



683 South 1300 West, No. 8 home, 15 July 1971.

Joe's Last Days With Us

10

After Joe's first heart attack in the winter of 1966, I made it a point to go every place I possibly could with him. We both realized that his type of heart condition was often fatal, so our life together from 1966 to 1971 was peaceful, tender, and most companionable. Our last year together (1970-1971), the year I was on sabbatical leave from school, was the first year that just he and I had been together alone since we were married in 1934. What a glorious time we had—how much fun, and how many intimate talks! It still just doesn't seem possible that that beloved voice is still and that I shall have to wait, probably many years, before I see and talk with him again.

Almost every morning, we knelt in family prayer by his "special chair"; in the last year, we knelt by his black recliner. When he said "Amen," we would give each other a good-morning kiss. When Kimmy and Becky stayed with us overnight, I always had to explain why we kissed each other in the mornings. His lips were always so soft; when he was younger he would get cold



Gayle, Joe, Grandma Cott, Stake Center.

sores on them, or they would become too dry from the sun. When the children were small and they hit him accidentally in the mouth in their play, he would have sore lips for weeks.

Joe took great pride in his garden. He admitted this to me just a few days before his passing. He gave his plants LTC (loving tender care). If he talked to them as though they were children, it was because he loved them. He didn't have the heart to throw anything away. He would not plant shrubs because he liked to rearrange his garden every year and get different effects from different flowers. I have never seen his flowers grow so large or so abundantly as in the year he died, 1971. The roots on the zinnias and the marigolds were so huge I had to have the

boys pull some of them for me. I hope I can always keep his garden lovely as a memorial to him.

Joe was very intelligent and a very good speller. He often helped me spell when I'd forget how. Until the last year that we were together, he always said that I didn't need to get a Master's degree because he was my Master. But when I decided to go back to school, he helped me get my sabbatical leave from school teaching, encouraged me, listened to me, and helped me when I needed him. When he read my introduction to my theses and realized that I had dedicated my thesis to him, to Joseph, my husband, he turned, looked at me, and said, "You *better* dedicate it to me." He was standing by the edge of the table and then turned, faced me, and said those words. I'll never forget that picture, it was just a day or two before he died.

During the spring and summer quarters at the University when I was studying for my Master's degree, I took the car because I didn't want to spend so much time on the bus. I could usually pick Joe up by 4:00 p.m., and if I wasn't on time, he would call me on the phone and say, "Frau Nemelka, when're you going to come and get me?" He was so good about dieting that he got tired more quickly—he really liked to come home. He very seldom went anyplace except to church or, in the later years, to political meetings. When his mother was alive and lived on Redwood Road, he went out to see her nearly every day. After she moved to Seventh East, he went to see her at least once or twice a week. I resented this attention at first because I didn't know Grandma Nemelka that well, but she was really on my side. If I wanted something done, I would get her to talk to Joe, and it would get done. When he was young and didn't want to take the children with him, he would tell them that he was "going to see a man about a horse." When he got older and had



Joe's beautiful garden, 611 South 1200 West, 1962.

grandchildren, he would often take them with him; he seemed to love his grandchildren very much.

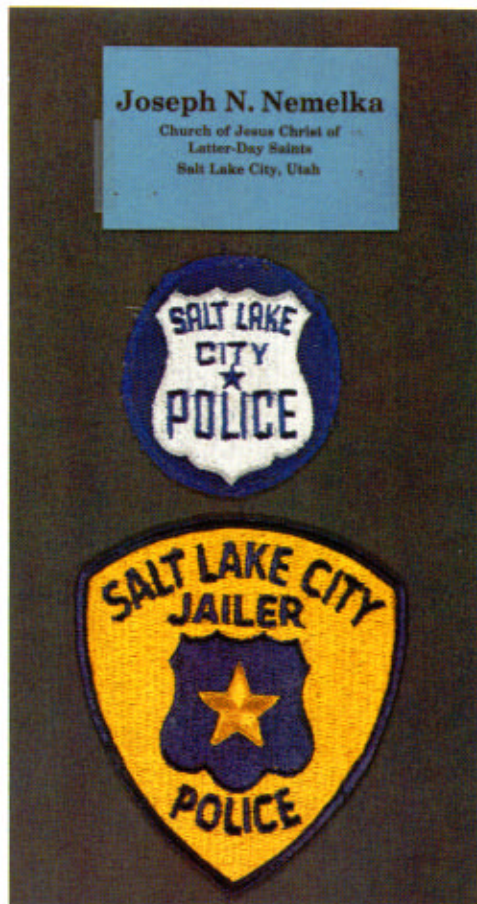
He very seldom scolded the boys or Beth after they were all married, but he would tell me when he was cross at them because he knew I'd tell them. He was always so happy when he would be a "pregnant grandpa." He wanted a new grandchild every year and paid each daughter-in-law five dollars for giving him a new grandchild. He knew that Janna was expecting the 30th grand-

