In late 2008, some DGS members realized that we could “rent” microfiche from the Church of Latter Day Saints Family History Library at ten cents a sheet, and could keep these indefinitely in our Genealogy Section at the Dallas Central Library. Although microfiche is an old media form, it appeared to be an opportunity we couldn’t pass up to add to the holdings of our already-rich genealogical collection in an extremely cost-effective manner.

In November 2008, the DGS Board approved a project to acquire genealogically-useful microfiche from the FHL at 15 cents a sheet, with funding provided through DGS. The project, led by Shirley Sloat, would be implemented by volunteers who would identify fiche available from the FHL that contained material not already available in Dallas through various media, creating lists of potential acquisitions that were reviewed for appropriateness by Lloyd Bockstruck, and subsequently ordered, received, catalogued, and filed in cabinets within the Genealogy Section by DPL staff members (see **Note 3**). An important part of the project was that acquisitions would be funded by donations and orders would be placed only when funds were available, thus ensuring that there would be no financial DGS risk. The additional important part of the project was the promise to create an online inventory of fiche acquired by this project, so that potential users could determine if they should come to the library to access the actual fiche data.

The project caught on like wild-fire and both volunteers and donors appeared on the scene about as fast as we could handle them. By the time we completed orders for all the States, ten DGS volunteers (see **Note 4**) had worked to create the orders and 60 donors had contributed approximately $ 2,700 — more than enough to acquire 16,500 sheets of microfiche. In the case of many state/counties, we more than doubled or tripled the number of data resources in our Genealogy Section.

In addition to orders for the states, two special collections were also ordered:

- “The Black Biography Project” consisting of more than 300 titles of biographical dictionaries and more than 30,000 biographical references, taken from more than 100 public and private repositories across the U.S. and Britain. The volumes in this publication deal primarily with Black Americans. A variety of biographical compendiums are included such as: national activist; state and local figures; prominent women; legal, medical, educational, business, and other professional members; reform organization members; pictorial histories of individuals and institutions. The acquisition of 1,070 sheets of microfiche was funded by a gift from the DGS African-American Genealogy Interest Group.
- “The Land Ownership Map” collection, a checklist of nineteenth century United States county maps in the Library of Congress. These included 1,449 county maps relating to 1041 counties concentrated mainly in the Northeast and North Central States and in Virginia, California, and Texas. Approximately one-third of all United States counties are represented in the collection. The great majority of the maps were prepared between 1840 and 1900 and vary in scale from 1:3,960 to 1:600,000. The acquisition of 2,010 sheets of microfiche was funded by a gift from Dr. Donald Holcomb.

Status, as of July 2011:

DPL Staff member Patrick McKinney continues to create card catalog entries for the remainder of the fiche acquired during this project, and has done an outstanding job of reorganizing the filing cabinets so that fiche are easily retrievable.

Since the City budget for funding library materials was drastically reduced, Ed Millis provided financial and other special assistance to create appropriate divider material for the fiche cabinets.

An online inventory of fiche acquired as part of this project is available for all fiche acquired, with the exception of the two large special collections. The inventory for these two special collections will be added as soon as possible.

Notes:

1. The online inventory includes only those fiche acquired by this project; there are other fiche that were acquired before 2009 and after 2010 that are not part of this inventory, and are not identified online.
2. The inventory includes the FHL fiche identification number which could be used to look up potential additional information for a particular fiche item, by accessing the LDS Family History site, www.familysearch.org , selecting the 'go to previous site' option, selecting 'library' from the top row of options, then selecting 'library catalog', followed by selection of 'film/fiche search' from the right hand list of options. Input of a specific fiche number will bring up a full-bodied description of the fiche source.
3. DPL Staff members included Lloyd Bockstruck, Gerri Brannan, Adrienne Jamieson, Sammie Lee, and Patrick McKinney.
4. DGS Volunteers included Joanne Corney, Ken Faucus, Gloria Goodwin, Sharon Henry, Liz Kutz, Ed Millis, Carole Ruska, Shirley Sloat, and Suzan Younger.