



PART 3

BRIDGING THE WESTERN FRONTIER & THE MODERN WEST



1887–1980

FRONTIERS COMING TOGETHER

CHAPTER 7

Bridging decades of frontiers can appear as rapid transitions if people simply look back. In reality, those bridges come one day at a time, with significant physical labor, trials, and a hope for the future. Pioneer life revolved around the essentials of shelter, food, and clothing. It was an agrarian farm and ranch lifestyle, at the start, often isolated from the big city and national business centers. Homes were constructed with the available local materials surrounding the farm. This is why Charles Ora Card, as he explored British Columbia and Alberta, was always alert for land with timber and water resources. As settlers moved into the West, they organized local communities, churches, schools, and governments. People worked together, particularly in small villages. Working together meant clearing the land, building homes, and practicing a cooperative enterprise. A quilting bee brought women of the neighborhoods together to sew quilts. Similarly, barns were raised, and crops were planted, harvested, and preserved.

It was the Union Pacific Railroad and the Canadian Pacific Railroad that brought the East to the West in both nations. It happened just before Card's exploration. Distances once traversed

slowly by horse, covered wagon, and foot were now covered comparatively quickly. The first Mormon settlers into southern Alberta came in wagons and later by the rails. The trains of Alberta linked the US and Canadian railways.¹ By 1899 the first pioneers were arriving at Stirling, Alberta, on the Alberta Railway and Coal Company (AR&CC) trains. By 1900 the St. Mary's River Railway Company (SMRRC) connected Stirling with Magrath and Spring Coolee. Between 1902 and 1905, the lines were extended to Cardston, Raley, Woolford, and Kimball, Alberta.² All interlinked to the rail centers in Lethbridge and Calgary. These lines moved people and freight in unprecedented numbers.

At the turn of the century, other modes of transportation and communication were evolving. The steam-driven automobiles were first called the horseless carriage. The first US patent for the gasoline engine was actually filed in 1885. The Stanley Steamer was in production in 1896. By 1899 there were eighty-four automobile manufacturers in the United States, all of which were in the New England states. In Canada, the first automobile plant was near Windsor, Ontario, in 1904. The steam engines burned kerosene, also used in home oil lamps. The burner heated the water, creating steam pressure to push the crankshaft driving the engine. The electric cars were quieter, but the batteries were too heavy, and the drivers had to stop often and recharge. The gasoline-powered engine would take over the market simply because an abundance of oil had just been discovered in Texas and Alberta. By the 1920s, automobiles were becoming the primary means of transportation.³ Distances were closing. Along with automobile travel, the Industrial Age ushered in mechanical farm machinery and a host of new technology, including film and radio.⁴

1. Claude Wiatrowski, *Railroads across North America* (New York: Crestline, 2012), 12–13. Also, Pierre Berton, *The Last Spike: The Great Railroad 1881–1885* (Toronto: McClelland and Steward, 1971).

2. R. F. Bowman, *Railways in Southern Alberta* (Lethbridge, Alberta: Lethbridge Historical Society, 2002), 36, 38.

3. Godfrey, "The Jenkins Horseless Carriages," in C. Francis Jenkins: *Pioneer of Film and Television*, 78.

4. David E. Kyvig, *Daily Life in the United States, 1920–1940* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002), 71–90; 91–105.

At the same time transportation was growing and countries were expanding, territorial issues of imperialism ideology were debated. Card was not the only individual who saw missionary opportunities among the First Nations peoples. Josiah Strong, an American Protestant clergyman, argued that it was the mission of America to “carry the blessing of spiritual Christianity, to the backward areas of the earth.”⁵ Missionaries of all faiths were reaching out around the globe to convert and educate native peoples to the new ways of Christianity. It was a national debate, and the approach was not always gentle.⁶

