



PART 4

IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS



FOOTPRINTS

CHAPTER 13

The Mormon pioneer families of the nineteenth century were common folks living extraordinary lives. However, they were not immune to historic turmoil that threatened them; the anti-Mormon mobs of Illinois drove them from Nauvoo, and the US marshals chased them into hiding. Eventually, they fled to Canada, looking for freedom, work, and a better life; these were foundations of their legacies. Their children were raised in the rich lands of the Canadian west. These children were born in the early twentieth century, and their families were ranchers and farmers with horse-drawn plows; they planted and ate what they harvested. The children and grandchildren of the original pioneers faced turmoil in a similar fashion. World War I frightened them. In 1919, during the Spanish Flu Pandemic, a Card family almost became one of the statistics. In the Roaring Twenties, it was hard to imagine that the generation of young adults who had kicked up their heels, dancing the Charleston, were only to have their hopes dashed by the Great Depression. Soon after, World War II forced rationing. Did the children and grandchildren of these pioneers face difficulties? Of course they did. However, the posterity of the pioneers overcame their challenged by following in the righteous footsteps of their ancestors.

LEGACIES OF THE GODFREY FAMILY

“I believe my greatest desire is to have the spirit of the Lord with me always,”¹ Floyd Godfrey wrote. Floyd and Clarice’s sensitivity

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1. Floyd Godfrey, Taiwan Temple Mission Journal, 20 August 1985.

to the Spirit increased as they worked at it and grew with it. They were deeply spiritual, and throughout their lives they were very much in love. They were both raised to uphold the standards of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the same followed in their own home. Their children never heard a cross word pass between parents. Children might have been tempted to sass their mother occasionally, but before the words spilled out, they were cut off by their father, who taught love and respect. Floyd and Clarice loved the Cardston Fifth Ward, and the ward loved them back. “I remember Floyd as a pillar of spiritual strength,” wrote Maurine Stanford, a neighbor, friend, and member of the ward. “He was a humble man,”² she continued. Floyd’s spirituality and his basic philosophy can be summed up in one epigram: “To thine own self be true. And it must follow, as the night the day. Thou canst not then be false to any man.” His children heard that so often they thought it was scripture until they read Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*.³

Floyd and Clarice loved the Cardston Alberta Temple and taught their children the same. Although he was reluctant at first, Floyd was a temple worker who served for many years. He encouraged his children to keep their covenants, to learn from the symbolism, and to feel the spirit of the temple. He held strong to his own temple covenants and promises. Floyd and Clarice’s six children continued in their parents’ footsteps, each serving as temple workers. Collectively, that service totals more than a hundred years. Elder and Sister Godfrey loved the Chinese people and never lost touch with friends and associates in Taiwan. After their first mission to Taiwan, Floyd could hardly wait to return. They had the Cardston temple in their backyard and both the Cardston and Taiwan temples in their hearts.

Floyd was a confident man; Clarice was a quiet, elegant woman. Floyd stood for integrity; Clarice stood for a strong work ethic, humility, and love. And although they had personality differences, they

2. “In Remembrance: Floyd Godfrey,” Funeral Services and Cards, Godfrey Family Papers.

3. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, act 1, scene 3, lines 79–81.

treated each other as equals and with respect. Clarice set the tone of her home; she loved children. Her own were priority, but she served in the children's organizations of the Church for almost forty years. After she passed away, Floyd was lonely. Lying in his bed one evening, he cried out, "If only Clarice could come back." Just at that exact moment, his bedroom lit up so bright that it scared him. He pulled the covers over his head and said, "I didn't mean it," and the light disappeared. He wondered, "Had a car just turned around outside?" He saw a light, but heard nothing.⁴

Floyd and Clarice enjoyed their time together, and it is in these times their spirit was the strongest. Floyd and Clarice also enjoyed their time with others. They often led out in public, taking center stage. Their home was open for any occasion. Friends, family, and church colleagues were often invited over for an evening. How so many people squeezed into their little home at one time remains a puzzle, but they did, and they were happy.

They enjoyed their gardens. Gardening was a way of life. In childhood, their pioneer parents ate what they planted, and if the crops were poor, they went without. Gardens were lifelines of sustenance and provided opportunities to acquire good work habits that passed through generations. Floyd planted the seeds, and Clarice preserved the harvest. Even as the necessity of gardens faded during their lifetime, they continued planting. Every spring Clarice planted new flowers, and every fall she harvested the bulbs for the next spring planting. All of their children learned to garden, and each tended their own gardens as their own families grew.

