

NAOMI FELT CHATFIELD

By Lilleth Peck with addendum by Lois Rose Hansen Chatfield – 1971

I feel honored to have been asked to give the life sketch of my very dear friend and associate Church worker--Naomi Felt Chatfield--and to be able to express my deep love for her.

A LADY BORN ** SHE WAS THAT ALL HER LIFE

Naomi, a daughter of Charles B. and Georgena Felt, entered into this life on May 24, 1886. She was born 1/2 block north of the temple, in the old Felt home on Main Street, in the 17th ward of Salt Lake City. The Felt Building there was named after her father, who was a member of the General Board of the Sunday School.

Naomi's mother had delicate health so the rearing of the seven children fell mostly her shoulders. She was always a kind, loving girl and had a wonderful outlook on life. Her husband said, "She always saw the nice side of life and did just that."

Her family was one of the outstanding stalwarts of the Church. At her father's funeral, Pres. George Albert Smith and Pres. David O. McKay were the speakers. Her grandfather, Daniel Spencer, was president of the first stake in Salt Lake City.

At seventeen, Naomi was called to serve as Primary President of the 17th Ward. During her time in this office, her future husband, A. Kelsey Chatfield, gave the whole Primary a big Christmas party. She instigated the first Primary Children's parade in the 17th Ward. Apostle Cowley was a student in her Primary.

Naomi became engaged to Kelsey Chatfield just before his leaving on a mission for the LDS church, and she stayed true blue to him during his absence. Upon his return, they were married in the Salt Lake Temple, on Aug. 18, 1910. I remember how her eyes sparkled when she told of their wonderful honeymoon. How her new husband made arrangements for a private car on the railroad train, and how they really traveled in style.

Their marriage climaxed a wonderful courtship which continued through sixty-one years of married life. They were always so kind and considerate of each other. Their love continued to grow through the years--they were always sweethearts!

Their first home was in Idaho Falls, Idaho, where Brother Chatfield as civil engineer helped to construct the falls and the power plant there. Naomi became very active in the church auxiliaries while there and was also a member of the stake Sunday School board.

In 1928 they moved to Lehi with their family of four - having lost a daughter Barbara before then. Brother Chatfield came to Lehi as owner and manager of the old Co-op Store. They settled in the 2nd Ward, in the home now owned by George Lewis. Samuel Goodwin was then bishop of the ward.

From there they moved to the north end of town where they have since resided. A son, Spencer, passed away here a number of years ago.

Brother and Sister Chatfield filled a short-term mission to the Southern States where they did a lot of good missionary work.

All her life, Naomi was a very talented person. Her artistic and creative ability brought happiness to many. Her many hand-decorated wedding cakes were a delight for many a bride. Bob tells how they, the children, were allowed to eat the browned sides that were cut away before the decorating began. She also made party favors that were in constant demand. Her parties also were gala affairs--I remember one, especially, that was very unique - with bread and milk as the featured attraction.

She was a great believer in self-culture and was a member of the local Athenian Club, and an active civic worker. She taught in every Church organization and held many stake positions.

I became closely acquainted with Naomi when called by Pres. A. Carlos Schow to be a counselor to her in the Stake M.I.A., and later when she was a counselor in the stake Primary and I was on the Board. A few years later Sister Lilliane Anderson, Margaret Barnes and I were set apart by Pres. Herman C. Goates as officers of the Lehi Stake Relief Society and Naomi graciously accepted the position of secretary.

She was very efficient in this job. In fact, many a yearly financial report that was sent in to the General Board had a masculine touch to it, and she proudly acknowledged the help of her husband in completing it.

Each year after the General Relief Society Secretary reviewed her report we received a written letter congratulating us on our so very efficient secretary.

Through the years in all our associations I found Naomi to be always charming, gentle, self-reliant, prudent, and a natural-born leader. She taught me by example to use wisdom in making decisions--to think before acting in haste, and to always pray for guidance before solving a problem; in fact, her motto was always - pray - think - act. She was my ideal of what a perfect lady should be. She was at ease in any society. Never once, under any circumstance, did I see her lose her calm or say anything to hurt another's feelings, and the members of her family are like her in these respects.

My husband worked with Bob - as counselors to Bishop Grant and he loved and respected both of them.

Kelsey was known for outstanding musical ability and outgoing personality.

Karlyn was as close as a daughter to me. She and the girls of her age belonged to my Gleaner class. Her happy, bubbling disposition made her a delight to be around. She should have been the first Golden Gleaner from our stake but she moved to Salt Lake before she obtained all her requirements so Salt Lake got the credit for her many achievements.

Brother Chatfield is not only a very dear friend but an outstanding teacher and leader, as well as a very faithful member of our ward. He and his wife brought sunshine into our class each Sunday morning. We have surely missed them both since her illness a few weeks ago.

