

Joseph LeRoy Kleinman

This history is written by his daughter, Sue Kleinman Dickson, and was taken from the history that he wrote himself.

I received my name from my grandfather, Conrad. When Conrad took me up to bless and name me, he forgot the name that my parent's had chosen and gave me the name of Joseph LeRoy. I was born the fourth child of nine on 19 September, 1899, to Andrew Phillip Kleinman and Helen Isabelle Pilling. My early memories were of an unselfish, loving mother who focused her life on her children and of a stern father who taught his children obedience and a desire to excel. I was highly influenced by the esteem that others had for my father. Many sought my father's help with farming questions and he was widely known for his honesty and sharp memory.

One of my earliest memories was of my little brother Leone, who I would pull around the yard in my little red wagon. Leone died when 19 months old and I must have been about 3-4 years old. Another time I recall a new straw hat that mother bought for me. I loved it and would wear it everywhere. One day I saw a whirlwind or dust devil. I loved to stand in them and feel the upward pull. My hat flew off my head and I watched it as long as I could. I told myself that the angles must have needed it. Many months later I found it on the far edge of the farm.

Once Maybelle and I went to our cousins' house to play and stayed too long. The trip home was dark and very stormy, with branches breaking and wind howling. Our older brothers had told us about some wolves that were supposed to be in the fields. We were terrified until we knelt and prayed for a safe trip home. I felt as safe then as if I had been home in my mother's arms.

I think I must have been a very mischievous boy and not terribly brave. My brothers and cousins would often risk a scolding to swipe corn, tease the "spooners" or even pushing over the outhouse. I also learned to work hard on our farm. When I was 6, I learned to milk cows and until I was a senior in high school would milk from 4 to 20 cows. I helped with the chores of irrigation, harvesting, repairing fences, mowing hay, and feeding the cows and pigs. I seemed to work well with the cows but not with the horses. I learned to work hard and to enjoy coming home at the end of the day hot and sweaty, change into my swimming suit and dive into the cool water in the canal.

I attended the Alma school until the eighth grade and excelled in arithmetic and science and did less well in music and grammar. In high school, I enjoyed playing basketball and baseball. As a senior, I was even voted "most likely to succeed". (Joseph loved school and was unable to attend college but made certain that all his children had that opportunity) My own desire was to become a chemical engineer.

August 2, 1908 I was baptized by Alan Brooks in the canal near home. Noah Brimhall conferred the gift of the Holy Ghost upon me. Oct. 14, 1912 I was given the Aaronic priesthood and ordained a deacon. I was given the Melchizedek priesthood and ordained an Elder, the same day my father was ordained a High Priest.

When World War I came, my brother Lawrence enlisted. George was on a mission and I wanted to enlist also but my mother refused to give her permission.

A few months later Bishop Hunsaker talked to me about serving a mission. The thought that the Lord might consider me worthy to serve a mission filled me with joy but I was sobered by the knowledge that I did not feel prepared to teach the gospel nor to speak a foreign language. I feared to go and serve the Mexican people as they were often looked down upon but when the call came, I was called to the Mexican Mission. Because of the supportive attitude of my parents, I accepted that call with great joy and learned to see these people as humble and sincere children of God. My mission president was Rey L. Pratt and I considered him to be one of the greatest men I have ever known. I traveled 3 days by train to Salt Lake and found a policeman who was able to lead me to an uncle's house. I was set apart by Anthony W. Ivans who told me I looked like my grandfather, went to the temple and left on the train for El Paso, Texas. There I was assigned to Taos, New Mexico with Elder Grant Curtis as my companion. He taught me to study hard and then allow the spirit to teach me. He taught me to love others and to laugh at myself along with more practical advice such as how to deal with bed bugs. I also learned the value of pure testimony, of listening to the spirit and of hard work.

In February 1922, I received a telegram saying that my father was not expected to live. I went home for a week and came back to El Paso but a week later received a phone call telling me that my father had passed away. President Pratt released me after 26 months and told me that my mother needed me more than the mission did. Upon arriving home I had a mother, two younger brothers and a little sister to care for. For a while I worked on the University of Arizona experimental farm and then on the Mesa temple. Half of my wages went to pay off the pledge that my father had made toward the building fund. I attended the dedicatory services and have since felt that this temple was "my temple".

