

*Mom's Dad's*

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Dear Family,

I like the sound of "1990," don't you? A good, strong sound for a new decade! Isn't it amazing how in the last moments of the '80s, iron curtains melted and tyrants toppled--all without centuries of diplomacy or nuclear might? In the final analysis, there is nothing more mighty than the soul's hunger for truth and free agency as linked to the Lord's timetable. I think this was a miracle of the Lord's might--not man's. Perhaps it is a signal that the windup scene might be closer than we think. 'Makes me anxious to prepare for whatever the '90s will bring.

Thanks, each of you, for your Christmas letters, cards, gifts, missionary remembrances, and ESPECIALLY, FAMILY PHOTOS. I have a bulletin board in the kitchen now. It's great to walk by and look at most of you each day. Makes me feel closer to home and think I might recognize you and some of our nieces and nephews when I get there! Hey, folks, would you label your photos? We figured out most of them--it's amazing how much kids change when you haven't seen them for a couple of years!

What a whirl this season has been. I can hardly believe it's the middle of January already! Dan and I decided to support the ward choir this Christmas season, but found the 7:00 a.m. practices on Saturdays and Sundays killing when we have seminary the other mornings. While at Virginia's it felt so good to sleep-in a few days.

Dec. 2 was our Stake "Messiah Sing-In" at the Morristown chapel. We had planned to go but by the end of that day were anxious about all the emergencies which had come up in our ward and quite behind in lots of areas. Dan decided to go see Bro. Rygg in the hospital, and I planned to catch up on some laundry. I took some papers out to the garage for recycling and managed to lock myself out. Realizing I at least had the car keys in my pocket, I hoped my long coat would cover most of my jeans, no-one would look at my walking shoes, and I headed for the "Sing-In."

What marvelous preparations they made for that event. We attract a lot of non-Members each year and they really go all out to make it memorable. Flickering lanterns had been placed from the street all the way around the parking area and to the church doors. The holiday decorations inside were absolutely elegant, as were all the guests in their holiday attire. I tried to sneak in the back, hoping no-one would see me, but soon got too hot for the coat and too involved to leave.

We don't have much talent in our ward, but we have some magnificent soloists in the stake and also recruited some great non-Mormon talent for the orchestra. Each year I go I resolve I'll start practicing and play my cello in it the next year. It was spine-tingling to be there--the music was spectacular. As I sang I couldn't help but feel this was an arranged gift from the Lord who knew how much I would have missed. I was just wishing I had left a note telling Dan to join me, when he did--said he just wanted to drop by and see how things turned out. So, we sang our hearts out and felt much at home, jeans and all!

We celebrated Dan's 45th birthday Dec. 6. He wasn't quite so thrilled that AT&T congratulated him by offering him (and all 45 yr.



olds in the Company) an early-retirement plan. Gave us one more thing to consider over the holidays, but we turned it down. Form letters went out to all management with veiled threats that those who did not accept the plan might find themselves without a job after Nov. 30--it brought on a nervous breakdown from one AT&T member in the ward. This is AT&T country--it affected a number of ward members and put a bit of a chill on the holidays. Our next door neighbor accepted the offer which makes me sad, since his wife has been my mentor at Weichert. I brought my lasagna to the division Christmas party--but half those there were leaving or retiring and the mood was somewhat subdued. Dan's boss, who has is the original Christmas Scrooge, did not even show up, claiming illness.

Our "Christmas Cantata" was on Dec. 17 and was most of the Sacrament service program. I sang a solo and also in a duet, trio, and quartet. In other words, our North Branch Ward is hard pressed for musical talent. In Westchester Ward I was lucky to sing in the choir. We got snowed out of our dress rehearsal and I messed up on my cues for coming forth and back for some of my parts, even though I carefully wrote everything down on my music! It takes all kinds. I felt stupid doing the do-si-do up there as part of our formal Christmas program! Still, considering our limited talents and time frame, we felt it went quite well. Both Barry and Virginia sang solos in their Christmas program which we were sorry to miss.

Christmas at Virginia and Barry's was marvelous. Their children are each such delightful, individual characters! The Wood home looked like something out of a story book Christmas tale. They finished all their floors for a holiday Christmas open house, tour program they have in Arlington Ward--it looks beautiful. Amazing what they accomplished since the last time we were there! Virginia made us "sock" bags out of fabric samples, all decorated with lace and ribbon and bulging with Santa-nick temptations. We took our video camera and tried to capture the creative, festive delights in each nook of their home (for example, the bunny-rabbit Christmas wedding taking place on an upper ledge in the family room). Some other snow-bunnies kept smashing us with pillows from that upper fortress!

