha, Nebraska, and Mount Pisgah and Council Bluffs in Iowa. That same year they sent their first company of members across the plains. Eventually 70,000 members traveled a 1300-mile-long trail called "Mormon Trail". The first group of Latter-day Saints arrived in Utah in 1847.

Vocabulary

Ward - congregation presided over by a Bishop that is made up of members from a particular geographic location, usually consisting of between 150-500 members. When a ward becomes too large, it is split up. Smaller congregations are called Branches.

Branch - congregations that are not large enough or stable enough to form.

Stake - A regional administrative grouping of three or more wards.

General Authorities - The highest leaders of the church, including the First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and quorums of the Seventy.

Missionary - A volunteer sent to national and foreign locations around the world in service to The Church.

Baptism – Performed when children reach the age of eight or when someone joins the church.

Name of the Church

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has been known by many names. In 1829-1834 the name was The Church of Christ. In 1834 it changed to The Church of the Latter Day Saints. In 1838 the official name became The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. In 1966 The Church produced an official Style Guide that added a hyphen in Latter-day with a lower-case d. Presently this remains the official name. There have been several nicknames given to The Church and its members over the years. In 2018 The Church clarified the name and nicknames that are official and those that are discouraged from use. Some records and history titles still may refer to some of the alternative's names.

Tips for Using the Records

- Gather the records, photos, stories, and tree you already have
- Organize this information in a way that is easy to understand
- Evaluate each source that is already found for each ancestor and organize the information
- Pull out places and dates to determine which records to begin searching in
- Create tables and charts to be able easily visualize what you have and what you need
- Create timelines

TIMELINE (Ancestors Name)			
Date	Event	Location	Source
13 March 1819	Born	Pike, Missouri, United States	Birth record
7 December 1837	Married	Dyer, Tennessee, United States	Marriage Register
August 1838	Birth of first child	San Felipe, Austin, Republic of Texas	Multiple Sources
September 1840	Birth of second child	Wild Cat Springs, Austin, Republic of Texas	Multiple Sources
16 September 1841	Birth of third child	San Felipe, Austin, Republic of Texas	Multiple Sources
19 March 1844	Birth of fourth child	Guadalupe River, Dewitt, Republic of Texas	Multiple Sources
12 October 1846	birth of fifth child	Nashville, Davidson, Tennessee, United States	Multiple Sources
15 March 1849	Birth of sixth child	Guadalupe River, Dewitt, Texas, United States	Multiple Sources
20 November 1851	Birth of seventh child	Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah Territory, United States	Multiple Sources
17 March 1875	Death	Logan, Cache, Utah, United States	Multiple Sources

- Use the FamilySearch Wiki
- Create a list of call numbers and microfilm numbers for onsite research

Finding the Records

Early Church Information File (ECIF)

[Utah, FamilySearch, Early Church Information File, 1830-1900 • FamilySearch](#)

Mormon Places

www.mormonplaces.byu.edu

Church History Library Catalog

[Church History Catalog \(churchofjesuschrist.org\)](http://ChurchHistoryCatalog.churchofjesuschrist.org)

Biographical Database

[Landing | Church History Biographical Database \(churchofjesuschrist.org\)](http://Landing.ChurchHistoryBiographicalDatabase.churchofjesuschrist.org)

Membership Records of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Membership_Records_of_The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints

Tracing Latter-day Saint Ancestors

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Tracing_Latter-day_Saint_Ancestors

Latter-day Saint Emigration and Immigration

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Latter-day_Saint_Emigration_and_Immigration

Census Records of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Census_Records_of_The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Census Records 1914-1960																						
Census Year	Parents Names	Fathers Name	Mother's Maiden Name	Children's Names - Oldest first	Priesthood, Member, Child	Age	Birth Year Only	Birthdate	Geographical Regions of Birth	Birth Place	Marital Status	KY, NC, TN, VA, WV, MD Provide Baptism Date, by Whom, and Place	Branch/Ward Record Number	Branch/Ward Name	Stake/Mission	Date Taken	Family Name/Surname	Address	Census Taken By	Previous Ward/Branch	Previous Address	Date Moved to Previous Address
1914	x			x x	x				x		x			x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x			
1920		x	x	x x			x		x		x			x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x			
1925		x	x	x x				x x			x			x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x			
1930		x	x	x x				x		x	x	x		x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x			
1935		x	x	x x				x		x	x			x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x	x		
1940		x	x	x x				x		x	x			x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x	x	x	x
1945	No Census Taken																					
1950		x	x	x x				x		x x				x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x	x	x	x
1955		x	x	x x				x		x x				x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x	x	x	x
1960		x	x	x x				x		x x				x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x	x	x	x

Latter-day Saints Online Genealogy Records

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Latter-day_Saint_Online_Genealogy_Records

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints

Records of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Records_of_The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints

Latter-day Saint Record Finder

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Latter-day_Saint_Record_Finder

Perpetual Emigration Fund

[Names of persons and sureties indebted to the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company, from 1850 to 1877 inclusive : Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

FamilySearch Wiki

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Perpetual_Emigration_Fund

Missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Missionaries_of_The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints

Missionary Reports 1831-1900

[Church History Catalog | Record viewer | Missionary reports, 1831-1900 \(churchofjesuschrist.org\)](#)

Latter-day Saint Biographies

[Latter-day Saint Biographies • FamilySearch](#)

Library of Congress Collection of Mormon Diaries

[Library of Congress Collection of Mormon Diaries • FamilySearch](#)

Latter-day Saint Vital Records

[Latter-day Saint Vital Records • FamilySearch](#)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Sweden

[The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Sweden • FamilySearch](#)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Norway

[The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Norway • FamilySearch](#)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Wales

[The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Wales • FamilySearch](#)

Saints by Sea

saintsbysea.lib.byu.edu

Joseph Smith Papers

[The Joseph Smith Papers: A comprehensive digital collection of the papers of Joseph Smith](https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/)

Wilford Woodruff Papers

[Wilford Woodruff Papers](https://www.wilfordwoodruffpapers.org/)

Harold B. Lee Library

[Harold B. Lee Library \(byu.edu\)](https://haroldb.lee.lib.byu.edu/)

