FAMILY HISTORY CENTER
POLICY AND PROCEDURES

A. PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

A.1. The Local History Department of the Berkshire Athenaeum has an agreement with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (also known as the Mormons and/or LDS) to serve as a Family History Center by distributing Church microfilm for genealogical research. The Mormons have some of the most extensive family history resources in the world located in their Family History Library. These resources are comprised of census records, birth records, family histories, church registers, and other records from many parts of the world. This agreement vastly expands the Athenaeum’s capability to provide service to genealogists.

A.2. Researchers gain access to the Family History Library online through a special catalog. This catalog is accessed via the LDS website located at https://familysearch.org/catalog. The Family History Library Catalog is a list of the records (books, microfilms, maps and other materials) in the Family History Library. The Catalog gives a description of each of these records and is used as a tool to identify the specific records in the Family History Library of interest to the researcher.

A.3. The Catalog does not contain all of the actual records; rather, it briefly describes each record and its contents. It also tells where to find it in the Family History Library. It does not list all the names and places on the records, only the main ones that the records are about. Further, it lists only the records the Family History Library has collected, not those that might be available in genealogical collections elsewhere. If the contents of a particular record have been digitized, a link will take the researcher to the online images.

A.4. The Catalog functions like a mail-order catalog. Each entry describes a product and gives a film order number. This number is used to find the record or to have a microfilm copy sent to the Athenaeum as a Family History Center. Some records in the catalog do not have film order numbers, which is an indicator the items have not been microfilmed. These items may not be ordered through this program and are only available for use at the Family History Library headquarters in Salt Lake City.

B. POLICY OVERVIEW: Library patrons place their orders for genealogical microfilm online directly from the Family History Library Catalog according to LDS procedure. A User’s Guide is posted on the Family Search website to guide researchers in all aspects of the process. Policies for this procedure are set by LDS and not by the Athenaeum.

C. CHARGES: The Family History Library charges for the use of their film. These charges are set by the Family History Library and are paid directly to them by the patron with a credit card or Paypal account when they submit their order.
D. LOAN PERIODS:

D.1. Loan types are defined by the Family History Library in the online User’s Guide which establishes loan periods as follows:

- **Short-term Microfilm Loan** is 90 days. These 90 days include a 60-day loan period with an additional 30 days to allow for shipping. Some areas will receive the film sooner than 30 days and will have the additional time to view the film. Family Search guarantees the film will be at the Athenaeum for at least 60 days, up to 90 days. The 90 days begins once the film is marked as “shipped”. The film will be returned once the 90 day loan period has expired.

- **Extended Microfilm Loan** is one with no return date specified.

- **Extended Microfiche Loan** is one with no return date specified. All microfiche orders are extended loans.

D.2. Short-term loaned microfilms will clearly be marked with a due date. If a renewal is not requested by the borrower before the specified date, the film must be returned to the Family History Library.

E. RENEWALS:

E.1. Film may be renewed at a cost set by the Family History Library. Renewals are defined or allowed as follows:

- **Short-term Microfilm Loan Renewal** is one where the film already exists on a short-term loan at the Athenaeum. The purchase of this loan will renew the loan for an additional 60 days, upon completion of the original 90 days.

- **Extended Microfilm Loan Renewal** will convert a short-term loan to an extended loan, one with no return date specified. The following exceptions can cause the film to be returned or will not allow the film to be ordered:
  - The Athenaeum will determine whether the film is no longer being used and wishes to reduce film inventory.
  - The microfilm has become restricted and is no longer available for viewing.
  - The film already exists in the patron’s default Family History Center.

E.2. Library patrons must submit the renewal request online directly through their Family History Center account.

F. NOTIFICATION: Patrons receive an e-mail notification when their microfilm is shipped. Once the film is received at the Athenaeum and checked in by ILL, the tracking system generates another e-mail, notifying the patron that the film is available for use in the Local History Department.

H. USE OF FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY MICROFILM:

H.1. After the microfilm arrives at the Athenaeum it may be used at any time the Athenaeum is open, subject to film reader availability in the Athenaeum’s Local History Department. The ordering
patron has first priority to use the films they have requested. However, other visitors to the Athenaeum may, without cost, also have access to and use those microfilms.

H.2. Once processed into the Athenaeum Family History Center microfilm will be stored in the Local History Department. Borrowers will sign the film out and return it to Local History Department staff after each use.

H.3. Films may be used in the Athenaeum only. Under no circumstances will borrowers be authorized to remove Family History Library film from the Athenaeum.

H.4. In fairness to all of the Athenaeum’s researchers, time limits may have to be imposed on the use of microfilm readers during peak usage periods.

H.5. Copies may be made from the film using the Athenaeum’s printers at the standard print fee; or they may save scanned images to their flash drive at no cost.

I. PROCESSING FILM ORDERS:

I.1. Shipments of film are received routinely from the “Salt Lake Distribution Center” in Salt Lake City. There are no markings on the box or address label referring to Family History Library or Center. The labels are addressed to the “Berkshire Athenaeum, Attn: Ronald Latham.” Because these shipments are so routine, library employees should watch for them and assure that they are routed directly to ILL (rather than to Acquisitions, which is standard library procedure for materials shipments).

I.2. ILL checks in the shipment and forwards the microfilm to the Local History Department for temporary storage while the film is at the Athenaeum. ILL staff update the Family History Center online tracking record to reflect receipt of the film, retains packing list, compares with shipment, and annotates with received/date due. Transaction paperwork is retained for six months.

I.3. Staff in the Local History Department will check the inventory of Family History Library films on site each week to determine which must be returned. At the end of the loan period for any given film, the returning film will be routed to ILL.

I.5. ILL will package the film, have it shipped to the Family History Library at the Salt Lake Distribution Center, and update the ILL tracking record and the packing list to reflect the date of return. The Family History Library requests films be returned in the original packing box to facilitate their automated tracking from their shipping label.

J. FUND ACCOUNTING: Order and renewal fees are collected by LDS. The Berkshire Athenaeum is not financially involved with LDS / Family History Library transactions.

K. LDS PATRON ASSISTANCE POLICY:

K.1. Do not openly advertise that films can be ordered by using Family History Center / Athenaeum computers. While allowed to mention that patrons may order films on any computer wired to the internet such as computers found at home, work, public libraries, or even the Family History Center, library staff should not give the impression that the Athenaeum is soliciting for library computers to be used as kiosks for film ordering.
K.2. The Family History Library requests that library staff do not directly assist patrons in completing an order online. If patrons need assistance or training to facilitate successful order placement, the patron should be directed to a separate computer where they may be walked through the steps. Once the patron understands the process, exit out of the website and have the patron start again from the beginning. Library staff should not be present during the ordering process, especially on the final steps when the patron enters personal information such as billing address and credit card information.

K.3. Library staff must not place an order for a patron using their own personal credit card, even if the patron reimburses with cash. Staff should never accept payment from a patron for a Family History Center transaction.