child before he died, but we didn't know at the time just when the baby was to be born.

Joe liked to go with Beth to eat pizza and liked to go to his sons' houses because the wives all made such a fuss over him. He talked about his grandchildren all the time—how he wanted them to go on missions and remain active in the Church. His sole reason for living was to build up the Kingdom of God here on earth, and everything he said or did was done with this objective in mind. During the time he was assigned to the jail, he was always glad to come home Sunday morning so he could go to church. He said that it was like going from “hell” to “heaven,” and that was what he worked for—“heaven.”

Joe and I had a wonderful time at Mesa Verde and in Hawaii. We went to Hawaii even though it cost him the election for the State House of Representatives. He said, “We may never get to go again,” so we went. We had a wonderful time and Joe swam every chance he got, even getting stung by a Portuguese Man-o-War. We really did enjoy ourselves; and on the boat I had him all to myself for five whole days.

The “weighing-in ceremony” took place Saturday mornings. After Joe did his exercises on the bed, he would throw his left leg over to the right fifty times, then throw the right leg over to the left fifty times, then he would get up and we'd both weigh ourselves. At “the weighing-in ceremony,” as he called it, I weighed first and then he would weigh himself. I didn't lose much, but he lost weight quite steadily during the entire spring of 1971. He would say to himself aloud when it was time to get up, “Get up, Joe,” and then he would roll out. Once, when we were first married, we were wrestling on the bed, and he caught his little toe in the spring and broke his toe. He never did have it set properly and, as a result, had a crooked little toe for the rest of his life.



From "Hell" to "Heaven".

Joe was so good about dieting, and I know that he finally conquered his desire for food, thus making him as nearly perfect as any man could be; in a sense, ready for death.

After mother died, I became very interested in genealogy and was able to do the baptisms, endowments and sealings of hundreds of my families, especially the Johnstons. Joe always assisted me with the sealings and attended every session to which we were assigned with my family names. The times that we went to do an en-

dowment alone were enjoyable, and we often stopped at the Tampico Cafe on the way home to eat a Mexican meal. He knew the owner of that cafe very well (he was an Italian fellow), and Joe would talk with him whenever he appeared as we were eating. As was mentioned earlier in the book, when my children were little, Joe went many times to the Temple alone as I just could not leave the children so much.

As I have mentioned in other parts of this story, religion was by far the most important part of our lives. The boys were set a good example by their father, and by the time they left home, each boy had his Duty to God award, had received all of his priesthood ordinations, and had been taught both by precept and by example. They all know the difference between right and wrong, as also does Beth. If they have chosen to exercise their free agency that was and is their right as taught to them by their father. He was insistent that they make their own choices in whatever they wanted to do. We didn't allow them to remain home on Sunday as we felt that if their father went to church, they could go there, too. We always blessed the food, and very often had family prayer—not every day with all members as sometimes just Joe and I were present, but we still had prayer. The children were also taught to say their nightly prayers—they did when they were little—but again, they could use their free agency to do what they wanted to do. Joe exercised his priesthood to give me blessings and to give blessings to his children when he thought they needed one. He was my teacher in the church, and he strengthened my testimony by the life he led. We always paid a full tithing and paid any other assessments that were given to us. He applied for and was given a temple recommend every year of his life. Thus he was a member of good standing in his beloved church.



Pioneer Stake M-Men and Gleaner. Bride and Groom Night

On our eighth wedding anniversary I wrote the following poem to Joe:

I'm not a poetess but these lines of mine
 Will tell you what I mean,
 Maybe some of them don't rhyme
 But after writing them I feel keen.

The other night you called me a name
 That now means more to me
 Than riches or beauty or fame.

