

## Correcting and Preserving Family Records

Tom and I are ordinance workers in the Draper temple on Wednesdays and we do baptisms for the dead on Friday mornings. On January 16th I had a strange experience in the baptismal font. I kept seeing my ex-husband who died in Portland, Oregon on February 2, 2014. He was dressed in white and looked like he did when we were young. My impression was that Pete wanted work done so he could join his sister, parents and grandparents. I wondered what to do. A divorced first wife is certainly not next of kin and none of our three sons have much sympathy for their father. We divorced when they were 1, 2 and 4. Our son #2 Dean said: "Let him wait!" However, when President Parker visited the 3rd Ward in February, I sought his advice. He suggested that I write a letter describing my experience and promised to send it, along with a letter of his own, to the Office of the First Presidency and "Let them decide what to do."

Consequently on March 12<sup>th</sup>, I wrote: Dear President Parker, "I discovered that Peter S. Belov, son of Claudia Talaiev and Serge Peter Belov, born December 22, 1934 in Tsingtao, China, is listed as a non-member in Family Search. I assume he was either ex-communicated or had his name removed from church records since from the early days of our marriage he was disgruntled with the church.

On March 26<sup>th</sup> President Parker forwarded an e-mail he received from a staff worker in the Office of the First Presidency. It explained that a close living immediate family member must make a request. She suggested that one of our sons reply to her via e-mail. So I forwarded the letter to Dean who responded: "I think my father deserves a second chance."

On March 27<sup>th</sup> after doing baptisms for the dead, once again I sensed Pete's presence and felt his overwhelming joy. What he had hoped for was now under consideration.

On April 30, 2015 the Temple Department replied with a letter addressed to Dean Belov: "We are unable to find evidence that Brother Belov was excommunicated or that he'd had his name removed from church records. We suggest a Family Ordinance Request be taken to the temple where sealing to his parents can take place."

Further research indicated that there are two membership records for Peter Sergius Belov. **One confirms his membership** and indicates that he was born on 22 December 1933 in San Francisco, California. It shows his baptism and confirmation date as 18 April 1962. His initiatory and endowment ordinances were done in the Manti temple on 24 August 1962, the day of our marriage.

The **non-membership record** lists Peter Sergius Belov (born 22 December 1934 in Tseng Tau, Hong Kong China) as the non-member husband of Diane Johnson with no

ordinance work done. Perhaps Pete's appeared at the font was an effort to correct the inaccurate information he had provided when he was baptized.

Why two different records? To answer the question I need to go back fifty years. I met Peter S. Belov at church in Washington Ward while attending American University in Washington D.C. He told me that his mother was a Mormon, originally from Ogden, and that he was baptized in his youth. Pete claimed that his records were lost when they were evacuated from China during World War 11. Pete was re-baptized so we could be married in the temple. Five years later we divorced and he moved to Canada. I continued my close association with his father who had settled in Cottonwood after his retirement. Grandpa Belov helped me with the children. We were close until the day I confronted him about information he had withheld before I married his son. Grandpa responded, "You were too much in love to have listened," which made me furious.

I was so upset that when I prayed, I told the good Lord I would not spend any more time doing genealogical work for the Belovs until Grandpa apologized to me. It was out of character for him to do so but the very next day he came to me saying he was sorry. I asked grandpa to fill out a pedigree chart and go back as far as he could remember. He did so and I carefully filed it away.

Twenty years later Tom and I were going through an endowment session when I kept seeing, in my mind's eye, my ex-husband dressed in white and smiling. This disturbed me since I seldom thought about Pete or about our five-year marriage. After going through the veil, I asked Ann Brooks, my Relief Society President, what this meant.

"Maybe he's dead," she replied.

Still bothered, I told Tom about this experience as we drove home. "Was he wearing his temple robes?" he asked.

"No!" I answered, "Pete was dressed in a white shirt and white pants and looked the way he did when we were young."

"Do you have temple work that needs to be done for that family?" he replied.