Floyd and Clarice taught their children to work at home and at Floyd's Furniture. Dusting Floyd's Furniture was as critical as pulling weeds in the garden. Clarice taught her daughters how to embroider and darn socks when holes appeared in the heel or the toe. She was known for the artistry of projects she created with her hands, which were given to others at Christmas or in times of need. A lady's handkerchief with a simple crocheted border communicated love when it

4. Eva Kay Harker-Copieters, letter, December 2012, Godfrey Family Papers.

was inserted within a birthday card. A knit wool sweater kept children and grandchildren warm. Whatever the challenge, they taught, “You can do it!”

While his children were growing up, Floyd taught with a never-ending vault of epigrams, songs, and poems. He did not lecture. He did not speak an unkind word or raise his voice in anger. He would cut off any conversation where his children started to say anything critical of anyone. “Let us all speak kind words to each other” is a line from a popular LDS hymn that he sang to underscore what he taught.⁵ These acts of self-control were monumental accomplishments. They must have been mountains for him to climb, but ones turned to gold in his family.

Floyd and Clarice took their church assignments seriously as they taught in the wards throughout the Alberta Stake and the Taiwan Mission by mentoring and engaging in fundamental gospel sermons. Floyd and Clarice’s teachings revolved around hard work, ethics, honesty, and basic Christian love. They taught by example. Floyd wrote, “Communicate with your family, for it gives you unity and strength. Keep the lines of communication open that all may understand and love. . . . Build yourselves. . . . Control yourselves . . . Be at the helm of your own ship. It is very simple, my children, just follow the Lord’s commandments.”⁶

In the early years, the Godfreys and Cards traveled by wagon, and in Floyd and Clarice’s childhood, people seldom traveled more than a few miles from their farms. Throughout their adult lives, they watched the modern world of gasoline automobiles, trains, and planes close the distance of those places once so far away. Travel for the adult Floyd and Clarice was for work, fun, exploration, and relaxation. At the drop of a hat they made trips to Salt Lake City, San Francisco, New York, and Toronto—visiting friends and family, mixed with a little furniture business. They once took both sets of their parents on extended journeys through eastern Canada to Ottawa, Ontario. They then went down to

5. “Let Us Oft Speak Kind Words,” *Hymns*, no. 232.

6. Floyd Godfrey, *Missionary Journal*, 24 February 1983.

the United States through Ohio and onto the Grand Canyon in Arizona. All six climbed into the car, and off they went.

Floyd was called “Wrong Way Corrigan” by close friend Alma Wiley. Corrigan was a 1930s pilot who took off from New York, headed for Long Beach, and ended up in Dublin, Ireland.⁷ Similarly, during the 1950s, Alma indicated he was going to pick up a son who was returning on a ship from a Church mission abroad. His ship was docking in San Francisco. “Well, you know Floyd has heart trouble,” Alma wrote, “[and] it started to swell, tears came into his eyes and he said, Bishop, I have a new car and I have just got to get away from my business, let me take you.” And off they went. “San Francisco here we come.” But Floyd first traveled to Mesa, Arizona; then west to San Diego; and finally north up the Pacific Coast to the Bay Area, and then back to Cardston with Alma’s missionary. On another occasion, Alma and his wife were invited by Floyd to ride to Edmonton with him and Clarice. This time they were going to Edmonton via a circular route through eastern British Columbia, stopping at Radium Hot Springs, Lake Louise, the Columbia Ice Fields, Jasper Park, and then northeast back toward Edmonton.⁸ Traveling music was a humorous pastime wherever they went and when children went along on any vacation. Songs like “The Bear Went over the Mountain” and “Alfalfa Hay” were sung repeatedly until the tired little passengers gave out.

