

FROM BRAZIL TO FINLAND AND BACK

By Salla Rantanen

A television documentary helped me find names from the other side of the world.

One year I traveled from Joensuu, Finland, where I was born and raised, to São Paulo, Brazil, for a vacation at the invitation of a Brazilian friend who is a fellow Latter-day Saint. While there, I became friends with the other members of his family, and when his mother added me as a friend on Facebook, I learned what her maiden name was.

Months after my return home, I happened to see a television documentary about traveling in Brazil

and recorded it to watch later. The show was about two Norwegian men who traveled the back roads of Brazil by car. They stopped at places of interest to show the everyday life in Brazil.

At one point, the men turned into what they thought was a little park alongside the road, but to their surprise, it was a nicely groomed cemetery. Just before departing, the cameraman panned away from the travelers to show a view of the

cemetery. Of all the headstones that came into view, only one, down in the lower right corner of the TV screen, had names and dates that could be read. I was surprised to see that the surname on that headstone was the same as the surname of my friend's mom, a rare German name in Brazil. I paused the video, took a photo of the headstone on my smartphone, and texted it to my friend in Brazil. I thought that this headstone might be important to his family and asked if



the people named on the headstone were his mother's relatives.

The next day a return text came that said, "They are my mother's family." His family wanted to know how I found that headstone and where the cemetery was located. I told them about the documentary and said that I would attempt to locate the cemetery by watching it again.

As I replayed the documentary several more times, I was able to pick out names of some towns and

villages that were mentioned, but I was unable to follow the travelers' route. Not wanting to give up, I went online and found a few tips from additional information about the documentary.

When I watched the video again, I was able to see part of the cemetery's name just as the men drove into it. I prayed for help, and after a search on Google Maps, I found the cemetery.

The discovery of the headstone in that cemetery in Brazil has led my

friends to find over 100 family names. Temple ordinances for the two individuals identified on the headstone and for several others have now been done.

I know that I was blessed to be guided by the Spirit to be part of finding these "lost" names. I know that there are varied and unique ways to help us find those who are waiting for their temple work to be done and that we have been given tools to assist us in performing this sacred work. ■

The author lives in North Karelia, Finland.

TOOLS TO HELP US FIND THOSE WHO ARE WAITING

Are you searching for an elusive ancestor and wonder where to look for information? The internet has opened up new avenues for family history research. Even simply typing an ancestor's name in a search engine like Google can bring amazing results.

FamilySearch and other websites offer records, books, and

newspapers online that may prove helpful, and FamilySearch can give you access to records on Ancestry.com, Findmypast.com, MyHeritage.com, and other sites (see familysearch.org/partneraccess). Plus, be sure to check out these resources: "Family History Research Wiki" (see directions below); "Finding Elusive Records" (video) at lds.org/go/elusiveE818.