Being there was a feast in more ways than one, with Virginia's homemade cinnamon rolls and Barry's most serious and amusing "spontaneous family councils" which he called whenever he thought the kids got out of line. (If my father sat me down for fun stories and songs whenever I "popped one" on my brother, I would have popped him every day)! Christmas Eve included a family home evening review of Luke's Christmas story.

We were sad Mom and Dad could not join our Christmas Eve circle, as they were self-quarantined in bed where they made-do with a T.V. and some good books. I have a feeling, though, that Mom turned down "Murder She Wrote" to hear the children's singing. The angels who sang to the shepherds that Bethlehem night could not have sparkled more than Nathan, Warren, Jonathan, Sarah, Rose Ellen, and Christian Fletcher.

Mom and Dad had that Asian flu which we heard reached epidemic proportions out West, closing many schools. They thought they were basically over it, but had a relapse as soon as they got to Virginia's home in Arlington.



Mom felt better than Dad and did get a chance to review some of my genealogy. She suggested some research I might do at the Federal Archives while we were in Virginia. With Barry's help we made substantial progress in tracking the Woodcoxes and Mulligans (Hall line) to Maryland! We traced the census records and will follow up on a track of a George B. Woodcox and Benjamin Mulliken we hope is significant. I found a Benjamin Mulliken in the Rev. Pension File, but did not make a connection or copy it.

I also finally found Jonathan Sartle Alexander's own application for a Rev. War pension. Copied it out and typed it on Barry's computer while Barry interpreted the script. I am including it in this letter for those of you who wish to read and file it. In addition I copied out the McElroy pension records--no new information, though.

I read a great book on The Revolution which Barry and Virginia had in their library. It stirred me even more than past reading, now that I've been learning about Rev. War fathers in our family. I hated history in high school--what a loss--but I'm trying to make it up now. In this book (by a McDowell?), he told a tale about Paul Revere I had not noted. Apparently a \_\_\_\_\_ Prescott was courting a Milliken (not "milking") maid at a tavern, with a full moon shining overhead and beyond Laura's curfew, when Paul Revere rode up with news that the British were coming. Prescott took off with Revere and another man and when Paul Revere was captured, Prescott jumped his horse over a fence and, having done a lot of courting of this Miss Milliken, knew every short cut and the terrain very well and was able to go on to Concord and warn the people. Since Prescott and Millikin are two of our family names, we ought to check for a relationship (yes, I know, I think we're related to everybody)!

'Got a nice letter from Uncle Gene who told me I was barking up the wrong tree on the Wm. Halls. He made it almost sound like a congratulations letter, he was being so encouraging! That's the Halls for you. I was going on a family group sheet in Mom's handwriting which listed Bennett as one of his sons and which I had copied out of Mom's file when I was out West. Turns out it was not a product of her research, but just one she was copying out of the Family Group collection at Salt Lake, hoping for leads. Thanks for letting me know that sheet was a combination of some false assumptions. Don't be afraid to tell me I'm off course. I won't get discouraged--it is such a waste to research in the wrong direction. I absolutely do not claim to be an expert. I am merely a collector. Somehow in there I hope to learn enough to identify what is worth keeping and even make some verifiable additions of my own! Thanks, Uncle Gene. By the way, Mom, remember to send me the correct version of that sheet.

As I read the story of the Revolution, I am amazed at what they suffered for the cause of freedom and the undeniable hand of the Lord in shifting the weather and other factors for patriot success.

We are taking Laura to Scarsdale this Friday for "Frost Valley" (did you see Laura quoted in the Jan. New Era article about last year's event?). Daniel might have me go from there to Meriden, CT so he can visit his old friend, David Falasco. While there I may visit nearby Farmington where Solomon Tracy camped during the Revolutionary War. He brought ammunition to General Washington for the Battle of White Plains where we used to live.



JONATHAN S. ALEXANDER'S REV. WAR PENSION REQUEST:

"State of New York  
Oswego County, SS

On this 8th day of August, 1832, personally appeared before me one of the judges of the Court of Common Pleas in and for the County of Oswego, Jonathan S. Alexander, a resident of the Town of Mexico in the County of Oswego and State of New York, aforesaid, aged 83 years, who being first duly sworn, according to law, doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the provision made by the act of Congress passed June 7, 1832. That he enlisted in the army of the United States as a corporal, in the month of June, 1775, in the Company of Capt. Elisha Benedict, Col. Van Schaick's regiment of the New York line -- enlisted first for the term of 8 months in the Town of Brattleboro, County of Windham, in the State of Vermont -- marched soon after enlisting through Vermont to Ticonderoga -- passed through Lake Champlain to St. Johns, in Canada, where we had a skirmish with the enemy -- went from there in a scouting party with Col. Ethan Allen down the River South -- went from there and took Chamblu fort -- from thence again to St. Johns, which place we also took from them. Proceeded to Montreal under Gen. Montgomery -- took that place after which I went with part of my Company under Capt. Benedict to Chamblu Fort where we wintered -- the remainder of Capt. Benedict's Company went with Montgomery to Quebec -- during the winter after my 8 months term had expired, not being able to get home, I enlisted again under Capt. Benedict for the further term of 3 months, which time I served. recd. a regular discharge from Gen. Hazen, I think, and returned home to Brattleboro in the month of May, 1776 where I remained until the taking of Gen. Burgoyne in 1777 when I was drafted and served about 5 weeks in the Company of Capt. John Sargeant in Col. Schuyler's Regiment (I think), was in the battle near Stillwater & served until the Surrender of Burgoyne in October, when I returned again to Brattleboro, where I continued to reside until about the year 1808 when I removed to the Town of Henderson, New York in the County of Jeff. N.Y. -- there I resided for about 16 years and removed to my present residence in the Town of Mexico in 1824 -- I was born at fort Dummer in the Town of Brattleboro, Vt. -- in 1749 -- have no record of my age -- my Father was killed by the Indians when I was about 6 years old. I rec'd a regular discharge but cannot tell what has become of it --I was acquainted with Gen. Montgomery, Col. Warren, Col. Van Schaick, Col. Allen, Adj. Tillman, Capt. Benedict, Capt. Sergeant, Lieut. MacCinnon [?], Lieut. Brink, and may other officers whose names I do not distinctly recollect -- I know of no officer or soldier now living by whom I can prove my services, except the two soldiers whose affidavits were procured in 1819 & are hereunto annexed viz. Waitsill Orvis, & Reuben Church, and whether they are now living I know not but believe one or both of them are dead. I was a member of the Presbyterian Church in Brattleboro for about 40 years under the ministry of the Revd. Mr. Reeves [Peears] & the Revd. Mr. Wells, and can procure hundreds of Witnesses in that place and elsewhere to testify as to my standing & character for truth & veracity -- I am now very poor, and so old and infirm, I am not able to labor or to leave my house without great inconvenience & trouble -- I hereby relinquish every claim whatsoever to a Pension or annuity except the present, and declare that my name is not on the Pension roll of the agency of any State.

his  
Jonathan S. Alexander  
mark

Sworn & Subscribed the day & year aforesaid before me, Avery Skinner, Judge of the Oswego Co. Courts

I, David R. Dixon, a clergyman residing in the Town of Mexico, do hereby certify that I have been well acquainted with Jonathan S. Alexander who has subscribed & sworn to the above declaration for several years past; that I believe him to be 83 years of age, that he is a pious Christian of undoubted truth & veracity, that he is reputed and believed in the neighborhood where he resides, to have been a soldier of the revolution, and that I fully concur in that opinion."



Dan and Laura went home after Christmas so Laura could take her driver's test (which had been rescheduled twice and was on last call without repeating the written test). Daniel and I stayed a little longer until Mom and Dad were better, but Dad's feet got chilled during the 5 hr. drive to our home after Christmas where they got ill again (I think it was more exhaustion from the anxiety of watching me drive Dan's stick-shift car all that way!)

Earlier in the month, I spent a lot of time getting out Daniel's mission announcement and our Christmas letter--but it was worth it. It took a week to get our addresses into the computer and updated, but that's finally together. Dan sent one to Brother Richard L. Andersen with an appreciation note telling him how much he has enjoyed his book on the apostle Paul and wondering what he could study next. Bro. Andersen (our former home teacher in Provo, who never stopped caring) mailed him "Guide to Acts and the Apostles' Letters," much to Dan's delight. We've received many heart-warming notes from old friends and most of you, making the season truly "bright."

Also spent two days getting photos and writing copy for local and New York newspapers about Daniel's mission call and farewells. Figured it could not hurt to highlight a young man willing to serve a mission to go along with the slur-articles advertising "Mormon Lectures" by the Baptists. Our local Bernardsville News published it and also The Reporter Dispatch (which covers the larger White Plains area) and, also The Scarsdale Enquirer. I also wrote one for the Star Ledger which covers this larger area which included the names and mission places of all 24 missionaries from our Stake. Dan hand delivered it to their office, but they just sent back the photo and never published it.

I thought for once this was going to be the perfect holiday--started the day after Thanksgiving with the decorating and preparations. With this being the last Christmas together as a family for a long time and Mom and Dad coming, I had visions of a perfectly organized, calm relaxed, ultimate occasion. You'd think I'd learn.