Such a sweet, tender name—
 Not "sweetheart" or "darling" or
 "precious" or "honey"
 Just a few little words
 That I wouldn't trade for money.

Perhaps not so flowery as some would say
 But the meaning was there and come what may



June 1971, Church Historian's Vault.

Those six little words have made happier my day.

Sometimes I'll be cross and tired
And the days will seem so long
But all of that can fade away
If you'll say the words that can't go wrong,

"You're the mama of my kids."

Yes, I'm the mama of your kids.
And thankful and proud I am to be
The woman you have chosen
For the mama through all eternity.

July 15, 1971 was Joe's last day here with me. I can't remember too clearly all that happened as it was rather an uneventful morning. He got up quite early and went



Annette and Dave Stanley, Joe and Gayle, 14 July 1971.



Patriarch and Sister Owens.
Their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

out to water his garden. I helped him throw away some of the useless things that had accumulated in the garage because the pickup men were coming this day. He saved an old broken down bird bath that someone else had put on our pile. He loved to sit by our back door and watch the birds bathe in Bishop Metcalfe's bird bath. Sometimes he would sit and count how many went swimming, and once he noticed that the same robin went back again and again. We had family prayer, and I took him to work. As we were driving in the gate of the Beehive Clothing area, I said to him, "I'll be glad when you can quit this job. Anytime you want to retire, just go ahead."

He smiled and answered, "Is that so?" He always said that to me when he didn't want to give a direct answer. Other times he had said, "I will, I want to go on my mission if I can."

I had a production of "The Emerald City of Oz" up at the University, so I left the house early and went to Auerbach's to buy some gifts.

I went out to pick Joe up at work at 4:00 p.m., and we drove home. He had some tiny pine seedlings that Vaughn Standing, the man who worked with him, had given him, so he planted them and worked awhile outside. He came in the house, took a shower, then sat down in his black recliner, watched the news, and dozed a little. He wanted to wear his Hawaiian outfit but I talked him out of it. He said, "I'll never get to wear it," never dreaming how true those words were. I never knew exactly what to wear at the church parties, and I always felt out of place, so he settled just for his pretty red and white Hawaiian shirt and the pants Beth gave him for father's Day. We drove out to Earl Olson's home in Bountiful. Joe remembered the plates, knives, and forks that we were supposed to take, I didn't.

When we arrived, I immediately thought that his Hawaiian outfit would have been very appropriate as the people were all dressed in slacks, but it was too late by then. He joked with a widow in the ward, then with Vaughn and LaRee Standing. After that, Joe and I played lawn darts.

Suppertime came, we ate and he enjoyed his supper. He hadn't eaten all day so that he would be able to eat a good supper, which he did. He made a remark about women's "lib" and asked me if I was in favor of it. I answered that I wasn't so he asked me to get him some ice cream and cake. I thought he asked for pound cake but he wanted German Chocolate. I gave him the pound cake and the ice cream because I hadn't understood, but he said that it was all right. We sat for a while. I was talking about my school, and Joe got a little restless. He put his bib back in the sack with the plastic knives and forks and took it over to the car. He walked around, talking to people, and sat with the widows for a moment. Sometime before, he commented on how much Sister Chappuis missed her Gaston. He threw the volleyball over to one of the fellows sitting at Elder Hunter's table, and I made him stop for fear he would hit the wife. Then he wandered over to the volleyball game with Vaughn while I stayed at the table and talked with a sister about her Primary problems. I watched Joe hit the ball a few times, then they changed sides. I remarked to a friend that he shouldn't be hitting the ball but I thought to myself, "I won't go get him to stop because it embarrasses him and he dislikes being bossed, especially in public." All of a sudden, one of the girls came running over to us saying, "Something's the matter with Joe." I ran toward him and said, "Oh, why did you let him play ball?!" Joe was lying on the ground, and they were trying to get him to breathe. Vaughn told me later that, when Joe fell, he didn't moan or make a sound. Apparently, he was dead

before he touched the ground. Vaughn said that, at first, they thought he was just clowning. Then they realized what had happened.

After Joe had dropped to the ground, I remember someone behind me had said, "Get Brother Hunter! Where's Brother Hunter?" I wondered why Brother Hunter hadn't used his authority to administer to Joe, but I needn't have wondered because, sometime later, a brother who was there said to me, "Did you know that Brother Hunter administered to your husband?"