Floyd had a wonderful sense of humor. He was a tease, sometimes too much of one. In Floyd and Clarice’s relationship, if his gregariousness was on the brink of going too far, it was Clarice who became the teacher saying, simply, “Floyd,” and he settled right down. It was not so much what she said, but the way and the particular tone of her voice that balanced him. Clarice had a sense of humor as well. She could get the best of him only on April Fools’ Day when she instigated the jokes before he realized it was a day of games. Any time could be turned into a humorous time. A winter’s toss of a snowball or Christmas games produced laughter. During summer’s Waterton Park family reunions,

7. See Douglas Corrigan, *That’s My Story* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1938).

8. Alma Wiley, “Dear Bishop Godfrey,” letter in the Godfrey Family Papers.

Floyd put watermelon rinds into the coffee pots because he didn't want his brothers drinking coffee. His humorous approach reminded them of their childhood standards. His actions taught his children, who always laughed at their father's shenanigans. Unfortunately for him, his grandkids inherited the jokester gene. While lying on the sofa during a regular visit to his daughter's Mountain View ranch home, his oldest granddaughters asked him innocently to "please lift his leg up" so they could measure him for a coffin. They had their mother's sewing tape measure in hand, and they looked innocent enough. Floyd's eyes were closed; he was only half paying attention, half napping, as he lifted his leg to a 45-degree angle. Then he suddenly bolted from the couch like his pants were on fire. Those loving little girls had poured ice water down their grandfather's leg.

One day, when he was visiting family in Tucson, Arizona, Floyd's children and grandchildren concocted a little plan "to get Grandpa." They were taking him to a special steak restaurant; Floyd loved a good steak dinner. Three grandkids, who might have been ten or eleven at the time, built up the excitement of the evening, telling Grandpa about this special place they were taking him to eat. All kept a straight face. They dressed in their Sunday best. The boys wore their white shirts and ties. The girls wore dresses and were ready to go. The kids kept passing Grandpa's bedroom and asking, "Are you ready? Have you got your *tie* on yet?" He was pleased at the attention and love from his "sweet little grandkids," as he later described the event. At last, parents, grandparents, and kids all piled into the car and drove to an old cowboy restaurant called Pinnacle Peak in a shopping area of Tucson called Trail Dust Town. As they entered the restaurant, Grandpa Floyd didn't seem to notice the hundreds of ties cut and hanging from the walls and ceiling. Nor did he notice that his son and three grandsons had snuck into the restroom and removed their ties. He did not know, of course, that if you wore a tie to this restaurant, the waitress would show up with scissors, cut it off, and staple it to the wall.

The family was seated and looking at menus, kids nervously trying to contain their giggles when the waitress suddenly appeared grabbing Grandpa Floyd's tie and giving it an upwards jerk. In one hand, she was

holding his tie and ready to hang him; in the other she had what was like a great big pair of carpet scissors. “You want this tie?” she declared, as she pulled on it. “Take it off or lose it!” she continued. “That’s my only Chinese silk tie,” Floyd declared with a surprised look on his face. Then, he suddenly realized he’d been duped by his grandkids. He rescued the tie; it was saved. All had a wonderful meal and a memory of a good time with Grandpa Godfrey.⁹

Stories of family, stories of his childhood, or stories from the scriptures always taught a principle, even without the sermon. Floyd loved a good story and had the ability to laugh at himself. “Don’t play with the matches” was an important lesson. One day as he was preparing for a barbeque, Floyd opened a small box of matches he kept in the cupboard, and they all fell out on the ground. He never carried matches on his person, but he dutifully picked them all up and put them in his front pants pocket. He forgot about them until he was on an errand to pick up some groceries at the Cardston Mall. He got out of the car, put his keys in his pocket and was looking over the fruit counter when his pants began to smoke. The car keys had sparked the matches, and his pants were on fire! He started to take his pants off, but realized he could not do that with all the people in the store who were now watching. In a flash, he dug the matches from his pocket and flung them out over the grocery aisle, smoke still pouring out of the hole in his pants. While one customer screamed, he was doing the “fast chicken on a hot plate dance.” A crowd had gathered to watch the action, and they were laughing hysterically, “including [his] own wife Olive.” Floyd’s pride was seared, but the only burn was to the hole in his pants. “I didn’t know you could move that fast,” Olive laughingly remarked.¹⁰

Floyd’s Furniture was the family business for almost twenty-five years. It grew from a small upstairs loft into the largest store on Main Street. Floyd and Clarice rode together all over the southern Alberta countryside as he called on the local ranchers, selling furniture or even trading a Chesterfield (a couch or sofa) for a cow. Clarice staffed

9. Donald G. Godfrey, *Seeds, Faith & Family History* (Queen Creek, AZ: Christon Communications), 121–23.

10. Journal of Floyd Godfrey, 23 August 1983.

Floyd's Furniture alone when he was involved in a Church assignment. It might have grown into a chain store, but there was insufficient financing to take it further than Floyd had come.