At almost the beginning of the twentieth century, illness, war, frivolity, and depression seemed to come in rapid progression: World War I, the 1918–20 Spanish Flu, the Roaring Twenties, and Great Depression of the 1930s. World War I broke out in 1914, and the armistice was signed 11 November 1918. Children in elementary schools were taught the exercises of war, and boys were taught how to handle a rifle. It was 1917 when the United States ultimately declared war on Germany. “It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war,” Woodrow Wilson declared. He was thinking of a time when “a concert of free people” could eliminate the necessity of war.⁷ The end of WWI was followed by a flu epidemic that killed millions. The flu touched every community and almost every household in North America and the globe.⁸ The Roaring Twenties followed, with the Charleston on the dance floor. It was a short decade of social revolution, economic prosperity, cultural development, new freedoms, and a revolution in morals and manners. Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* introduced the idea of evolution into the religious debates. Freud brought forward the open discussions of sex. It was a comparatively footloose and free decade

5. Josiah Strong, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis* (New York: The American Home Missionary Society, 1885), 159–61, 165, 170, 178–80.

6. Ernest J. Wrage and Barnet Baskerville, *American Forum: Speeches on Historic Issues, 1788–1900* (Seattle: University of Washington Press), 343–68.

7. Kyvig, *Daily Life*, 209–30; also Wrage and Baskerville, *American Forum*, 51–52, 76–86.

8. Mark Osborne Humphries, “Paths of Infection: The First World War and the Origins of the 1918 Influenza Pandemic,” *War in History* 21, no. 1 (2014): 55–81.

of history. It ended abruptly on 29 October 1929, often referred to as Black Tuesday. The stock market suddenly crashed, and the Great Depression would last more than a decade.⁹

FAMILIES ON THE FRONTIERS

The histories of the western frontier and the modern West were bridged by families. During frontier times, the Cards led the Mormon migration into Canada (see chapter 5). Charles Ora Card established “Card’s town,” along with multiple LDS settlements throughout southern Alberta. He organized, directed, and worked to construct the irrigation systems that opened a new land for farming and ranching. He promoted the Canadian Mormon immigration through the *Deseret News*, calling for “200 Men With Teams Wanted, who will become actual settlers in Southern Alberta, Canada.”¹⁰ It offered Latter-day Saints “a grand opportunity to accumulate means to pay for [homes and farms] without incurring the bondage of debt.” Twelve years after the first LDS settlers arrived, the town had “a newspaper, a cheese factory, a grist-mill, two blacksmith shops, two carpenter shops, one tin shop, a shoe shop and a meat market. Taxes? We have none except those we impose on ourselves.”¹¹ Card’s town was incorporated 29 December 1898 and became Cardston. In 1904 the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company connected Cardston with Lethbridge, the major city of the area. The settlements of Magrath, Raymond, Mountain View, and others were just beginning to dot the district.¹²

A decade after the establishment of Cardston, the Godfreys, who had been living in Star Valley, Wyoming, packed their horses, car-

9. Kyvig, *Daily Life*, 257–300.

10. Godfrey and Card, *The Diaries of Charles Ora Card: The Canadian Years, 1886–1903*, 11–12 January 1886.

11. Godfrey and Card, *The Diaries of Charles Ora Card: The Canadian Years, 1886–1903*, 12 January 1899. This was a circular to be published in the *Deseret News*, 12 January 1899. See the actual flyer at <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/021017/f1/nlc010647-v6.jpg>.

12. “Survey of Cardston,” August 1963, Industrial Development Branch, Department of Industry and Development, Government of the Province of Alberta, 3.

riages, and belongings into a train car and headed for Stirling, Alberta. Their destination was Magrath, twenty miles west of Stirling and east of Cardston. They arrived in Stirling in the middle of a late spring blizzard. They were venturing into the new land, following the first pioneers, all of whom labored with a vision of hope and opportunity. When their train arrived at the Stirling Station, the snow was so deep the horses could not even walk through the wind-packed drifts to Magrath. The train track had not yet reached Magrath, so each step was a forward lunge. This made progress excruciatingly slow and created significant stress on horses and riders. Riders felt like they were sitting atop a bucking bronco in a freezing winter rodeo, but there were no spectators or cheering crowds.