Actually, it was going quite well for a while, there. Then our entire ward seemed to fall apart--deaths, funerals, illness, hospitalizations, nervous breakdowns--you name it, and it happened in our Elder's Quorum. One of the breakdowns was one of Dan's counselors, so Dan had a lot to cover along with horrendous pressures at work! As all my best-laid plans toppled one after the other, I finally decided the Lord had other priorities for me and in the true Spirit of Christmas, I should put my plans aside and help all I could.

I don't think I helped that much, but it was a good excuse for still not having the Christmas tree decorated when we brought Mom and Dad home. I did, at least, have my "family tree" ancestor ornaments beribboned and ready to hang and finally got it finished in time for New Year's and our open house! Now I have to take the ornaments all apart and send the 3 1/2 X 5 photos to Allens to make negatives and redo all those prints done on bad paper.

We put a live tree outside the dinette bay window on the deck and it, too, sparkled with tiny white lights which I still turn on and enjoy from time to time. The neighbors probably think I'm daffy, but after finally getting our trees done, it's nice to enjoy them! Fran and Dave Price invited us to their home and cut us lovely pine boughs from their



4 acres of trees which I used to decorate our home and to make a wreath for the master bedroom, so it would be more cheerful for Mom and Dad in their sickbed.

We were quite worried when the first doctor we took them to could not get antibiotics by shot for Dad. We took him to the emergency room at the hospital at one point, concerned that he might be getting dangerously ill. Like the first doctor, they sent him home without any medication, but somehow he recovered without it--though slowly. He may never recover from what doctors charge around here, though! They were not able to get out of bed for Daniel's farewell, but slowly got stronger. Dad started taking little walks which got longer each day that last week, and they both looked finally well Jan. 3 when we took them to Kennedy Airport. Mom and Dad, we're still glad you came--just sad it was so miserable for you. It meant a lot to have you here--thanks for coming.

December 30 turned out to be an icy, nasty winter night. Some good friends here pitched in to help me get ready for the Open House, as I was somewhat behind schedule--and Mom said she felt good enough to come down and make some egg salad--is she ever a dynamo in the kitchen--does the work of 15! But she got shaky after a while and had to go back to bed--I never should have let her do that. Quite a few of our friends who were going to come from New York called to say they couldn't make it. I was glad Virginia and Barry decided not to risk it with all the children on that long trip in their car which has been balky.

We still had a good turnout, though, and were especially pleased when Pres. George (and Louise) Watkins arrived. He gave both Daniel and Laura their Patriarchal blessings and has shown a special interest in Daniel ever since he was a little boy. We couldn't believe they made the 1 1/2 hr. drive (one way) on such an awful night.

"Now, Sister Bartholomew," beamed Pres. Watkins as he saw my amazement. "I could picture you bustling around trying to make everything lovely and having all these people call to say they weren't coming because of the weather. We wanted you to know how very much we care!" Dan and I decided if they were the only ones to come, it would have been worth all the effort. But many came, including some neighbors, and also Bishop Robert Bailey and Brenda his wife, who were instrumental in helping Dan and me get back together--also our current Bishop Bob Smith and his wife, Karen, Bishop Frazee who encouraged us in the stress of our reuniting adjustment and now could use some of his own advice (his wife left him and the Church last year).

Richard Hedberg and his son, Jeff (Daniel's roommate at the "Y") and another friend of Daniel's, Matt Clayton, also came from Westchester. Cindy and Reed Young brought his parents, Don and Anne Young, who used to live in Poughkeepsie and take us in when we made the rounds with Dad's S.S. District Superintendency when I was a child. They insisted on going up to see Mom and Dad, flu bug or no, and came down glowing from a good chat.

My good friend, Dinny Lewis made the trip up all by herself--I was her visit teacher when she was totally inactive and was going through a divorce. Then she became active (a seven-year process) and got strong enough to buoy me up when my marriage was in trouble and I was feeling so discouraged. I rented a room in her home a couple of months when Dan



January 14, 1990 - Sherlene

7

and I were first separated and we still talk long on the phone from time to time. Such dear friends now, and she is so active in the Church and filled with testimony. And to think when I was called to be her visit teacher, I thought it was a mistake! I thought we had nothing in common and it would be an unwelcome assignment. I feel really ashamed now and grateful I accepted that inspired call.

The Morans also came from Westchester. 'Said Celine, their daughter, had to come and see her former Primary teacher. I guess I'm getting to be a silly old fool, but it makes me feel so good to think those children remember!

Daniel's Farewell was early the next morning, Dec. 31 at North Branch Ward. Mom and Dad seemed to be feeling well enough to get along at home, but not well enough to come out. Kristin Ferderber sang a solo and all four of us spoke. I liked the other talks, but did not feel the Spirit the way I wanted to, myself. Maybe I was too tired at that point to feel anything--but it arrived in overwhelming quantity later at our New York service. We came home, checked in on Mom and Dad, and then drove to Westchester Ward at Yorktown (the Scarsdale chapel is still being renovated).