Naomi passed away quietly last Tuesday morning; leaving behind a loving husband, two devoted sons, Robert of Lehi, Kelsey of Riverside, California, and an affectionate daughter, Mrs. Milton W. (Karlyn) of Bountiful. One brother, Milton S. Felt, and two sisters, Mrs. Joel (Georgena) Richards and Mrs. Roy (Helen) Simmons, all of Salt Lake City; sixteen grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Brother Chatfield asked that I read a poem written to Naomi by her cousin Rhea Eddington on her birthday.

Again I'd like to say I'm grateful for having known this wonderful woman and hope I always remember life's beautiful lessons she has taught me. May the Lord bless her family and keep her memory always before them I pray -- Amen.

Addendum By Lois Rose Hansen Chatfield

Naomi Spencer Felt Chatfield is my mother-in-law, and I dearly love her. The above life sketch is a little flowery, but quite true. Some items in it triggered memories of things that my dear mother-in-law told me, or that I heard about her, and I'd like to add them here:

She said that her mother was unable to take care of her family the way she would have liked to, so the daughters had labors assigned to them. Naomi's duty was the cooking. Someone else's duty was the house-cleaning. Naomi claimed that she was never a good house-keeper because that wasn't her job at her parents' home. She did admit, though, that she was a good cook. Was she ever! I'll never forget the time that she made dinner for us and we all went off to church. When we got home, the dinner had somehow burned. In a very short time, Mom had concocted a new dinner, which we all enjoyed very much. She always walked around the table and made sure that everyone was well served. No matter how many times her husband urged her to sit and enjoy the meal, she just kept making sure that we all ate well.

Naomi told me that when she was a girl she had a very serious disease (smallpox, I believe), and in those days people with serious diseases were quarantined. She told me that it was very hard to be quarantined when her husband-to-be was soon going to go on his mission.

As far as her husband-to-be, A. K., knew, he was the only member of the Church in his family. His brother, Curtis, never did join our Church, or any other church. However, even though Curtis could not believe the things that A. K. believed, or couldn't even understand the reason that anyone could understand those things, Curtis still made it possible for Naomi to have an escort to various activities and programs that took place while A. K. was on his mission to England.

Naomi once sent A.K. a bread of some type for him to eat while he was on his mission. Dad wrote and told Mom that he enjoyed the bread very much, and he could taste her fingers in it. He thought he was being romantic and grateful, but Mom was offended, and her eyes still snapped with anger when she told me about that after the two of them had been married more than 50 years.

The falls project in Idaho Falls was Dad's first (but not his last) entrepreneurial venture. A flood came down the Snake River and took out the falls that Dad and Mom had tied up a lot of money to build. Naomi described to me the awful feeling it was to sit there in the dark, listening to those rocks crashing down the river, and know that their income was crashing, also.

The last entrepreneurial project they attempted was the co-op in Lehi. They went into that just as the Depression hit, and they lost everything. (You will notice that Lilleth said that they moved to Lehi in 1928, which was the year that their son Kelsey was one year old.) Dad felt a duty to the people of Lehi, so he stayed there, but he never tried another project. He also never forgave Herbert Hoover or the Republicans for the economic crash that ruined him. He remained a loyal Democrat to his death, and even got himself elected to the Legislature as a Democrat.

We still have a saying in our family, "If you can't give them food, give them service." The saying comes from Mom, who had to feed a big family during severe Depression times. Dad had brought home from his mission in England beautiful linens, silverware, china, and crystal. Therefore, Mom had beautiful table settings but not much food to put onto the table. The smaller the supply of food, the more beautiful the place settings, with Mom saying, "If you can't give them food, give them service."

After the huge losses from the co-op, Dad bought a little farm home on 15 acres of land with fruit trees and vegetable-type land. There were a couple of cows, and they bought chicks. They knew that even though they had no money, they wouldn't starve. Then Dad, the civil engineer, got a job with the State Road Commission and went away for days and weeks at a time, while Mom, the cultured, sheltered city girl, took over the care of the

baby chicks and other things. Once, when the visiting teachers came to visit, Mom grabbed an apron off the hook on the wall and went to host her teachers. When she put her hand into the apron pocket, Mom was horrified to discover that a mouse was in that pocket. Rather than reveal that she had mice in her home (a not unusual occurrence in farm areas but a disgraceful situation in Mom's eyes), Mom held onto that mouse until her teachers left. The mouse died in Mom's squeezing hand. Mom never overcame her fear of all rodents, either before or after that incident.

At her funeral, Bishop Grant Christopherson told how Mom had done wedding cakes for their family, and something happened to the cakes. Bishop Grant said that Mom had new cakes ready for the wedding. He didn't know how many hours she had worked to do that. My husband, Kelsey, said with tears in his eyes, that Mom worked all night long on that project.

Mom never learned to drive, but they never had a car available to her, anyway, because Dad had to drive all over the state to earn their living. When Mom was the stake Young Women's M.I.A. president, she walked to every meeting. That meant that she had to walk miles, because the stake covered all of Lehi. (Weather in Lehi is cold.)

I love my mother-in-law a lot.