

LEONA

It is difficult to write on paper how you feel about loved ones. There are so many events and feelings that no matter what is said or written, it just doesn't "reach there". That's the way it is with me for my father's family, but especially for Leona. What would my world have been without the close association with my brothers and sisters?

Leona has been so good to me. She has always been special because she made me feel "special" through things she has said and done for me all through my life.

As with others in our family, I remember Leona and her part in water fights when I was very young. I remember walking to school with her when I was in first grade. I remember mother sending her with me to an outdoor toilet (on the farm) after dark, and how she didn't appreciate that assignment. I remember how Leona and our cousin Martha laughed when a mouse ran up my pant leg and all the way up in my back as we were playing near some grain sacks by the old grainery. I remember her taking piano lessons and how I liked to hear her play "The Doll Dance". I remember her wedding day and how Reo "fixed" Jewel's car and how Jewel was frustrated when it wouldn't start. Leona knew Reo had done something to it. Reo laughed as he repaired his mischief.

I remember going to see Leona and Jewel at Red Rock Trading Post. I watched as the Navajo Indians purchased items in the store. It was interesting and somewhat entertaining as Jewel would forecast

whether or not they could purchase the items they were asking about. I later wrote a descriptive theme paper on this, and pleased my English Professor in college. All of this is part of my memory of Leona, and her family. And speaking of family, Leona and Jewel have much to be proud of. They have raised a beautiful and talented family.

I have always referred to Leona by name. Although I could easily have called her "Sis". But that was Reo's way, and I didn't want to copy. I felt it would have sounded shallow from me, but fine for Reo.

I have traveled to many places with my wife, Lela, and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. A trip to Japan was coming up and we decided that since I had been there with them once before, we shouldn't stretch our finances that far again. We both came up with the same thought: why not invite Leona to go with them? (Lela did not want to travel alone and she had not arranged for a travel partner in the Choir.) We were happy and pleased when Leona decided to go. Although Leona payed her own way, I felt that through my wife, I had given her the opportunity for a marvelous experience, and thus repaid her for some of the kind things she had already done for me. They had a choice two weeks in Japan together.

Thank you Leona for the little "talks" we have had and for the counsel I have received there.

May the Lord continue to bless you and your family.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Just".

LEONA

I have always had a special place in my heart for my "little" sister, Leona. As I try to stir my brain to bring back some of the memories of our childhood in Colorado, I think of the bird funerals we had as we buried the poor little sparrows I had killed with my beanie. The gravesites were under a "grove" of currant bushes. As I remember, there were tunnels or trails through these bushes and we would crawl under the bushes where there was ample room for a sparrow cemetery. It seems that we played together quite a bit when we were small. Then we moved to Fruitland, New Mexico and continued the process of growing up.

One time I had to take a load of hay to Mariano Lake Trading Post, east of Gallup. I talked Leona and Irene into ditching school and going with me. We had a great time, ate lunch at White's Cafe in Gallup. What a blast! I don't remember the repercussions at home, though I know there probably should have been some. Another time I was going from the Ignacio farm to Farmington in the truck and Leona and Carmen, Irene's sister, went with me. We had some hay to drop off at Long Hollow Mill where Reo and Ferrel were working. It was late Sunday afternoon. In fact, it got dark soon after we went through Durango. It was January and there was lots of snow on the ground. About a mile before we got to Red Mesa, we got stuck in a snow drift. I had chains which I tried to put on, but to no avail. The wind was blowing and drifting the snow. We saw a light in a farm house about 1/4 mile back, so we headed for it. We struggled through knee-deep snow trying to get back to that house. We finally made it and those good people invited us to stay the night, which we did. The next morning the man pulled us out with his tractor and helped us through a few snow drifts and we went on our way. I was afraid the three of us were going to freeze to death before we reached that farm house. Leona and Carmen had no overshoes. What an experience! I don't remember of having any fights or squabbles with Leona, but I'm sure we must have had a few. She may remember them better than I.

Then we moved to Ignacio, Colorado. I don't have many memories of Leona there. Of course, I married my sweetie a year after we moved there and as I remember, Leona and Jewel were married about a year later. We've had many good times with the McGee's. We had a very memorable time with them when our children were small out at Red Rock Trading Post. We went up on the Lukachukai Mountain near Red Rock on a picnic and enjoyed a great day in the pines. A few years later we and our families went fishing in the Colorado mountains. We camped at Wolf Creek campgrounds and spent a few days enjoying the cool mountains and fishing on the upper San Juan River.

