

Uncle Gilberto's Memory

By Esther Labibe de Beruben

When I began learning about ordinance work for the dead, I was inspired by the great love my husband showed for his grandmother in seeing that her temple ordinances were performed. This motivated me to learn more about my own ancestors. In the years since then, many brothers and sisters, including those at the family history center near my home in Guadalajara, Mexico, have helped me learn to do the work for my ancestors.

In 1991 I received my patriarchal blessing and was instructed that I should be concerned about my deceased relatives and dedicate myself to them. I set a goal to do this, which led to daily discussions with my parents, who were not members of the Church. I often asked questions about my family, but my mother could tell me only about my grandparents.

One day my mother told me that Uncle Gilberto, my father's brother, had suffered a heart attack. "I know he would love to talk

with you," my mother said. "He has a great memory, and he could give you a great deal of information about the family."

When I called him at the nursing home where he was staying, his wife answered and told me that my uncle was doing poorly and couldn't talk. I gave her my best wishes and told her that I would pray for them and their family.

The next day I called the nursing home again. To my surprise, my uncle answered the telephone.

"Uncle Gilberto!" I said. "I called to tell you that I have prayed fervently for your recovery and that I love you."

"Thank you very much, Bibi," he

replied. "I woke up this morning feeling much better. Tell me what's going on with you."

I told him of my eagerness to know the names of

family members who were from Arabia and Lebanon. My mother was right about my uncle's memory. He knew names, dates, and places for four generations on my father's side of the family.

When I hung up the phone, I felt that our conversation would be the last one we would share in this life. I was right. But the Lord had blessed us both so that I could obtain information I needed to unite our family—both now and in the eternities. ■

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY KRISTIN YEE



A Ride to Church

By Stephen Baer

When I was seven years old, my mom and dad befriended a less-active family in our ward that consisted of a single mother and her two sons. My older brother, John, and I were the same ages as the two boys, Robin and Shannon, so it seemed appropriate that we extend a hand of fellowship.

The family didn't own a car, so my father offered to pick them up at their home in a nearby city and give them rides to and from church. I remember the days Dad summoned my brother and me to accompany him to pick them up. I begrudged it at the time, but despite my groaning, Dad continued to give them rides until they were actively attending church and had their own car. Robin and Shannon were soon baptized and confirmed, and their mom began participating in Relief Society. I didn't realize at the time the positive repercussions that would come from this act of service.

A few months before I began eighth grade, my dad passed away. To compound my grief, I was insecure about my physical appearance and

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lack of friends. I began to succumb to feelings of despair, and I spent my lunch hours walking to my house and back because I couldn't bear sitting alone.

That same year, the family we had befriended moved into our school district, and Shannon began attend-

ing my school. We became immediate friends. I felt accepted, and I was no longer so sad. Knowing that someone enjoyed being my friend boosted my confidence and self-worth. I no longer had to spend my lunch hour by myself.

Our friendship deepened during high school. When our older brothers left for college and missions, Shannon and I became surrogate brothers. We received our Eagle Scout Awards at the same court of honor, went to the same university, left on missions during the same summer, and became

roommates afterward. We were both married in the Salt Lake Temple to wonderful women, and our first children were born within three months of each other.

One evening shortly before Shannon's wedding, we began talking about our childhood. I told him how he had helped me overcome my insecurities and cope with the death of my father. It was his friendship, I added, that had helped me turn my life around. Shannon then told me that if my dad had not given his family rides to church, he would not have attended church, served a mission, and been sealed in the temple.

The Spirit touched me strongly during that conversation as I realized the blessings that a simple ride to church had on our lives. As I reflected on Shannon's friendship, I realized that my father not only helped save Shannon's family, but he also prepared a friend who helped save his own son. ■

Who Turned My Head?

By Hildo Rosillo Flores

During a sacrament meeting in Piura, Peru, in 1972, a speaker who was discussing the importance of family history work kept looking at me. At the end of his talk, he surprised me when he announced, “I know that Brother Rosillo is going to do this work.”

I had been a member of the Church for less than a year, but I set a goal to get started on my family history—not because of what he said but because I felt a desire to do so. I obtained a four-generation pedigree chart and started by interviewing my parents and relatives to find out what they knew. Each time I worked on my family history, I prayed and asked the Lord for help.

To find the death dates of my maternal great-grandparents, I traveled to the town of Zorritos, in northern Peru, where they had been buried. The cemetery was on the outskirts of town, and most of the dead had been laid to rest in vaulted compartments.

I entered the cemetery and started looking, but I didn’t find anything. I then decided to go to town to ask a cousin if she was sure that our

great-grandparents had been buried there. When she said yes, I told her, “Then I’m not leaving until I have those dates.”

I returned to the cemetery and began a methodical search, walking down every vault aisle and reading every inscription. I still couldn’t find their vaults, so I knelt and asked the Lord to help me. Then I searched again—but with the same results. I was tired, it was getting late, and I needed to leave so I could do other research I had planned.