The family struggled reestablishing themselves. Melvin settled into a routine of working a handful of construction jobs, all the time looking for permanent work. He served as a carpenter, as town marshal, as a judge, and later as the owner of several small businesses. He would become heavily involved in public projects, working with Levi Harker and others, creating the framework for success in agriculture, electricity, roads, churches, schools, local businesses, and town government. The town boasted a growing complement of Main Street enterprises and by 1906 offered a post office and general store, the Magrath Trading Company, Christensen's Blacksmith Shop, and the Tanner Lumber Yard to serve the continual flow of settlers still arriving from Utah.¹³ Magrath would eventually be on the railway line between Cardston and Lethbridge. Available land, successful farms, irrigation, and transportation encouraged newcomers. Magrath farmers were shipping fifteen to twenty tons of sugar beets per acre to the Raymond Sugar Factory, twelve miles east.

Charles Ora Card had broken the first ground for planting in southern Alberta. He even had a handy grocery store in his Cardston log-cabin home. His son George followed his father's entrepreneurial footsteps, working on the vital irrigation canals—earning both salary and land in Magrath for his labors. Settlers were coming, going, and

13. *Magrath's Golden Jubilee: Commemorating 50 Years of Irrigation* (Magrath, Alberta: n.p., 1949), 121–43.

growing with an abundance of available opportunities. Religious freedom, land, and employment opportunities were catalysts for growth. But it took hard work and ingenuity of the pioneering kind to succeed.

The Godfrey and Card families were poor, but like most pioneers they were determined. They were adventurous agrarians and were bold in new business undertakings. There was little difference between the “haves” and “have nots.” Most had very little of anything, but they were a bit daring and certainly industrious.

Melvin Godfrey arrived at the turn of the century. He eventually became the town marshal and constructed a three-unit business building. Gust’s Grocery was in the third unit, and Melvin owned and operated the store. He rented space for Long Jim’s Chinese Restaurant. The third unit was rented to a barber and periodically a dentist. It was the Godfrey children’s job to work the grocery store, and the youngest, Douglas, was in charge of keeping the new sidewalk clear of snow.¹⁴ Melvin introduced the first silent movies to Magrath when he purchased the Electric Theater and Skating Rink. His Empress Theater took viewers from the silent screen into the age of sound and color. All the early settlers supported growing families taking advantage of every opportunity to prosper in peace.

CHILDHOOD ON THE FRONTIER

Magrath was a western frontier town. Cattle ranges were wide open, barbed wire fences only just beginning to appear. The McIntyre Ranch was the largest in the region. It was just south of Magrath and north of the US border. Each fall and spring they shipped and received hundreds of cattle from the Magrath train station. The station was at the north end of Main Street. Herds were driven from the ranch right through the town center by real cowboys, much to the excitement of

14. Douglas Godfrey to Donald G. Godfrey, 26 September 2014, Godfrey Family Papers.

the youthful wannabe cowboys who lined the dirt road, cheering the parade. Youngsters ran alongside the galloping cattle, at times grabbing the tails of the calves and hanging on for dear life. Laughter rang out as they were pulled along and splatted with fresh, wet cow dung, before falling into the irrigation ditch to clean off their bib overalls. Local branding and dehorning of the cattle kept the boys entertained almost as much as the cattle drives or watching the local blacksmith.¹⁵ Every household had a barn and large gardens, so there was always plenty of work to do.

Melvin and Eva Godfrey's children were Bert, Parley, Lottie, Floyd, Mervin, Joseph, Norris, and Douglas. Parley and Norris both passed away as children, leaving six in the growing family. Lottie was the only sister. The children were robust, playful, fun loving, full of themselves, and pranksters. They were outgoing, and, being a little rough around the edges, they liked a good boxing match. They could be mischievous, but they were easily loved. Bert and Floyd were perhaps a little shy and more conservative than their younger brothers, Mervin and Joseph. Douglas bore the brunt of friendly teasing. Harassing the littlest was a favorite pastime of the elder brothers. Joe and Mervin once convinced their kid brother that "Watkins Salve" would remove his freckles. The salve was an ointment used to soften a cow's chapped nipples before daily milking, with no effect on freckles.¹⁶ Playing on the hay ropes hanging in his father's barn, Floyd once fell and bit a hole right through his tongue. He later liked to pull out his tongue with his thumb and forefingers, grossing out his children and grandchildren as the story grew with each telling.¹⁷