We got there in time to hear Adrienne Varley, just returned from her mission, who was scheduled to speak just before Daniel. She told the story of the old violin which was almost auctioned for \$1. before people heard it played by the Master's hand. Then she thanked the congregation for not giving up on any child of God, nor selling one short for a dollar. We knew, as she struggled through tears, that she was talking of her father, a convert whom Laura asked to speak at her baptism. He had a vibrant, glowing spirit then and was quite a hero to the ward youth and to all of us. His talk at her baptism was one of the best I've heard.

Somewhere, both he and his son got hooked on drugs (he had struggled with alcoholism for years before joining the Church). Laura had only recently heard from a mutual friend in Basking Ridge that Jerry had left his wife and disappeared into the New York drug scene, leaving his wife to care for their often hospitalized and suicidal son.

It was good, though, to see he had come to his daughter's mission return, though he looked ashamed and broken. After the service we talked with him, pretending not to know what had happened since we left the ward. "I'm so glad," he said, "that I taped that story Adrienne told about the Master and that old violin."

After her talk, the "Collegiate Choir" got up to sing,--I wasn't the only one crying to see those Primary children grown up to be so handsome and beautiful.

Then Daniel spoke, and we were proud of our 19 yr. old--thought his short comments revealed great love and appreciation for all there who had helped him reach that point, including his parents, and especially for his Father in Heaven. His testimony was strong and sincere and his joy and enthusiasm contagious.

We were wiping our eyes and opening the hymnbook when Bishop Eugene Freedman called Dan and me up, also. We did keep it short--that was a long meeting, with all the returning students speaking, but we were



overflowing with love and gratitude and happy to express it. The choir sang the closing song, which included my heart's desire--a solo from Dorothy Bench. It seemed the perfect close to a beautiful day and the best possible beginning for a New Year.

Of the two events, Westchester was the highlight. I guess it should have been after having lived there a dozen years! So much love--the Spirit flowed truly and naturally--these friends will always be dear in our hearts. I could hardly bear it for all the memories of ways in which they have blessed our family and still do. The outpouring of love we experienced there still blesses me every time I think about it.

Another joy at the Westchester Farewell was seeing the Millers sitting right up front. They had come from Brooklyn so Daniel ("Andy") could hear Daniel speak and see us again. He is a deacon now--is it possible? Andy came up and I tried to hug him and he acted uncomfortable, so I didn't push it, but felt a little sad. Five minutes later he was at my side with a painting of a lighthouse, not yet dry, which he had spent each day since Christmas finishing--really nice. He also gave me a photo of himself, saying he wanted me to always keep it in my wallet, and by the end of the evening, he demanded a hug. Kids are funny.

Andy ("Daniel" is what they call him now) really looks good. They are doing wonderful things with him. When he was little, I never would have thought that by age 12, he would have the patience to complete an intricate, dot painting like that. I hope he makes beautiful things like that for his mother and father--they are the ones who deserve it, and I told him so. But it was choice among several tender, somewhat tearful moments of the day.

Linda and Ron Inouye had invited us to dinner after the service, so we traced our way to their lovely home in Scarsdale through very dense fog, wondering when we might "fall off" the curvy Bronx River Parkway. They have been such wonderful friends. Daniel and Laura have been friends with theirs since childhood. It was so much fun to be together under such happy circumstance and with the usual delicious food Linda prepares. She is one of these who has mulled cider and delicate appetizers before a roaring fire in the fireplace, salads of hand-peeled citrus and avocado with lemon sauce, Chinese food with vegetables still exactly-right crisp, with a birthday cake (early) for Daniel all served on best china and silver with all the settings and a homemade centerpiece with lighted candles. After all this, she apologizes that she didn't have much time to put together the meal she wanted to. All the time she is so relaxed and seems to enjoy every minute of it. I will never capture that art, but sure do appreciate it in others.

We had fun talking about the international women's conference Linda recently participated in. We had seen her name and the event listed in the back of a recent Ensign and it was exciting to learn what an influence Linda and other members of the Church were able to have with this opportunity.

Daniel stayed in New York to celebrate New Year's with his White Plains friends at Dan Teck's home. We came home, shared the day with Mom and Dad and joined them in sleep before the New Year arrived. We must be getting old. Even then, I still felt like I had a terrible hangover the next day. What a weekend!



One time this season I felt shaky chills coming on and that awful aching all over--thought I was getting the flu and knew I did not have time for it! What a blessing to be able to call on two Priesthood holders under my own roof. I felt strength immediately returning and was able to carry on.