Not wearing his temple robes indicated to Tom that Pete could not perform the ordinances himself and wanted me to do them.

It was then that I remembered Grandpa Belov's pedigree chart. I was able to find it along with photos and other information about the family and began preparing names to take to the temple. However finding birth and death dates was a problem since some of the information was in Russian. I had a picture of a woman holding a baby with an inscription written in the old Cyrillic script on the back. I asked my son Matt, who had minored in Russian, to translate it but he could not. Maria Wright had a friend who was able to translate it. I discovered that this was a photo of Grandpa's mother and older

brother. The inscription read, "This is me and my son Matthew, born July 5, 1889."



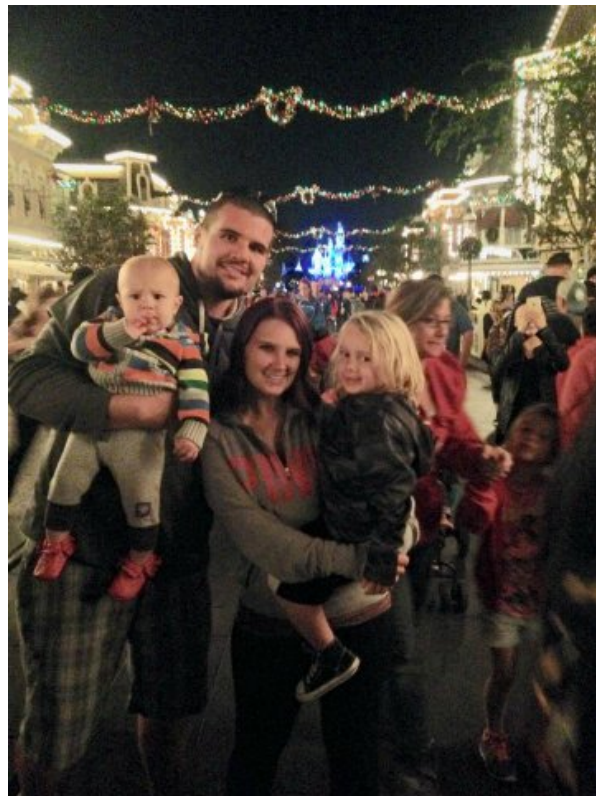
Another photo of her grave yielded birth and death dates for her and her husband. They died in China where they took refuge after fleeing at the end of the revolution.

As I had only one family that needed to be sealed, a temple worker escorted us into a sealing session led by Keith Bergstrom, Tom's former principal. I was filled with love and deep emotion as I served as proxy for Catherine Kluichnicov Belov, grandpa's mother. I cried all over the altar during the marriage ceremony and the sealing of the children to parents knowing in my heart that this little Russian woman wanted her family sealed. Upon seeing my tears and deep emotion some became curious and Brother Bergstrom asked, "Were they kin?"



Not wanting to explain that I was doing temple work for my ex-husband's grandparents I said, "Last month my little grandson, Andrew Belov, was born in Salt Lake City and I am the only person on the face of the earth who had the records that link him to his Russian ancestors."

Because of two revolutions, one in Russia and another in China, it would have been next to impossible for anyone else to make the connection and do the temple work. This was the fall of 1989. The Berlin Wall had just come down. The cold war was over and Russia was changing. Little did I realize that Tom would lead a delegation of Skyline High School students to Zelenograd the next summer; or that my son Matt Belov would be invited back to attend the Moscow Institute of Technology -- a life changing experience for him. The events that occurred the year after the sealing brought wonderful opportunities to our family. In 2002 Tom and I edited and published grandpa's book, "The Steps of Saturn." Our great grandsons, Shroeder and Wyley, will be able to read the stories of their ancestors. Through them the Belov name lives on.



Andrew and Chelsi Belov with sons in Disneyland, 2014

We hasten the work of salvation by writing stories and doing temple work for our deceased ancestors. A work that welds the generations together in an unbroken chain and blesses both the living and the dead.