

MY NOTE ON THE GRAVESTONE

During the summer of 2003, I was in Michigan, USA, researching my great-great-uncle Robert Hall. At the end of my trip, I revisited a cemetery I had been to 20 years earlier.

When I had visited the cemetery before, I noticed flowers on one of the headstones with the last name Hall. This time I wrote a note, dated it, and laminated it to protect it from the weather. Then I prayerfully left the note at the headstone, hoping that someone who could help me learn more about Robert Hall would find it. I returned home to California

hopeful but skeptical that anything would come of this note.

A week later I received a letter from a distant cousin named Deke Bentley.

“Yesterday I had a strange experience,” he wrote. “At 3:00 p.m. I was headed to buy strawberries when I decided to stop by the Plains Road Cemetery to check out my ancestors’ graves. I had not been there for several years. Next to the graves was your postcard.”

Deke had gone to the cemetery the same day I had left the note. I called him immediately. During our

conversation I found out that he lived in Hillsdale, more than 50 miles (80 km) from the cemetery.

A few months later I eagerly returned to Michigan to visit Deke. He told me he had relatives buried in the cemetery directly across from his home, and he asked if I would like to go there. He told me that the cemetery had four gravestones of Halls, two that he knew nothing about.

At the cemetery, Deke showed me the gravestones. The two he didn’t know about belonged to Martin and Anna Hall. I hadn’t brought my records, but I distinctly remembered having researched a Martin Hall.

We rushed to the county courthouse an hour before it closed, hoping a death record would identify Martin’s parents. It did! Martin’s father was Robert Hall! The Holy Ghost confirmed to me that my long search had ended.

Deke, not a member of the Church, said finding Robert Hall seemed “almost spiritual.” I smiled, knowing that the Spirit had led me.

“You may have been disappointed that you didn’t leave your note 20 years ago,” Deke said, “but the fact is that I moved to Hillsdale just three years ago!”

This experience was a lesson to me that family history is indeed part of God’s work and that He leads us in our righteous efforts. ■

Marianne Chaplin Stovall, California, USA

I prayerfully left a note at the headstone, hoping that someone who could help me would find it.