One of the Godfrey boys' favorite pranks happened at the Magrath Agricultural Fairs when they were ribbon winners. Everyone brought his or her best chickens, horses, cows, homemade pies, and alfalfa to be judged. Floyd and his brothers were winners for their alfalfa crop entries. The local farmers never figured out how Melvin Godfrey's

15. Gary Harper and Kathy Bly, *Power of the Dream*, 104–5.

16. Autobiography of Douglas Godfrey, 4, Godfrey Family Papers.

17. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, 20 March 1982, Godfrey Family Papers.



Melvin and Eva Godfrey's second home. Courtesy of Godfrey Family Organization.

town boys were raising such good alfalfa. It was full and sometimes five feet tall. What the farmers didn't know was that, although Melvin's sons had no alfalfa field, they had an irrigation ditch where wild alfalfa flourished. Floyd and his brother would gather a large bundle, cut and tie it together with one of their mother's sewing ribbons, and take it to the fair. They won first prize every year.¹⁸

The irrigation ditches that wove throughout the town were a popular place for children to play. The water flowed toward the east and the north, with larger lateral ditches feeding smaller yards. These water funnels fed gardens throughout the town and neighboring farms, and they were summer swimming holes and bathing troughs for the young at heart. If a serious farmer diverted water to his field and bypassed the children's favorite swimming spots, it was not beyond the rabbles

18. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, January 1977, Godfrey Family Papers, 6.

to redirect the fun back where they wanted it. The farmer patrolled the length of the dig ditch, checking to see that no one used the water out of turn. When the farmer rode by, the boys hid in the barn until he had passed. Then the mischievous children ran to the head gates and switched gates so water would flow down the ditch where they played. Later, they'd run back to the barns and watch for the farmer to return, fuming and scolding as he closed the gates again. It was a game played between the working granger and the neighborhood children. Although no fun for the farmer, it would become a tale told often by the ruffians.¹⁹ Such was the life of rambunctious frontier children.

HUMBLE, HUMBLE HOMES

Melvin and Eva's Magrath homes were modest. The very first, where Floyd was born, was a lean-to dugout built into the south banks of Pot-hole Creek near the north end of the Magrath Cemetery. These structures were temporary homes used often by the pioneers. They were sometimes called pit houses or mud huts.²⁰ They were just shelters for families and often their animals. Melvin simply excavated the ground from the side of the hill facing the creek and built a lean-to cutting into the bank. The sides of the structure were wood, and the roof was loose lumber covered with sod. This was how many western pioneers started what they called home.

Godfrey's second Magrath home was one house north of the Cards on 2nd Street. Melvin dismantled the old lean-to and with a team of horses dragged the lumber up to the meadow and used it to build his second home. This more than doubled their living space. There were originally two rooms, but more were added as Mervin, Joseph, Norris, and Douglas came into the family. The walls and roof were wood framed. The outside wall was covered with chicken wire, stuccoed with mud, then painted. There were two small enclosed entries on the south

19. Floyd Godfrey, "The Irrigation Ditch and Children," in "Life Stories," a file of undated handwritten stories from the life of Floyd Godfrey, Godfrey Family Papers.

20. See Cass G. Barns, *The Sod House* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1930).

and east sides. Dirty gum boots and overshoes were stored here in these entryways, with parkas hung against the wall.

Wooden shingles covered the roof. They were soaked in thick red lead paint and nailed to the double-pitched roof. The roof was held in position by skeleton-like walls erected from the foundation. There was no insulation in the walls. In the winter, ice built up inside the room on the northwest corner of the house, just below the children's bed, due to poor air circulation. The structure itself was the only protection against the elements. Water in the tea kettle on the old coal stove froze at night. Winters were stinging cold.²¹

Outside and just west of the house was the all-important coal and wood shed. These 8 x 10-foot structures kept the coal and wood dry and usable in the winter, and they were close enough to haul a heavy bucket in the cold. The fire was stoked early each morning with the wood over any burning embers from overnight. Once a good fire was burning steady, mother cooked breakfast as the children gathered around the stove to get warm. In the summer, the woodshed was a secret retreat—a place to play out childhood dreams and cool down from the summer sun.