Floyd was a dedicated town servant. He was elected to the school board and became board president. He was among those who brought a troubled school budget under control. And in doing so, he established the foundations of the educational structure in the district. In the Rotary and Lions Clubs, he worked to beautify the community and strengthen its economic development.

Floyd's most significant community service was as a member of the town council and as mayor. Projects brought natural gas into Cardston, new water-treatment resources, and a sewage-treatment plant. The Lion's Park was redesigned and upgraded with neighboring campgrounds. A park building was constructed with accommodations for large groups and family reunions. The "old folks" Chinook Center Villa was expanded and modernized. A new swimming pool was designed, expanded, and constructed. Floyd was a major supporter of the Remington Carriage Center, today a dynamic tourist attraction. Plans for a new library and new council offices in the Civic Center, the old "Social Center," were the building blocks of his leadership. Floyd spent a short time as a member and the president of the Cardston Historical Society. He led the way in the preservation of the municipal courthouse, eventually transforming it into a museum under the management of the historical society. He was a continual promoter of historical preservation and beautification projects. Floyd was a team builder who did not chase the public stage; he gave his council members their spot in the light. Clarice was always by his side when he traveled for the town.

HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

As Floyd's life drew to a close, there were many things he still wanted to accomplish. He wanted to visit his children and grandchildren again, pilot a plane, build a new home, and work again in the temple. He continued studying Mandarin, wanting to be perfectly fluent, even when there was no one who understood. He wanted to write. He still loved the scriptures, good books, and poetry. "Life is good," he wrote, "we

all have our setbacks . . . but cheer the happy moments.”¹¹ “What can I do at 80 years old?” he asked himself. He could not believe he was that old. “I can smile . . . , be kind . . . , love my wife and children. . . . I can do a kind deed.”¹²

Floyd and Clarice lived beautiful lives. Everything was not always rosy, but they did love their “roses” and looked for them in life. Floyd always wondered what life would bring, but it was today, not tomorrow, that was his priority. “To-Day . . . I have a difficult time with detail. I like the big bands. Sometimes I yearn for a Rolls Royce (dreamer). I never seem to worry about money. I love to swim (in a warm pool). I like to ride my bicycle. I hate this arthritis in my left knee (my companion for 40 years). I love modesty. I like pretty women (unless they smoke). I abhor drunkenness. I love the countryside. I love the blue sky and Old Chief Mountain. I respect my many friends, all races. Today is good!”¹³

FLOYD’S PASSING

The following is a letter Floyd wrote to his children of his hopes for the future. His hopes were not of notoriety, nor positions of wealth and influence. His hopes were for his family’s future, their faith, and love:

Dear Children: If I should die tomorrow, I would feel that I have succeeded in life . . . if I have planted in your hearts an earnest desire to love your God, love your fellow man, and a firm testimony of the Gospel. If in some way I had taught you to be honorable men and women. And if, I have taught you the wisdom of thrift in time and money.

I hope I have planted humility in your hearts, that you are earnest when you kneel before your Lord and repent, then rise with a new determination.

I hope mother and I have shown you that a family is no place for contention and that we have taught you, in our small way, to seek the Master’s hand and to know that herein is real inner peace and happiness.

I hope I have taught you to have faith in yourselves and the future. Then and only then will I feel content as you walk in my footsteps.

Love, Your Dad¹⁴

11. Journal of Floyd Godfrey, 23 October 1985.

12. Journal of Floyd Godfrey, 27 November 1985.

13. “Today,” Journal of Floyd Godfrey, 7 January 1986.

14. Godfrey, *Just Mine*, v.

Floyd's health ebbed slowly after his second mission in Taiwan. His knees gave him pain, yet he was on them working the carpet of the new Taipei Taiwan Temple. His eyesight was fading; the doctors told him to rest, but this was not easy for a man who loved reading. Cancer began creeping into his body. He was honored by the Lion and Rotary Clubs for his life of service. He reached out to his extended family, and he was a part of their lives to the end. He was a positive and spiritual influence to those with whom he served from Magrath, the Cardston Third and Fifth Wards, the Cardston Alberta Temple, the town of Cardston, and Taiwan.

Floyd Godfrey passed away 11 April 1992 at eighty-six years of age.