Leona and Jewel have always been so good to us and our family--made us feel special. We really treasure the good times we have had together. They always make us feel welcome when we stop by for a good visit or when we need a place to stay. Many of Leona's little mannerisms and ways remind me so much of our dear mother. I don't think Leona realizes how much she is like Mom, and I mean this as a great compliment because I consider it a great tribute for anyone to be like Mom. I hope that Leona, and anyone else who reads this will recognize the great love and respect that I have for my sister, Leona. I have great difficulty in finding the words to express my feelings. Oh how I wish I had availed myself of the opportunities I may have had in school, in English class, and in disciplining myself to write more; a diary, letters, etc., so that I would be better able to express my innermost feelings in an understandable and meaningful way. Anyway, Leona, I do love you and am really proud to be your brother.

...Vaughn

KURT

My memories of Kurt before we left Sanford are almost nil. He was only four and a half years old at that time and I only remember him as a little boy running around and doing the things that little boys that age do. I remember when we were living on the Burt Dustin farm in the early 1930's when Kurt was trying to find a ripe watermelon in our watermelon patch. I guess he had seen Ferrel or Reo or me "plug" a melon to see if it was ripe. In order to find a melon that was ripe without plugging it where the plug could be seen, he turned the melons over and plugged the bottom, then if it wasn't ripe he'd turn it back over so the plug would be out of sight. Sad to say we had several melons that started to spoil. I wonder why?

Kurt was always a good student in school and made better grades than I did, as I remember. In 1935, we moved to Colorado near Ignacio. Kurt had the experience of attending the little one-room school that was in one corner of the 160 acre farm we moved to. I think he was about 11 years old. I married Irene Cardon the year after we moved to Colorado. We were cutting oats with the "binder" one day. Maybe Kurt was "shocking" the grain, I don't remember; but I do remember it started to rain. We unhooked the horses (three of them) from the binder and headed for the barn. The rain turned to hail along with wind and the horses refused to face it. They turned with their backs to the storm and Kurt and I took shelter under the horses heads. Boy, what a storm! Needless to say, the hail threshed the oats we hadn't cut. The storm finally abated enough so that we could get the horses turned back around and finally got back to the house, wet from the rain and well-beaten by the hail. Anyway, Kurt went to school in Ignacio for the next few years but graduated from Farmington High as I remember.

The folks left me with the farm and moved to Provo where Dad got a job helping to build the Geneva Steel Plant. Kurt grieved about leaving his Colorado girlfriend when they left, but in Utah he finally met the one and only, Lela. The war was on and Kurt joined the navy and saw some of the world. The war ended soon thereafter. I don't recall whether Kurt was involved in any of the "action" or not. However, as I recall, he came home on leave and married Lela and went back to finish his tour of duty. When he came home for good, he attended Utah State University and got his advanced schooling in with the help of his loyal wife, Lela.

Kurt and I haven't had as close a relationship after he left Colorado as I would have liked. Carole, Jan, Ken and Steve were born before Kurt left Colorado and I remember that Kurt almost seemed like their older brother. In the mid 1950's, I took my family to Yellowstone Park. I remember we stopped by Kurt's and Lela's when they were living in Layton. Our kids had a great time playing with theirs and we had a good visit. I feel bad that Kurt has felt so far from his family. He has always lived in Utah since his marriage and the rest of his family have lived in New Mexico, hundreds of miles away. Lela's family live in Utah so they have had a closer relationship with her family.

Kurt is a great brother and I am really proud to be his brother. He and Lela have done a remarkable job with their family, six sons and two daughters. All of their sons are Eagle Scouts, which is no small accomplishment. All of their sons have filled missions. As of this writing, their children are all married except Bob, who just recently returned from his mission and is attending Utah State University, as have all of their children. They have love in their family and a great concern for one another. Kurt and Lela and their family are all very talented, especially in music. Kurt's wife, Lela, has now retired from 20 years of service singing in the Tabernacle Choir. Best of all, his entire family is active in the church and have strong testimonies. Is it any wonder that I am proud to be the brother of so great a man as Kurt? And as I think of Kurt, Leona, Reo, Ferrel, Dee, Velma and Ora, I think of our dear parents who are responsible for our very existence on this earth and of their teachings, example, encouragement and love for all of us. How grateful I am for them. I can't finish this without mentioning Clayl, that other little brother who was with the family such a short time. He passed away on my 12th birthday. He was about 6 1/2 years old when he died. I remember how he suffered the last few days of his life. He was such a jolly little guy and brought so much joy to our family. I know it must have been a very difficult time for Mom and Dad. I look forward to renewing our acquaintance in the hereafter.

...Vaughn