The outhouse was the coldest place in the winter world. “You didn’t stay long out there.”²² The Godfrey’s outhouse was a “two holer,” a little bigger than usual.²³

A water well was dug outside and away from the outhouse. It provided the water for cooking, drinking, and bathing. It was hauled indoors by the bucket full. The well was more than a fresh water source. It served as a summer refrigerator, a place for keeping butter and meat. Perishable foods were packed in a sack and lowered down the well on a rope close to the cold water. Eventually, Melvin installed a water pump in the kitchen, replacing the outside well. Running water in the house was a luxury, even though it still required being drawn up by hand

21. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, 20 March 1982, 26.

22. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, January 1977, 18.

23. See Bob Jackpine Cary, *The All-American Outhouse: Stories, Design & Construction* (Cambridge, MN: Adventure Publications, 2003).

with a pump. An ice box would eventually replace the well to keep things cool. This was indoor progress in small doses.

A root cellar was dug between the house and the barn. It was a hole about six feet deep, six feet wide, and twelve feet long with a door at one end. An A-frame roof covered the hole, and soil was spread over it for insulation. Inside, vegetable bins were dug deeper into the earth. These bins were for food storage. Shelves jutted from the dirt walls. The harvest from the gardens yielded potatoes, carrots, beets, parsnips, and turnips, hence the name root cellar. The bins were covered with a layer of dirt, and square lids were placed over the holes. This was sufficient insulation against the winter freeze and offered access when a child was sent for food.

A root cellar was not without its unexpected dangers. When Floyd was a young boy, his mother went into the cellar, filled her bucket, and was returning when she spotted a rattlesnake under the first step up to the door. She put down her bucket and made a run for it, jumping over the reptile onto the steps. The snake was hibernating, but she hurried inside, leaving Melvin to take care of the snake.²⁴

After Floyd and Clarice were married and took over the old Godfrey home, young Kenneth went missing one summer day. Parents and grandparents engaged in a prayerful search. After a time, Clarice's father thought, "Look in the root cellar." There was Ken. He'd been playing in the yard, gone into the cellar for a carrot, and fallen asleep on the cool soil atop the vegetable bin.

The barn was farther back from the root cellar and woodshed. Their barn housed the family's milk cow, pigs, chickens, and horses, which they used for transportation. A buggy shed on the south side of the barn was just a large lean-to structure. It faced east. It was large enough for two or three wagons, but Melvin owned just one buggy. It had the luxury of a cover that made it a more expensive model, \$87.50 (\$1,957). Around 1914, after he purchased his first Model T Ford, the shed was converted into a garage.²⁵

24. Journal of Floyd Godfrey, 5 February 1986, Godfrey Family Papers.

25. The Model T Ford was produced from 1908 to 1927. See Floyd Clymer, *Floyd Henry's Wonderful Model T, 1908–1927* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1955).

Melvin was proud of his car. His first had headlights, a taillight, and two wide lamps operated with coal oil on each side of the windshield. There was a running board along the sides, allowing passengers to step up into the vehicle. On the driver's side, there was a toolbox with pliers, a screwdriver, a tire-patching kit, a jack, and tire tools. The gas tank and spare tire were mounted on back. The front radiator was gleaming polished brass, and a hand crank in front got the engine fired, often more difficult to use than perceived. Many a broken bone was created when the cold engine backfired, spinning the crank back and smacking the driver's arm. The car's canopy was heavy leather; the windows were isinglass that flapped in Alberta's west winds.²⁶ The morning after buying the car, Melvin showed it off to the family. He cranked it up and the engine started with a bang. The family all jumped in. Melvin released the brake, stepped on the gas, and "went right through the back of the buggy shed."²⁷ A second version of this tale has Floyd's brother Bert coming home late from a dance, and he drove the car through the back of the shed, "pushing the wall into the air." Both stories were memorable family firsts. While he was a policeman, Melvin even tried his hand as a car salesman, but being an officer and running the Empress Theater took his time. Car sales proved one job too many.