"No, I didn't know that," I told him.

"Well, he did, because I helped him. Brother Hunter was the voice in that administration."

What a comfort those words were to me! Apostle Howard W. Hunter had used his priesthood but the Lord had had other plans for Joe.

The ambulance finally came, and I rode with Joe to L.D.S. Hospital. They put him on a bed and checked him, but he had left us. Jody, who met me at the hospital, went in with me to see him. He looked so peaceful, though he was quite dark. I kissed him, and his lips were cool. My beloved sweetheart had gone home.

My only regret is that I didn't do more for Joe while I had him, although he hated having me hover over him. He scolded me for worrying about him. He would always tell me, "When it's time for me to go, I'll go," and he did.

Thus was the life of Joseph Nephi Nemelka. His birth was in response to great faith, and his life was a magnification of that faith. And yet, his life was filled with many of the same human frustrations and experiences that all of us must face; and, in the end, death took him like it will eventually take all of us.

I hope that the memories I have shared of him are, if nothing more, a clear example of the great meaning that can come to one's life through unfeigned love and service

to others. The emptiness all of us felt at his passing was, no doubt, due to the realization that his love and support would not longer be with us. I suppose the message of his life is simple: if you love, you will be loved.

In conclusion, may I leave some precious words of his that he wrote to me before we were married. If he could speak to us right now, he would no doubt say something very similar to this:

Love, my dear, is sweet.
Love, my dear, is bliss complete.
Yet to some, tis agony untold,
For to love is to have and to hold.

Love, my dear, can cause much sorrow,
Some love today and forget tomorrow,
While others, for love they would die,
And still some give it up with a sigh.

Some yearn for love, yet know not why,
While others spurn love, and say 'tis a lie.'
Still others seem not to care,
And to them life seems too unfair.

And in the end, when we all must part,
We say with a sigh that comes from the heart,
'Life has been sweet and filled with love,
And I will think of thee, even from above.'

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
OFFICE OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84141

August 9, 1971

Gayle Nemeika
683 South 12th West
Salt Lake City, Utah

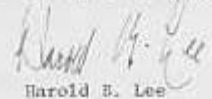
Dear Gayle:

When I returned after a few days out of town, I found your note with reference to the passing of Joe.

I agree wholly with what you have said about him. Your appraisal of him seemed to be that of every one who came to know him. I am sure that the example of his life and his teachings will bear fruit in the wonderful family that he and you brought into the world.

May the Lord bless you Gayle and give you the strength to carry on and to complete the mission which you and he undertook when you first started your family. Please be assured of my love and blessing upon you and yours in your bereavement.

Affectionately yours,



Harold E. Lee

RESOLUTION

BE IT REMEMBERED that the Board of County Commissioners of Salt Lake County, State of Utah, met in special session of the Board on Friday, the 16th day of July, 1971, with the following Commissioners present:

William E. Dunn, Chairman
Philip R. Stromquist
Ralph Y. McClure

and with the following officials also present:

Ray G. Grossman, Chief Civil Deputy County Attorney
Helen M. Houston, Deputy County Clerk, all of whom

WITNESSED THAT:

WHEREAS, we have learned that Joseph Nephi Nemelka, age 61, and father of our able County Attorney, Carl J. Nemelka, passed away on Thursday, July 15, 1971 herein Salt Lake County; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Nemelka was a Church and civic leader of consequence, and was also a veteran police officer with 28 years of honorable service, prior to retiring; and

WHEREAS, this good man's stated objectives in life were to be a good husband, father and grandfather, and to give selfless service to his Church and to show his great love and devotion to his wife, Gayle Cotterell Nemelka, and to their ten children, eight of whom survive him; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Nemelka did accept and honorably fulfilled numerous Church assignments, including a mission to Germany, and service as a Bishop, Stake High Councilman, superintendent of L.D.S. stake seminaries and supervisor of the Church Historian Record Center, among other duties; and

WHEREAS, Joe Nemelka, although mindful of the certainty of death and the uncertainty of life took time to be active in civic affairs and with his political party, and also, through

his love of gardening, earned the sobriquet of having the "greenest thumb" in his neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, this noble man will be sorely missed by his loved ones, his host of friends and by the many persons who have been inspired to live better lives because of their association with him;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of County Commissioners of Salt Lake County, does hereby express its deepest sympathy to Carl J. Nemeika, to his mother, Gayle, and to his brothers and sister, Larry, Duane, Michael, Dick, Beth, Joseph Jr., and John, and the other members of his accomplished family in this time of bereavement, acknowledging their great loss and paying tribute to Joseph Nephi Nemeika for his integrity, devotion and service to mankind.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Carl J. Nemeika and to Mrs. Joseph Nemeika and family.