It was nice to have a couple of more relaxed days to recover and just have Mom and Dad around now that they were feeling better. Jan 2. Daniel came back and Dad took us all out for pizza at Pizza Hut.

Just before taking Mom and Dad to the airport the next day, we picked up some Chinese food and had Daniel's birthday meal. Daniel's best friend through the years, Dan Teck, had come back with him from New York for the occasion.

I bought one of Linda Aboshama's specialty cakes at the ward auction, and it was! A large cake on a revolving base, it included a frosting map of Guatemala on a background of the blue and white Guatemalan Flag. She added an open book of scripture to the frosting design on the map, complete with bookmark and special verse charging him to teach and baptize with the Spirit. Around the sides were sayings in Spanish, wishing him much joy on a successful mission! It was so beautiful none of us wanted to cut into it. It was especially fun to light the candles, since Mom and Dad felt good enough to join us at the table downstairs and help celebrate. Then we took off for Kennedy airport and made good time on a beautiful, sunny day where we could see more of New York City than we cared to.

Friday, Jan. 5, Dan and I took Daniel to the Washington Temple. According to Daniel, Pres. Wood gave him a wonderful recommend interview the night before and discussed at some length the nature of the covenants he would be making and what he might expect at the temple. I went with some trepidation, considering the background of some of the questioning by Uncle Wendell on temple ceremonies and my own recent pondering. I had been praying for a reconfirmation of my testimony on these things. Bishop Smith had told me I should not expect a strong answer, necessarily--that sometimes the Lord stands back to see how we will carry on even when we are not getting all the spiritual infusions of strength we might desire. I guess I was especially anxious wondering what Daniel's reaction might be.

So, if you can believe, when we got to the hall on the 3rd floor of the dressing rooms, who was the first person we saw? Don Brereton of Schenectady, who now works in the temple. We had seen him the last time we were in the temple. This time, he introduced us to his new bride, a widow with 12 children, who when joined with his 8, gives them 20 children and some 50+ grandchildren! I told him I had learned that sometimes if things were not too busy, mothers were allowed into the lecture room for the discussion just after the washings and anointings and before the endowment ceremony. Bro. Brereton said, "Well, I'll have to consult the temple presidency on that!"

Who should be the beaming member of the temple presidency, but the newly installed Russell Maddock, whom I recognized from our branch in Schenectady where I lived until age 12. We also met his wife, wife, Elaine, who used to sing solos in Church all the time. Pres. Maddock said he had just received and read Mom and Dad's Christmas letter, which was very welcome, and he gave the "lecture," which more aptly would be



called, "tangible experience with the Spirit."

Pres. Maddock truly has become a man of God. Listening to him was a spiritual highlight in my life. Choking back his emotion, he bore testimony of the truth of the temple work and efficacy of the ordinances. My heart burned as I wept with him, for with all my heart I knew the Lord had commissioned him to answer my prayers. All the sacred and beautiful experiences I have had in the temple came vividly to my remembrance, and I wondered how I could have questioned something the Lord so obviously and manifestly accepts.

Pres. Maddock explained parts of the ceremony to Daniel with great tenderness and delicacy and created a spirit in which nothing could seem unusual or strange.

After the endowment ceremony, we were further blessed to witness a sealing of a young, convert couple and also the sealing to them of their beautiful little 2 1/2 yr. old daughter. This moved us all deeply and was, I think, for Daniel a highlight of the entire experience.

Afterwards, Pres. Maddock visited with Daniel in the Celestial Room, answering questions. We then waited about an hour while Dan took steps to become a temple veil worker. Then we took Daniel out to a great Japanese restaurant and tried to fill his stomach to match his filled mind. He called it "fried brain" syndrome--not an unusual reaction to a first temple experience--but he still thought the day was "incredible," "amazing!"

Brian Wood came over here the other day. He's entering the mission home the same day as Daniel (Argentina), but got his endowments a month ago with his sister who is now in Spain on a mission. It was heart-warming to hear the two of them compare notes of their first temple experience with such an enthusiastic mixture of awe and wonder.

For the record, before I forget, Daniel should always be able to remember his dates. He was born on Jan. 3, Baptized at age 8 on Jan. 4, and received his endowments at 19 on Jan. 5. Now he can get married on the 6th (at 50) and die on the 7th at 110).

We stayed with Barry and Virginia, again--poor souls can't get any peace. Dan went back Sunday and I stayed on to see Daniel through removal of four wisdom teeth by an LDS oral surgeon Virginia recommended. Virginia got some flu bug while we were there, but it seemed to be a short, if miserable version. A big storm came, and I thought we might get snowed in, but the roads cleared and we came back Tuesday, after buying two suits and a whole lot of other missionary fare at the sales there (prices much better than our area).