The family garden filled the largest section of the yard, perhaps a half acre. Every spring their horse, "Old Baldy," was hooked to the plow to prepare and plant the garden. The Alberta growing season was short—June through September, if the weather cooperated. Golden Bantam sweet corn, head lettuce, potatoes, peas, carrots, and all kinds of vegetables ripened in the summer sun. Old Baldy plowed the garden for Melvin, but the kids thought the horse was for their entertainment. After working all day, Old Baldy did not always agree. He was smarter than the boys who wanted to ride him and act like cowboys. If they approached with a bridle, even when it was held behind their backs, he could see it. He turned and ran, playing his own game of "catch me

26. Isinglass, also called mica, is a transparent silicate that hardens into a clear sheet akin to today's clear plastics.

27. Floyd Godfrey, "The Buggy Shed," in "Life Stories," file of undated handwritten stories from the life of Floyd Godfrey, Godfrey Family Papers.

if you can.” Melvin taught his boys a better way to bridle Old Baldy. First, put some oats in the feed boxes. This attracted their horse, and the bridling became easy. They would say, “Old Baldy trained everyone well.”²⁸

CHILDHOOD IN MAGRATH

The childhood house for Floyd was Melvin and Eva’s second home at 155 1st Street West. Only Mervin, Joseph, and Douglas spent any time in the new brick home constructed later on Main Street. Floyd was close to his brothers, but around others he felt insecure and somewhat shy. He saw himself as “An Unkempt Lad.”²⁹ His bib overalls, which he did not like, were worn. He went barefoot for play and wore gum boots for work, and his shoes were half-soled with slick rubber his father cut to shape from an old piece of boot or a tire. He was embarrassed to wear his short knee pants because they were baggy. When he stood straight, his more formal bloomers looked like a “girl’s skirt.” After much pleading, his mother bought him long pants and a suit. He proudly headed to church in his new outfit, when a neighbor saw him cutting through the yard and teasingly commented, “Well look at the little girl.” Floyd ran home crying. His mother hugged him, “telling [him] not to pay attention” to that old man but to just go to Sunday School. However, Floyd never wore the suit again. Years later there were rumors that this man’s cow kept ending up in the town corral on the weekends. The boys always pleaded their innocence.

The Godfrey boys played with the other neighborhood kids, the Andersons, Jensens, Colemans, Schaffers, Merkleys, Cards, and Fletchers.³⁰ The Fletchers’ home, immediately south of the Godfreys’, became the Cards’ new place when George and Rose moved their family into town. In the Fletchers’ attic one day, after parents warned them they

28. Floyd Godfrey, “Old Baldy,” in *Just Mine* (Mesa, AZ: Chrisdon Communication, 1996), 36.

29. Godfrey, *Just Mine*, 24.

30. Floyd Godfrey, “Our Neighbors,” in “Life Stories,” file of undated handwritten stories from the life of Floyd Godfrey, Godfrey Family Papers.

were “not to go up there,” Lottie lost an expensive watch while playing “dress-up” and posing behind empty picture frames. Her younger brother Floyd, their friends Howard and Gail Fletcher, and Lottie all went outside and knelt down around a bush. They prayed, “and when we got up there was the watch in the bush.” It was the beginning of their faith in prayer.³¹ As the only girl in the family, “Lottie was spoiled,” her brothers said, which she denied, but “they were good to [her] sometimes taking the blame for what [she] had done.”³²

There were friendly and not-so-friendly boxing matches in the house to settle childhood disagreements. Floyd seemed to be on the losing end of the matches, so his father bought two pairs of boxing gloves and taught Floyd some moves. At the next bout, the boys put on the gloves and went at it, but Floyd landed a few blows with his newly acquired skills, and the disagreements ended.

