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# EPILOGUE

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“History turns on small hinges and, so do our lives,” said LDS President Thomas S. Monson.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, that is as true as any singular gospel principle. Our destiny is determined by the choices we make. Sometimes, it is those little, tiny, teensy, and small decisions that shape a life. There are always choices that might have been, both within the destinies of those who lived before, as well as decisions made in our own lifetimes.

*What if* . . . the 1800s whaling ship captain in the English harbor had not decided to take young stowaway Joseph Godfrey with him on his ship? In those days, there were alternatives for stowaways, including slavery or death. The captain could have chosen to return the young lad to his father, but the decision was to take the boy in and care for him. The captain virtually adopted young Joseph, making him his cabin boy. Joseph worked for decades on the seas, learning independence and even medical practices of the day as a member of the ship’s crew because there were no doctors on board the vessel. It is a fact that Joseph had an abusive father, but it is an error to see Joseph as an eternal victim. His time aboard the ship set the foundations for a lifetime. He and a shipmate, George Coleman, became part of the Canadian Loyalist’s Army. Later, they were among those who joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Joseph and George were among the bodyguards of the Prophet Joseph Smith. They were driven from their homes in Nauvoo by mobs. Joseph Godfrey trekked

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1. Thomas S. Monson, “Follow The Prophets,” *Ensign*, January 2015, 5.

across the plains with his own family and another friend. Joseph settled in North Ogden, where some attribute the naming of Mount Ben Lomond to him. A large family evolved, and Joseph became known as a man of love and compassion to all in need. The whole of North Ogden attended his funeral.

*What if* . . . Charles Ora Card had decided that he had had enough? Hounded by the US marshals, he hid out in the attics of the Logan Tabernacle, in friends' homes, and in the bushes along the Logan River. For his own protection, he carried a gun, which he kept holstered. Even at the dramatic point of his capture by the marshals, he was prompted not to draw the pistol. What if he had drawn it? Charles had challenged the Edmunds-Tucker Act, gone to trial, and was acquitted. It was a miracle he was not convicted. *What if* he had been convicted and sentenced to the Yuma Territorial Prison?

Charles's wives and children were already suffering. He was suffering, but he was also determined. He set out with plans for Arizona, but a prophet, John Taylor, asked him to explore the British territories for a place of settlement and peace. It was a much different direction than he had intended, but he was obedient. On this sixteen-year mission, he established the foundations not only for his family but for the Latter-day Saints in Canada. He created irrigation systems, roads, and communication systems for the entire region. Where would the Card family and the LDS Saints of Canada be today without his sacrifice and his conquering of his human frailties and temptations?

In the next Godfrey generation, *what if* . . . the North Ogden family farm had been inherited by Melvin Godfrey, Joseph's youngest son? He expected the farm to be his, but it was not to be. The probate courts divided the choice property, leaving Melvin without a means of support for his new wife and their first-born son. They emigrated to "Starve Valley" in the dead of winter and later to Canada, again arriving in the middle of another brutal blizzard. Melvin was among the first pioneers of Magrath, Alberta. As the town marshal, Melvin brought law to the little community. He worked with the town council to bring electricity to the village. He established the town's first silent movie theater and

hosted the first exhibitions of radio in the region. He loved Magrath and worked throughout his life for its modern improvements.

In the next generation, *what if* . . . the Great Depression had not occurred? Only a fraction of people over the world were positioned to avoid the economic devastation.<sup>2</sup> There is no question the Godfrey families were victims of the resulting hardships. The movie theater substituted cash tickets for “tickets in kind,” meaning that patrons brought potatoes and eggs as admission. Floyd’s wages were cut by the Magrath Trading Company. Food for his family came only from his garden and the Card farm. They dug coal for cooking and heating from the banks of Pot Hole Creek. Floyd was a new father with a growing family, building his second home, and he was about to lose that home to debt. He sold it, paid the debt, and followed his brother Bert to Cardston.

*What if* . . . Floyd and Clarice had not moved to Cardston? In Cardston, Floyd built his third and last home. He became a religious and civic leader, a member of the Alberta Stake high council, a bishop, town councilor, mayor, and unflinching community servant. *What if* . . . he and Clarice had not gone to Taiwan?

*What ifs*—these are rhetorical and somewhat speculative questions of history. They do, however, illustrate those small hinges that become turning points of heritage. The Godfreys and the Cards had come a long way since the seagoing vessels and the wagon treks across the plains to the Great Basin and then north into Canada. Each generation experienced their challenges thrown against their testimonies and lives. Each made their own decisions that directed not only their own lives but lives to come.

These are the footprints within which the communities of Cache Valley, North Ogden, Magrath, and Cardston stand today. The family heritage was a transition, bringing family from seventeenth-century England to America, then through the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. The Godfreys and the Cards joined a new religion. The Mormons were persecuted and driven from the United States because of their

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2. For the effects of the Great Depression, see Frederick Lewis Allen, *Since Yesterday: The 1930s in America, September 3, 1929 to September 3, 1939* (New York: Harper and Row).

beliefs. In Utah, the American government came after them again. Some moved north into Canada, seeking a better life. The Godfrey and Card families witnessed the transition of the country, the abolition of slavery, and the creation of a more stable union; they witnessed the railroads uniting the East and West in both the United States and Canada. They participated in the transition of the Wild West into the modern West. Their immigrations had been by oxen and horse teams on nonexistent roads. Their lives ended driving gasoline automobiles on paved freeways. They experienced the historical eras that birthed the electronic media, telephone, train, and plane.

The Godfrey-Card heritage is one of American and Canadian originals. The first in new lands with new visions of life, liberty, and freedom. They were among the first to leave footsteps for their heritage to follow. “Though times and circumstances have changed, the principles for facing trials and successfully living together as a caring and prospering community under God have not changed,” said President Dieter F. Uchtdorf.<sup>3</sup> So it was with our pioneers; so it is with those of us today. We learn as we walk in their footsteps.

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3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “All Is Well,” *Ensign*, July 2015, 4–6.