Daniel had a good experience joking with the salesman who was an expert at keeping him entertained long enough to choose and fit two suits (THAT requires TALENT!!). This black man named David Brown was quite an intellectual and proud of his ivy-league educated family who are now all gone. I managed not to ask why he is selling suits (probably for the same reason I am selling real estate), but his literary allusions as we philosophized a couple of hours showed some good background. He assumed the patronizing air of too many so-called eastern "intellectuals" when they find themselves giving advice to those "quaint, sweet Mormons." I put up with his condescension for about half



an hour before I started finishing his quotes--at which point he quit telling me which suits looked "young." I guess we looked pretty rural--Daniel lost his high-tops and walked in in his camp boots and a flannel shirt (maybe something else, too!) I won't tell you how I looked. He said he once had a good Mormon friend who had tried to interest him in the Church.

At the end of the fitting, he zeroed in on Daniel, trying to find out his motives for going on a mission. I think he was touched that a normal, red-blooded 19 yr. old who obviously was not fitted for wearing suits and getting serious, sincerely believed the message enough to make this transition. I came back another day to negotiate with the tailor for an early finish, and Mr. Brown made it a point to tell me he really expected Daniel to provide him with some literature (he had asked him to mail some--but we thought he was probably just trying to make a sale). So, when we came to get the suits to bring to tailors here (you can see how well I negotiate), Daniel brought him a Book of Mormon which Barry had in stock and some pamphlets, and he seemed genuinely glad to get them. So, Daniel has already started his mission. I thought Mr. Brown gave Daniel some good advice--told him just to be himself--seemed to think he was a pretty delightful kid, if a bit antsy.

Barry also arranged an interesting discussion with his next door neighbor who headed the Peace Corps in Guatemala 3 yrs. That was very interesting, but Daniel had to get up and leave, feeling nauseous from the anesthesia and his wisdom-teeth removal that morning. I had planned to treat Barry and Virginia to dinner for a change, but she was ill; so I got some groceries and made them a roast beef dinner at home. Daniel, who had strict instructions not to eat solid food for 24 hours and had been lying prone with ice bags under both ears all day while sipping fruit juice, smelled that beef and resurrected instantly. I am trying to remember if there was any beef left for Virginia. At any rate, he began to pay the price for breaking the rules in the middle of that discussion and was green in more ways than one for a couple of days. A couple of us had tongue for dinner, having bitten some in two, trying not to make preachy analogies about missionaries who break rules!

Last night at an Open House at the Woods' for Brian, we talked with Steve Wood's brother whose son just returned from a Guatemalan Mission. Said his son got both parasites and malaria there and was in and out of hospitals. You cannot eat raw food, salads, drink water or even brush your teeth with unbottled water or you will get sick. They mostly eat beans and rice, only a little chicken occasionally and very little beef. This is going to be a real adjustment for Daniel who looks in the fridge just after I've spent \$100 on basic foods and, not finding any Twinkies, wants to know "Why isn't there any REAL food in this house?" He eats beef like some sort of carnivorous monster, caring little if it is yet dead, never mind cooked, and thinks the only two foods worth note are Ben and Jerry's ice-cream and Big Macs. I must confess some uncontained glee in telling Daniel there is only one McDonalds in Guatemala City!

Friday, Daniel and Brian went in to Travel Med and got their immunizations (typhoid, polio boosters) and have one more appointment for more. Monday he'll have the first of two dental visits with Bishop Fraze, and meanwhile there is so much paperwork, tailoring of suits and other detail--and a whole list of things still to buy. I don't remember ever having so much to do before my mission (You probably



remember it, Mom). Woods told us to be sure to send him with a very good, warm sleeping bag--their son slept in one his whole mission--apparently they don't find many beds there, either!

Going to the temple had quite an impact on Daniel. He was understandably tired when he got home from finals and at first resisted my pleas for help around the house--I was about ready to send him back! But he just needed a rest. He has been such a joy ever since we came back from the temple--just couldn't be more helpful or a better peacemaker. He has the spirit that he would do anything for anyone--and he has--it has been terrific!

Laura's big news is that she was accepted to Brigham Young University, summer term. She is on a waiting list and we should find out in April if she can skip summer school and just enter with the fall students. She has become quite a scholar this year--we think she will do fine and are elated with her that she knows she can get in one way or the other--we were a little concerned with the new, more stiff entrance requirements.

She also got her driver's license and, with her good grades, only cost us an increase of \$140 in insurance,--big relief. She and Daniel have had a lot of fun together this week--we're going to miss him when he leaves (did I say that once before?). I could have an empty nest by June 25. Scary. Sort of exciting, too. All that freedom to not be responsible for children! Last night while I waited to hear Laura drive in the car until 12:40 a.m., I thought this flight of the fledglings might not be so bad!

