

# families are forever

## GENEALOGY CENTER TRACES ANCESTRY



### reuniting families

Linda Colvard believes every adoptee has the right to know the truth of their identity. In fact, she's made it her mission – her ministry – to reconnect adoptees with their birth families.

In the last two decades, Colvard has reunited hundreds of adoptees with their birth moms and siblings, and she has used genealogy researching skills and resources to do it.

**"In all of us there is a hunger, marrow deep, to know our heritage – to know who we are and where we came from."**

– Alex Haley

using the skills she used to trace her own ancestors, Colvard uncovered the history of her granddaughter and locked it away until the day she asked for it.

Kathy Huber, Genealogy Center manager, knew Colvard was passionate about adoptees having the right to know. When the library received a request from a girl in Oklahoma City who wanted help finding her birth mom, Huber asked Colvard if she would help.

"We did find her birth mother," said Colvard. "It is just one of those sweet, precious stories! The mother had remarried several times and lived in Chicago but had always wanted her daughter to find her. When I found her, she told me that she prayed every day that her daughter would find her."

Colvard credits the Tulsa City-County Library for her success at finding birth families.

"I couldn't have done it without the library," said Colvard, who for many years had volunteered at the Genealogy Center. "Without the library I wouldn't have had a clue where to start. In fact, the people who contact me don't have a clue as to where to start; a lot of times they already

have the information they need to find their birth families but they just don't know how to use it. I don't do anything that is magic but it's the experience I learned by researching through the library that I am able to help them."

Birth and death certificates, marriage licenses and divorce decrees, cemetery records and wills are just some of the special tools used by people to research their roots. Colvard uses these same tools to give adoptees an ancestry – a name, an identity.

Six years ago, Colvard helped Jodi Pielsticker find her birth mom, who had given birth to Jodi in 1935, during a time when it was considered shameful for an unmarried woman to become pregnant. Jodi's mother confided that she had prayed for her daughter every day, and whenever she saw a red-headed little girl of the right age she would wonder if she might be hers. Pielsticker will get to celebrate her birth mother's 100th birthday this September.

"Every adoptee wants to look into the face of someone they look like," said Colvard. "I tell them I will do everything I can to find their birth family and I will never give up. I will do my best to at least find a picture of the birth mom. And when I am successful, it's the most rewarding thing in the world."

Jodi Pielsticker cradles a photo of her birth mom.



### digging roots

Using the resources available through the library's Genealogy Center, library associate Liz Walker traced her husband's family back to the Mayflower. Countless others have used the center to dig their roots and create their own family trees.

The Genealogy Center not only boasts one of the largest genealogical research collections in Oklahoma, it also has access to the largest genealogy collection in the world – the Family History Center in Salt Lake City, Utah. Designated as an official FamilySearch Center in 2008, the Genealogy Center can borrow microfilm and microfiche (for \$5.50 per item) from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' Family History Center, which contains more than 2.4 million rolls of microfilmed genealogical records and 742,000 microfiche.

"With access to the Family History Center plus supplementary materials available in our own collection, we can provide our customers with most everything they need to research their family's roots," said Genealogy Center manager Kathy Huber.

"If we don't have all the resources you need to complete your family tree, we have experts on staff that can direct you to the right place, tell you what is available and how to get it."

### FRIENDLY STAFF

Kathy Huber has managed the library's genealogy collection for 18 years. She is assisted by library associates Liz Walker, Lisa Hansen and Jae Jaeger.

### DEDICATED SUPPORT GROUP

Founded in 1998, the Friends of Genealogy Inc. group offers an annual fundraiser in July to supplement the collection with special items that the library cannot afford through its regular operating budget.

### INFORMATIVE PROGRAMMING

Every July, the Genealogy Center celebrates Family History Month with lectures, all-day workshops, computer classes and other genealogy programs to help customers create their family trees. See Page 12 for this year's schedule of events.

### tools of the trade

The Genealogy Center contains vital records, census schedules, state and county histories, passenger lists, military records, family histories and a heraldry section. The collection consists of books, microfilm and microfiche, maps, research files and online databases, including: Ancestry Library Edition, Heritage Quest, Footnote.com and New England Ancestors.

Check out these new additions to the collection: "Cemetery Index of Oklahoma" – Published by Oklahoma Home and Community Education, this 77-volume series, one for each county, lists all known cemeteries with detailed directions for locating each cemetery, including latitude and longitude, and the township range and section. Some listings include a brief history of the cemetery. Death certificates often note the cemetery, so these reference sources will come in handy to find the actual location of the cemetery where your ancestors are buried.

"Family Maps" – Discover the exact location of your early ancestor's land. This series maps out each county of every state that was a federal land state, showing where each of the earliest landowners settled. The library does not have all of the books in the series yet but is in the process of buying them.

### VISIT THE GENEALOGY CENTER VIRTUALLY

Get an in-depth glimpse of the Genealogy Center by visiting our Web page at [www.tulsalibrary.org/genealogy](http://www.tulsalibrary.org/genealogy). The page features a tip sheet on how to begin your family history search, frequently asked questions, genealogy forms and charts, Web sites, American Indian research information including the Final Rolls of the Five Civilized Tribes, the Dawes Rolls Index, Tulsa Newspaper Death Notice Index and other handy resources to help you research your heritage.

### VISIT THE GENEALOGY CENTER IN PERSON

2901 S. Harvard  
Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., except Thursday, 1-8 p.m.