

## **1973 and 1998: The Story of George's Family, told by leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints decades later**

*This is a story from the 1918 Flu Pandemic that was told much later. Look for both the tragedy of the flu and how neighbors helped each other out during the hard time. [Summary changed for easier reading.]*

In 1918, during the influenza pandemic, George Goates was a farmer who raised sugar beets in Lehi, Utah. Winter came early that year and froze much of his beet crop in the ground, which made harvesting the crop very difficult.

During that hard time, one of George's sons and three of his grandchildren died from influenza. In only six days, George made three separate trips to Ogden, Utah to bring the bodies home to be buried. It seemed like he could barely get home before the phone rang to give him the news of another tragedy.

After the last trip, George and another one of his sons headed back to their beet field to finish harvesting. On their way, they passed lots of their fellow farmers hauling wagons of beets to the factory. As they passed by, each driver would wave a greeting: 'Hi ya, Uncle George,' 'Sure sorry, George,' 'Tough break, George,' 'You've got a lot of friends, George.' Finally the driver of the last wagon waved and called out, 'That's all of 'em, Uncle George.'

George assumed the driver meant that all of his own beets were harvested and wished he could say the same. When George and his son got to their farm, however, there was not a single sugar beet in the field. He suddenly realized what the neighbor had meant: all of his neighbors had harvested his beets for him and his family.

George looked at his field as if he couldn't believe his eyes. Then this man, who had brought four of his loved ones home for burial in only six days, made caskets, dug graves, and never faltered, flinched, or wavered, sat down on a pile of beet tops and sobbed like a little child in gratitude.

Links:

<https://www.lehi-ut.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Les-Goates-by-Vaughn-J.pdf>,

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1998/10/the-priesthood-quorum?lang=eng>