Thursday night I gave the Homemaking "Spiritual" lesson in Relief Society. I was given an entire hour which was a challenge after giving the shorter lessons in Sunday School. I was supposed to take one Conference talk and build a lesson around it, but I ended up choosing the theme: "Remembrance of Sacred Things," which seemed to thread itself through many of the talks. I got Dolly Cox to sing a solo, "Going Into the Temple," which was lovely. We did feel an abundance of the Spirit there, thanks to her, the comments of a very supportive class, and the way the Lord blesses me despite my faults and for the benefit of those who still come out on a busy night. In addition, Dan and I are team-teaching the Temple Preparation course tonight (and providing refreshments)--after this I'm going into hiding for a while!

Monday's P.S.: On our way to teach the course we were stopped at an intersection in Hillsboro when the car in front of us started backing up until he mashed out our parking light. We never did find out why he decided to back up or why he did not see us! Dan was very gracious to this man who gave us his card and said he would send us a check for the repair. When he called to see what his bill would be (a lofty \$10), he told Dan he takes interest in accents, and he thought Dan sounded like his ancestry was Irish and from Dublin! Really, now!

Friday night the four of us went to the movie, "The Littlest Mermaid"--sort of cute--for people like me who still like fairy tales.

I hope David tells you all about his exciting experience being the first public person to download family information directly from the Salt Lake Library computer. It was great how it happened! I hope he'll



put all the details in writing for us. THIS IS MORE EXCITING THAN COLD FUSION, ANY DAY (Not that I would mind hearing all about cold fusion, you guys).

Dan ordered the latest update of the Church genealogy program. I promised David that when it comes, I'll feed in what I have collected and mail him my disk. He has a good bribe, promising to trade what he downloaded in Salt Lake.

At Brian Wood's open house last Sat. (for which I returned Onalee's favor and cut vegies and baked all day), Pres. Clegg cornered me to speak at Stake Conference in February. I'm supposed to speak five minutes on the "joys of genealogy." How can you even number the joys of genealogy in only five minutes!?!

Daniel is up writing his thank you notes right now, and believe it or not I got all mine done--it is always hard for me to put my thanks in words--but I'm always glad when I manage to at least try! This year took a pile of thanking.

I just wish there were a way to adequately write a note to my Father in Heaven. A few days before and after Daniel's farewell program, I woke up filled with this joyful sense that the Lord's Spirit was in the room and He was accepting of me and my efforts to raise Him a missionary. It was the same feeling I got in Germany for a few days after Grandma Langford died and before I got the news in a letter. Maybe some grandparents were in the room, too, sharing the joy of it all. It's a wonderful feeling, not to be described in words.

Sister Onalee Wood described the same type of experience in her talk at Brian's farewell, so maybe all missionary mothers have that experience. While at Westchester Ward, Claire Freedman told me I can expect spiritual blessings in our family with a son on a mission that we never have experienced before. It is hard to see your only son leave--so I look forward to that comforting influence. On the other hand, with him gone, we'll have more and less beef--if you know what I mean!

On a more serious note, I am remembering how Uncle Jim and Aunt Melba lost their only son, Harvey, to a strange disease just after his mission return. I am beginning to understand more what a shock this must have been to lose him at this prime time in his life. They have made such sacrifices to build chapels on missions of their own through the years. These surely stand in their mind, also, as memorials to Harvey's desire to serve the Lord, as he surely is now on missions beyond the veil. We should also keep in mind other cousins we have lost--Randy and Alice Hall--surely they have served important missions, too.

Writing family letters is a good thing for those of us who seldom get to a diary. It does help keep sacred things in remembrance. We don't like to dwell on all the mundane and gritty things which happen. So, we highlight the beautiful and it weaves a glorious pattern of the Lord's blessings, more luminous as contrasted upon our more-textured trials. I am filled with gratitude at such a sight and wish my capabilities matched my desire to thank the Lord and each of you more adequately.



January 14, 1990 - Sherlene

14

I'm especially grateful for Dan, too, who with incredible patience has not exactly enjoyed his favorite thing--three family meals a day, on time, and a nice, orderly existence at home. He has been a tremendous help through this season, as have the children. He, too, would agree, I'm sure, that it has been a marvelous holiday. 'Hope yours was too and Virginia and Barry, Mom and Dad, too, will recover!

May He bless you and bless me to bless you better. I love each of you--especially you parents. Hang in there--and STAY AWAY FROM THE FLU. At least this time you can't blame it on eastern germs!

Love, Sherlene and Family

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