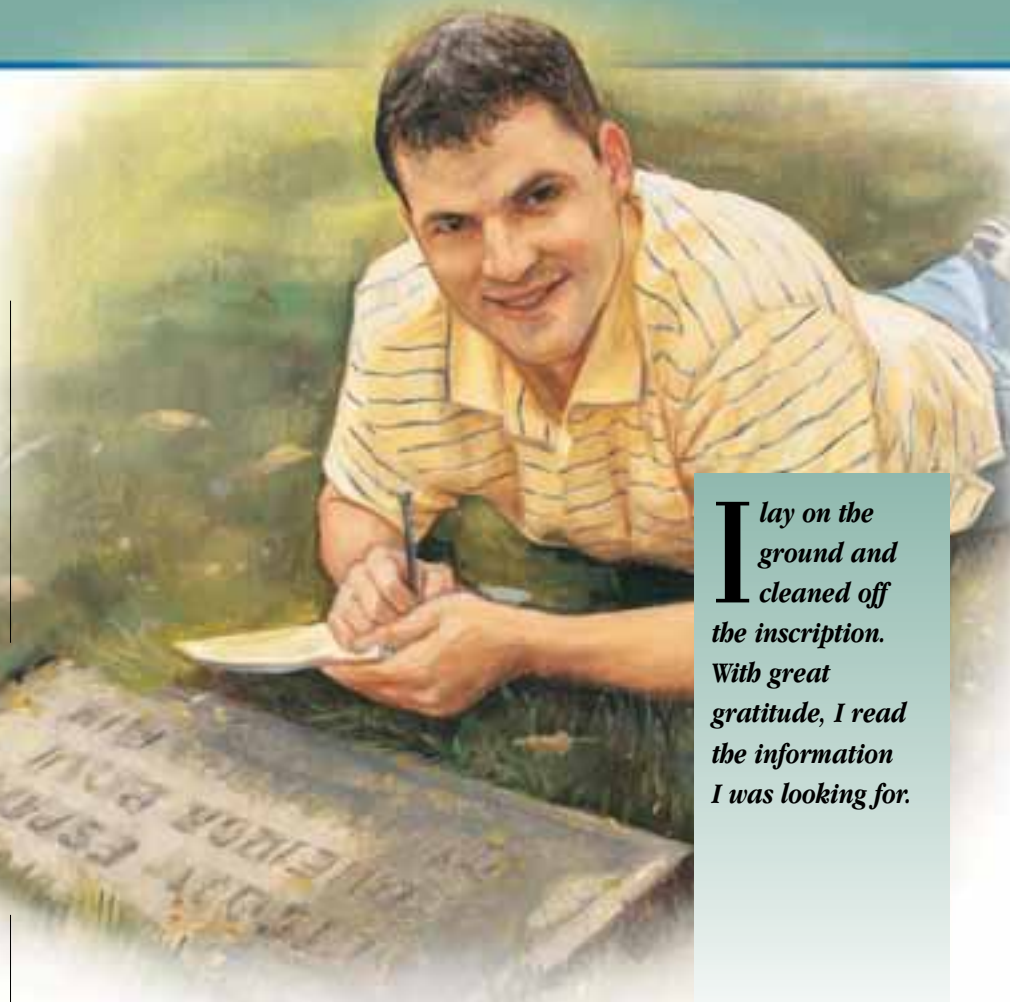
“Well, I did my part,” I thought to myself. I would have to leave without accomplishing my goal.

Ready to leave, I turned toward the front gate. But just as I took my first step, I felt two hands take hold

of my head from behind and turn it toward a certain spot. My eyes rested on a small, dirty headstone that was level with the ground. I looked behind me to see who had grabbed my head, but no one was there.

I walked to the headstone, lay on the ground, and cleaned off the inscription. With great gratitude, I read the information I was looking for: *Isidro Garcia Rosillo, died August 1, 1934. Francisca Espinoza Berrú, died January 31, 1954.*

My ancestors’ long wait to receive their saving ordinances ended in 1980. That was when my wife and I went to the São Paulo Brazil Temple to receive our endowments. At the temple I was sealed to my wife and baptized for my deceased loved ones.



I lay on the ground and cleaned off the inscription. With great gratitude, I read the information I was looking for.

As I entered the baptismal font, I remembered the small headstone at the cemetery. I went down into the calm waters knowing the Lord had guided my steps as I searched for my ancestors. ■

A Prayer with My Home Teacher

By Judy Stone

I am embarrassed to admit it, but there was a time when I thought home teachers were more of a nuisance than a blessing. At such times I would find ways to absent myself from their visits so I could get my work done.

That's why when Lincoln became our home teacher, I was especially annoyed. He never missed a visit. He always had a lesson prepared, and he faithfully carried out his home teaching duties. I appreciated his efforts but not enough to give him and his companion my undivided attention when they came for their monthly visit. Lincoln was always cordial; I was always a little rude.

One year during the early spring, I was out working in the yard. The day was clear and warm. Usually I find gardening therapeutic, but on this day I was distraught. My husband had just undergone debilitating back

surgery, and as a family we faced some tough decisions.

Needing answers, I found myself kneeling in the garden. Tears flowed as I prayed fervently for direction from the Lord. If I could only feel some peace. If I could only have some assurance that our future would not be as dismal as it seemed at the moment. I prayed earnestly, speaking aloud at times, begging the Lord for hope but most of all for peace.

When I returned to the house after pleading with the Lord, I was

spent. I was glad no one was home so I could get myself together. But no sooner had I taken off my work shoes when the doorbell rang. Lincoln was the last person on my mind, but when I opened the door, there he stood with his wife, minus lesson materials.

For the first time, I actually found myself happy to see him. I invited them in. We chatted, and Lincoln asked about my husband's work, our five daughters, and other family matters. They didn't stay long, but as they got up to go, Lincoln asked if

he could leave a blessing on our home. I was grateful, wondering how he knew a prayer would be so welcome. We knelt, and as I listened to his words of comfort, he specifically asked for a blessing of peace on our home.

During that moment I felt a wave of comfort fill my soul. I knew then that the Lord was in charge and that everything was going to work out.

My prayers had been answered with clarity and assurance through Lincoln, our faithful home teacher. In honoring his stewardship and following the promptings of the Holy Ghost, he left me with a testimony of his sacred calling. ■