Done in Salt Lake City, Utah this 15th day of July, 1971.



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF SALT LAKE COUNTY

By William E. Dunn
WILLIAM E. DUNN, Chairman

By Phillip R. Blomquist
PHILIP R. BLUMQUIST

By Ralph Y. McClure
RALPH Y. McCLURE

ATTEST:

William E. Dunn
County Clerk

Dave Kadleck *Deseret News*,
Saturday, December 25, 1971

...MOMENTS OF SADNESS, TOO

No year goes by without its sadness. Many of the sad moments of 1971 will span our lifetimes....The late Joe Nemelka, whose many sons have dominated our headlines for the past three decades, fell victim to a heart attack while enjoying an athletic activity.....

Their legacy, of course, must be the many young men they guided into life's busy world.....

Joe also wrote:

“My mortal life story begins with the fasting and prayers of my beloved mother for a child.”

My Priesthood—the Power by which I shall obtain Eternal Life if I magnify and honor it.

My religion is the very essence of my life—not separate but included.

Make each day your masterpiece.”

Joseph Nephi Nemelka

**OUR CHILDREN, OUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN AND
OUR FUTURE POSTERITY
Christmas, 1984**

I. CARL JOSEPH

1. md Susan Hodson
Michael Paul md Kristine Thomas
Debora Ann md David Spotts
Tracy Lee md Patrick Sullivan
Tiffany Lynne
Christopher
Jon Carl
2. md BettySue Pearce
Kathryn Brooke (Katie)

II. LAWRENCE PAUL (Larry)

1. md Dorothy Hansen
Anthony Lawrence (Tony)
Cynthia Dawn
Tricia Gayle
Marci Laurel

III. ROBERT DUANE

1. md Claudia Bishop
Kenneth Duane (Kenny) md Lori Robinson
Scott R. md Jenny Schacht
Brooke Anne

IV. MICHAEL JAMES

1. md Diane Jorgensen
Michael James II (Mike) md Teena Blades
Jonathon Michael
Cory David md Linda Snideman
Amanda Jean
Sarah Elizabeth

Christopher Marc (Chris) md Paula Blades
Brittany Nicole
Joseph Lee (Jody)
Alesa Diane (Lesa) md Kelvin Warner
Lisa Anne
Leslie Michelle

2. md Gloria Harmon
Kevin Wendell
Joel Nathan
Jill
Bridget
Paulette
James Howell

V. MARK STEPHEN

1. md Robin Olsen
Jeffrey David (Jeff)
Mark Stephen

Robin md Gary Hicks
Mindi Louise
Russell James
Joseph Jordan (Joey)
Judith Elaine (Judy)

VI. RICHARD SAMUEL (Dick)

1. md Barbara Davis
Stephen Richard
Rhett Branson
Cary Lee
2. md Pamela Abegg
Thomas Spencer (Tom)

VII. ELIZABETH (Beth)

1. md Ronald Westerman
Kimberly (Kim) md Dennis Holt
Derek Stephen
Rebecca (Becky)

VIII. JOSEPH NEPHI JR. (Jody or Joe)

1. md Janna Dutson
Jason Richard
Jefferson Owen (Jeff)
Joseph Nephi III (Joey)

IX. ALMA JOHN (Johnny or John)

1. md Sheila Kitchens
Matthew John
2. md Marie Thompson
Melissa Ann
Ryan Allen



Betty



Virginia



Charletta



Grandma Cott

Once I went in swimmin'
Where there were no wimmin'
And no one to see,

Since no one was there
I hung my underwear
Upon a willow tree.

Dove into the water
Bare as Pharaoh's daughter
Dove into the Nile.

Someone saw me there
And stole my underwear
And left me with a smile.

(Joe's song for his children.)