

Dear Grace, Earl, and Family –

Well! Somebody has got to break the ice! I don't know if we wrote last or if it was you, but anyway someone has forgot to write.

Today was Stake Conference¹ and a wonderful conference it was, too. Elder Joseph Fielding Smith was the visiting authority – a wonderful man! Also Elder Mark XXXXX² of the General Welfare Committee was here. We attended the morning session this morning but Billy was too tired and restless to remain for the afternoon session³.

Yesterday we had the groundbreaking for our new chapel⁴. I had the honor and the privilege of having my picture taken with Elder Joseph Fielding Smith while he was breaking the ground. Then each of the Priesthood Group Leaders had the honor of breaking the ground – I got my picture taken again! Hope there are no broken cameras today!

Things are going to start rolling on the new chapel tomorrow morning – I guess there will be no more evenings at home now until the building is completed⁵. It is going to be worth all the time we can give. It is going to be a beautiful building with a patio in front⁶. It will cost something like \$100,000 to build.

Ralph Gardner was here today. He sure looks like his mother. He and Dorothy have been out all afternoon.

Last Sunday morning my wife and son presented me with a beautiful leather bound binding for genealogical records. It is filled with blank pages which are just itching to have some records placed upon them⁷.

Sometime ago you said you would send me all the Hiatt genealogy you had as soon as you had completed the papering of Aunt Emma's house and obtained a little rest. Perhaps you have had ample time to accomplish both so – if you please – may I receive my request⁸? Forgive me if I seem to be rushing you.

The genealogist William Perry Johnson said the publication would be completed some time the latter part of this year⁹.

Dorothy is really looking good now. She lost about 37.5 pounds all together. She is eating more now because she was loosing too fast. She lost 30 pounds in six weeks and seven and one half pounds in three weeks. Some difference, huh!

Lois and Billy are just fine. He is really growing. He won't talk yet, but I think he could if he wanted to¹⁰.

How are all the folks in Idaho? We never hear from anyone anymore. Maybe it is because we don't write any letters.... I don't know¹¹.

Well, I think I will close for the present. I have been going quite steady the past few nights and it is beginning to tell on me. Write soon and tell us all the news. Dorothy always lets us read her letters from you so we're not entirely ignorant as to what is going on.

Bye now –
Lois, Billy, & Clayton

PS. Come if you can. I guess we can put up with you again¹². Seriously, we are eagerly waiting for you.

Clayton

Notes:

1. This would have been the East Long Beach Stake. That means driving from Santa Ana to Long Beach on surface streets, since there was no freeway yet.
2. I can't read this last name. Dad writes cursive better than I do, but that is not saying much.
3. I think he is just blaming this on me. He probably wanted to get home and watch the ball game. Oh wait, no TV... Okay, maybe I was restless.
4. This would have been the chapel on Hallady Street in Santa Ana. I attended Church in that building from the time it was built until after my mission and marriage. The Santa Ana Unified School District purchased the building from the Church in the early 1970's, tore it down, and built an elementary school there. Before they tore it down, I went in and took several rolls of pictures of both the inside and outside of the building. Dad baptized a lot of people in the font in that building. Unfortunately, I have been unable to find the slides.
5. In those days, men knew how to build things. Everyone in the ward was expected to put in time to help get the building built. No one had much money in those days, but we knew how to work. My job was picking up bent nails that were on the ground. I never really thought about that before, but looking back, I think I was set up. Who needs bent nails, anyway? Were they implying that I couldn't be trusted to run that big electric saw? They had some there and I was pretty sure I could run one. I just needed someone to hold me up, since I couldn't quite reach it. Someone there slopped paint on my good cowboy work shirt, too.
6. Okay, Dad was from Idaho and not very familiar with Spanish style architecture. The patio was inside, not in front.
7. I still have his genealogy record book. That is where I found many of the family history stories that he wrote.
8. Who does this sound like? Apparently, those who teach about genetics know what they are talking about.
9. William Perry Johnson was the man who put together the HIATT – HIETT genealogy book.
10. Yeah, well, there really wasn't much to say. I got fed, had clothes to wear, a place to sleep.... I didn't really have any complaints.
11. See note 8.
12. See note 8.