On 31 March 1858, a baby girl was born to Lucy Ann Hambleton and Absalom Woolf. This new baby was their first child, and was named Chelnecha in honor of her maternal grandmother, Chelnecha Smith Hambleton. Chelnecha was soon given the pet name of “Nisha” and was known by this to her family and friends.

The Woolf family was living in Nephi, Utah, at the time of Nisha’s birth. When she was 2 years old they moved to Millville, Utah, where they lived for 2 years before moving to Hyde Park, where they were to reside for the remainder of their lives.

Chelnecha’s parents were hardworking, resourceful people. The 12 children born to them were taught at an early age to assume household responsibilities and outside chores. Chelnecha’s mother, Lucy, was a trained and licensed midwife and practical nurse, and was always on call to assist in the delivery of new babies. When there was illness in Hyde Park and surrounding communities, it was necessary for her to leave her own small children in the care of Chelnecha and her sisters. Because of this, the girls gained much valuable experience and training in homemaking which they later applied in their own homes.

On 8 May 1877, at the age of 19, Chelnecha was married to Joseph Waite in the Endowment House at Salt Lake City, Utah. Their married life started in real pioneer fashion in a log cabin in the community of Hyde Park. On 19 April 1878, their first child, a baby girl, Lenora Ann, was born. 18 months later, 19 Aug. 1879. Lucy Ada, their second daughter, blessed this home. These little girls were the best of playmates. 9 more children were later born to Joseph and Chelnecha: Joseph Wilson, Jesse Noble, Appy Leo, Sarah Vera (Sadie), William Wallace, Gerald Owen, George Irving, Fenton Hambleton, and Elmo Woolf.

Joseph Waite was a convert to the LDS Church from England and was always very active in the Church organizations. Chelnecha was content to stay home and assist him and the young children to attend church meeting.

Nisha was a very good manager of the family affairs and income. She was also energetic in providing for the needs of her children and husband. Thrift was her watchword. She said it was wicked to burn even a crust of bread. All of her life she avoided waste and laziness. The family spent summers raising and storing enough food to provide for their needs through long winter months. Nisha was able to see to the repair of household items. When electricity and water were installed in their house, she could repair a leaky faucet or a short in the electric cord. She was truly a farmer’s wife. She raised pigs and chickens to provide meat and eggs for their use. It was part of her daily schedule to arise early and milk 3 or 4 cows, taking special care of the milk. She would then churn the cream into butter. The butter was shipped by train to Salt Lake City where her sister, Emma Brown, would sell it for 15 cents a pound. The money received from this project, along with the sale of extra eggs, provided her with some pin money to buy the few items she didn’t produce.

Chelnecha was an excellent cook. She would make several loaves of bread every day. Large kettles of soup were usually simmering on the back of the stove. A great favorite on cold wintry nights was thickened milk, better known as “Lumpy Dick.” Also, to this day her children speak reverently of the delicious rice pudding they would have for Sunday dinner.

Chelnecha’s kitchen was a homey family room. It was a delightful place for a child or grownup to while away some time watching her sitting in a rocking chair by the sunny window. She was always busy with her hands—making lace, knitting stockings, or mending. A sewing
machine stood in the corner: above it was a book case of cubby holes and shelves where many fascinating surprises and sometimes a peppermint candy could be found. Usually there was a lazy cat purring away in the wood box back of the kitchen range. The noises of the ticking grandfather clock and the singing teakettle were relaxing to anyone who wanted to stretch out on the cozy couch.

On 1 May 1884, the Logan Temple was opened to the Church members for sealing ordinances to be performed. Joseph took his wife Chelnecha to the temple on the first day to be sealed for time and all eternity. They were accompanied by her parents. The following week, Joseph and Chelnecha returned to the temple with their 4 oldest children, who were sealed to their parents. The rest of the children were born under the covenant of that marriage.

Joseph married his second wife, Mary Lorinda Lee, 11 Nov. 1887.

6 May 1889, he was called to serve a mission in the state of Virginia. He left Chelnecha to care for the children. Wallace was just a young baby at the time. Despite many hardships, Chelnecha was able to provide for the needs of her family and even send some money to her husband. While Joseph was on his mission, a son, Evander, was born to his second wife, Mary, 19 Dec. 1889. A year later, 17 Jan. 1891 Mary died. Chelnecha mourned Mary’s death as she would had she been her own daughter. She offered to take little Evander into her home and raise him as her own, even though Wallace was just a toddler, but Mary’s mother felt this would be too hard for Chelnecha, so she kept Evander and raised him in her home.

In the spring of 1901 a deadly smallpox epidemic dealt the community of Hyde Park a severe blow. All of Chelnecha’s family became ill with this dreadful disease. She was expecting her 11 child and was ill with smallpox. Elmo was born 11 April 1901, covered with the smallpox. He and his mother were very ill for a long time recovering from the disease.

Throughout Chelnecha’s life her greatest attribute was her love and deep concern for others. On 1909. An apartment was built on the Waite home; Chelnecha’s aged mother Lucy Ann and invalid sister Ida moved in where Chelnecha could help to care for them. They spent many happy and profitable hours together. They were always busy piecing quilts of making rugs. They also learned to make beautiful netting lace. Gifts of this lace were bestowed on new brides and used for baby clothes. Man, Many yards of the lace were also sold.

Ida came to live with Chelnecha in 1920 after the death of their mother. For the next 20 years they were to help each other. Nisha especially enjoyed Ida’s companionship after her husband’s death 12 Jan. 1924. Chelnecha also provided a home for a niece, Florence Ricks, for several years. In addition, her home was always open to the many friends and relatives who would visit in Hyde Park.

Chelnecha was a Relief Society visiting teacher most of her adult life; her companion, Caroline Anderson, said she was always available in times of trouble and illness.

Chelnecha’s birthday parties were legend. Her family looked forward to them as much as they did Christmas. Every adult and child that could possibly come would be there on 31 March for a chicken dinner and all the trimmings. Her daughters and daughters-in-law would see to the preparation of the food. Because there were so many in attendance, the table would have to be set and cleared several times in order to serve everyone. At times, the weather would be cold and stormy and the house would hardly contain them all. On her 82 birthday her children honored her at a tea. During the afternoon 150 guests called to see her. The following day, radio station KVNU paid special tribute to her with these comments: “At 82 years of age Mrs. Waite still keeps her own home and cares for her sister, Miss Ida Woolf, which she had done for the past 20
years. She also continues to make beautiful handmade lace and is a great reader. She takes an active interest in her family and shares in their happiness and sorrows. She has 10 living children, 62 grandchildren and 58 great grandchildren who often visit her. Her greatest asset is her congenial, happy disposition. It has always been her nature and desire to give and to serve.

Soon after her 82 birthday Chelnecha became ill with what the doctor diagnosed as cancer. She suffered extreme pain and distress throughout most of a long, hot summer, while her devoted family cared for her in her own home. She passed away at home in Hyde Park, 9 Sep. 1940 and was buried 13 Sep. in the Hyde Park Cemetery.

Funeral speakers stressed her great courage, honesty and integrity and said she was always kind, charitable, cheerful and deeply religious. She had reflected the courage and faith of the early pioneers. “And her children shall rise up and call her blessed.”

Virginia H. Lee, Granddaughter

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