

Our Family History Game

By Cynthia Green

I can do that! I thought. I'd just finished reading an *Ensign* article by a mother who had created a game to help her children learn their ancestors' names.¹ She'd drawn a six-generation pedigree chart on a large piece of butcher paper and made a card for each ancestor featuring the individual's name and a bit of biographical information. The children then had to place the cards in their proper places on the chart.

For some reason I was drawn to that article, and something clicked inside me. Before that, I'd had no interest in my family history because I had always believed it was already done. But as I read, I realized it would be good for my children to be familiar with their ancestors' names and photos. And it would probably be good for me too, since except for my grandparents, I didn't even know who my ancestors were.

Using information provided by my parents and my husband's parents, I prepared six-generation pedigree charts for my children. As I did so, I was moved by this visual representation of my family and my husband's family becoming one.

Our family enjoyed playing the ancestor game in family home evening. We started out using the 15 names in the first four generations. After time, as

we became more familiar with the names and faces, we added 48 more ancestors. The game became a favorite at our house.

As we played, I looked at the photos and began wondering about these people. Where did they come from? What kind of lives had they led? I wanted to know more. So I asked our parents to share information about these ancestors that I could add to our game.

As I read their stories, I felt like I was walking beside them, living their lives with them. I wept over their hardships, cried when their loved ones died, rejoiced when they overcame trials, and laughed with them as they celebrated simple pleasures. I put my heart and soul into learning more. They became more than just photographs and names to me; they were real people with real lives. As my heart turned to theirs, I felt them turning toward me. I sensed they loved me and were happy I was getting to know them.

My love for my husband and his family grew as well. Knowing their history helped me understand them better. My family has learned from our ancestors' good choices as well as their poor ones. We've been blessed by their sacrifices. We have come to love them. I have learned that our ancestors are a part of us and that we are a part of them. ■

NOTE

1. See Dorine McDaniel, "The Ancestor Game," *Liahona*, Mar. 2000, 44-45; *Ensign*, Sept. 1995, 73.

