

**UPDATE ON THE ADAH/GSU
LOOSE RECORDS MICROFILMING PROGRAM
September 2007**

A cooperative endeavor by ADAH, the Genealogical Society of Utah (GSU), county government officials, and local volunteers, the Alabama loose records microfilming program is now in its sixth year. Work completed so far in 45 Alabama counties, and others currently filming, has yielded over 4,500 rolls—or seven million microfilm images—of historical estate files, marriage licenses, divorces, Confederate pensions, and other records from probate offices and circuit courts. Nearly 600 volunteers from local historical and genealogical societies have participated in the program

The following counties have finished their loose records projects: Autauga (58 rolls), Baldwin (22), Barbour (79), Bibb (55), Blount (73), Bullock (57), Butler (57), Calhoun (144), Chambers (119), Cherokee (67), Chilton (23), Choctaw (57), Clarke (56), Clay (31), Cleburne (52), Coffee (14), Crenshaw (38), Cullman (5), Dallas (129), DeKalb (68), Elmore (88), Etowah (242), Greene (142), Henry (60), Houston (31), Jackson (114), Jefferson (519), Lee (91), Limestone (196), Lowndes (19), Macon (32), Marshall (168), Montgomery (7), Morgan (309), Pike (57), Russell (74), St. Clair (34), Shelby (66), Tallapoosa (141), Tuscaloosa (50), Walker (60), Washington (15), Wilcox (84), and Winston (13). The GSU completed a separate project in Mobile County that produced over 400 rolls of film.

Filming has now begun in Hale and Lawrence Counties. Local volunteers, GSU volunteers, or local archives staff in four counties (Escambia, Franklin, Madison, and Talladega) are currently at work preparing their loose records. Nine other counties (Colbert, Conecuh, Coosa, Covington, Monroe, Perry, Pickens, Randolph, and Sumter) are not currently preparing records; they are either recruiting local volunteers or awaiting preparation help from GSU. In time, we expect loose records projects to be conducted in most of these counties.

Because loose records in some counties were lost in courthouse fires or floods, were bound in record books and previously microfilmed, or fall outside GSU's microfilming cut-off dates (1915 for estate case files, 1950 for loose marriages and divorces), seven counties (Dale, Fayette, Geneva, Lamar, Lauderdale, Marengo, and Marion) inventoried by ADAH staff did not have enough loose records to justify a project.

The GSU has also completed an "in-house" microfilming project at ADAH. It included historical county records from our own collection, as well as church and private records held by ADAH and Huntingdon College. This project produced 347 rolls of film. Finally, the Alabama Genealogical Society has recently begun to compile a database index of loose records microfilm from every completed project in the state. More information on this work is available on the AGS website: www.lrp.algensoc.org/LRP/loader.html.

To summarize, the loose records microfilming program has been one of the most successful local records initiatives that ADAH has ever conducted. When finished, it will have preserved millions of loose records in nearly every county—records that have enormous historical and genealogical importance to Alabamians. Even more beneficial, perhaps, has been the program's role in fostering increased cooperation between courthouse officials who are legally responsible for county records; local volunteers who revere their county's history; and our own state agency, whose primary mandate is the preservation of all Alabama public records.