After a few months, I was able to obtain a job with the United States Customs Service because I could speak Spanish. I did well on the civil service exam and the job became permanent. From time to time I studied hard and worked to obtain promotions that would lead me closer to a branch of the church. In 1940 I was transferred to El Paso as Appraiser of Merchandise. I retired in 1965 and went to Guatemala for 18 months on a government aid project and wrote a handbook for their customs services as a technical advisor.

My first Sunday in Naco, Arizona, I saw a dark-haired, dark-eyed young lady that I soon began to date. We dated for two years with occasional breaks to date other people. Eventually we were put into the parts of the romantic interests in a play called "The Poor Married Man". Horesa and I spent many evenings practicing together and we agreed to marry just as the two characters in the play. Through the rest of my life, I would be grateful for that wonderful girl agreeing to marry a fellow like me. We married in the Mesa Temple and honeymooned in the Grand Canyon.

Then we returned to Naco and lived in five different houses the first 6 months of our marriage. One house had a roof only over part of the building. We finally found more permanent home and it was there in August 6, 1930 that our sweet baby Betty Jo was born. She went everywhere with us and was the darling of our branch. Wayne Deloy was born May 20, 1932. He was a serious but very curious little

fellow who gave his mother quite a scare at times. Horesa's mother passed away shortly before our third baby was born. Harold Rey was named after my mission president and was born April 9, 1936. At that time, the two older children had whooping cough. Horesa and Hal went to Mesa to be cared for by my mother and Horesa's sister Verda came to take care of the other two children. Hal was pampered by his aunt and grandmother. He loved to take things apart and became adept at fixing almost anything mechanical. During these years we had much sickness but with the help of the priesthood and the faith of their mother the children lived and thrived.

Just after moving to El Paso, our fourth child, Larry Horace was born August 30, 1940. He was a big boy and very adventurous. He would dive for the buggy handle or get the high chair rocking until they tipped over and crawl away. At first we felt alone and without purpose in the church here. After a few months, Spencer Kimball who was our stake president came to interview me to be a stake missionary. During those World War II years we were able to bring the gospel to many young men training at Fort Bliss or Biggs Field.

During WWII times were hard and we thought we should not have any more children but Horesa kept dreaming of a red-haired little girl. Karen Jean was born July 6, 1945. A tax refund, some unusual overtime pay and a small temporary pay raise paid for the hospital bill. Karen is smart and musically talented. Sue Lynell was born March 21, 1950. She was the only one with dark eyes like her mother and also had her mother's temperament. Just a few months later our first grandchild, Shelly Corbridge was born to Betty Jo.

About that same time, the El Paso ward was divided and I was ordained a high priest and set apart as the bishop of the 1st ward by Joseph Fielding Smith. I never wanted this type of calling but found great joy and growth in this calling. After some years as bishop, I was called to serve on the High Council. During many years on various high councils, I worked with genealogy programs, missionary work, and seminary programs. We always saved for the missions of our sons. Wayne served in Germany, Hal in Uruguay and Larry in Argentina.

I retired from the customs service in 1965 and took an offer from the U.S. government to go to Guatemala on a government aid project where I wrote a manual for their Customs agency. There we had many choice experiences with the members of the church and with the people of that country. We felt closer to the stories of the Book of Mormon. We stayed there for 18 months but Sue only for 12. She returned to the USA and lived with Hal for a few months. We then also returned to Utah and made our home there. There I served on the High Council again and Horesa and I were set apart as ordinance workers in the Salt Lake Temple and then in the Provo Temple.

In May of 1972, Horesa was operated on for an aggressive thyroid cancer. The Drs. Only gave her 3-4 months to live. She was able to survive several surgeries, radiation treatments and chemotherapies for 11 years. She lived long enough to see all but one of our grandchildren be born. She continued to live for her family. She died in July of 1983 and Betty Jo the following year after suffering kidney failure and being on dialysis for several years. Horesa begged me to let her go and I was startled to realize I was causing her to suffer longer. I wondered why the Lord was keeping me on the earth after my dear wife

was gone. I have generally been healthy with a few minor surgeries that are normal for someone my age. Arthritis has plagued me much of my life but I have been blessed with a strong testimony, many opportunities to serve in the church and above all a wonderful family. Joseph LeRoy Kleinman passed away June 24, 1999 after suffering a broken hip a short time before. He remained alert and mentally strong until that happened. He was buried next to Horesa in the Orem Cemetery.