The Godfrey family may never have had much, but their needs were always met as family and community worked together. Harvesting ice in the winter was one such collaborative effort. There was no refrigeration, but there was a deep, muddy slough along the creek, south of the Card and Godfrey homes. It was the place where the community cut ice for preserving summer vegetables in their root cellars and ice boxes. The blocks of ice were perhaps eighteen inches square and three or four feet long, cut straight out of the creek, winched up to the ground with a team of horses, and hauled home. The ice blocks were placed in the cellars and covered with sawdust to prolong their shelf life. When needed, pieces were sawed for the ice box in the house.

One winter day, wearing his father’s awkward-fitting gum boots, Floyd went down to the creek to watch the workers cut the ice. It was slippery and wet. The adults tried to shoo children away from the icy creek, but as Floyd stood to move, his boots slipped out from under him and he skidded into the water. One of the workers, Alva Merkley, grabbed him at the back by his overcoat. He pulled him out of the creek, took off his boots, drained the icy water and gave him “a kick in

31. “Memoirs of Lottie Harker,” Family Files, Magrath Museum, 5.

32. “Memoirs of Lottie Harker,” 11.

the pants” to encourage him to leave. Floyd really didn’t need a lot of encouragement. He was freezing as he ran up the hill and back home.³³

In the summer, the creek provided a place to swim. Pothole Creek was filled with adventure. It was a boy’s wilderness paradise. At first, Floyd just wandered down to the canal and watched the older boys. He was timid. Bravery came slowly and with experience. He started to swim with his clothes on. He learned a lot faster when one of the older boys, Red Stoddard, picked him up and threw him off the bridge into the middle of the swimming hole. Floyd “dog-paddled” to shore and afterward took a liking to the sport. He eventually had his own circle of swimming buddies and a secret swimming spot called “the old whirlpool.” It was not a well-kept secret. After school, in the warmth of spring, even with the water still cold, it was a popular place to go. In the summer, the boys lay in the warmth of the sand and tanned in the sun. No girls allowed! The boys were skinny-dipping.³⁴

Guns were in every home as a necessity, not recreation. Fathers and sons hunted for food, and serious respect for weapons was paramount. Melvin instructed his boys to especially leave the shotgun alone. Floyd, at age eleven, thought he was old enough to hike down by the creek and get a prairie chicken or partridge for supper. Despite his father’s warnings, he took the shotgun and walked toward the stream. As he approached, he sat on the ground to look around, watching for any movement of the birds in the grass. He laid the gun down beside him, and the trigger caught on a sturdy dry weed, and it went off. The recoil from the shot spun the gun around and a second shot went off as the barrel struck Floyd in the leg like a swinging baseball bat. The incident scared Floyd, and he went directly home. It was a situation that could have ended in tragedy, but it reinforced his father’s admonitions, leaving Floyd with a lifetime respect for firearms.

Floyd was around twelve years old when he decided to run away from home since “no body loved me.” His father, at age eighteen, tried

33. Alva Marion and his wife Jehzell Gibb Merkley moved to Magrath just a few years prior to the arrival of Melvin and Eva Godfrey. See Magrath and District History Association, *Irrigation Builders*, 492.

34. Floyd Godfrey, “The Whirlpool,” in *Just Mine*, 37.

the same thing in his own North Ogden youth and knew what would result. Eva asked Floyd where he planned on going. He didn't know, but he figured he could live with friends. "Just let him go," Melvin told Eva. His father rolled up an old blanket with some of Floyd's belongings and put a rope around it. The plan was that after school Floyd could take his things and leave to live with his childhood allies. Later that day he left home, heading south around the block, but he didn't get far. He sat down on the hill overlooking the creek and cried. He gazed at the old creamery where the farmers sold their milk for butter and home delivery. He thought of the crystal-like garnet pitcher his mother filled with buttermilk from the creamery for hot breakfast pancakes. The recollections sent him home. When he walked back in the house, his mother and father there waiting for him. "I love you," Floyd said. He did not want to live with a friend, "I want to stay here."³⁵ Years later, Floyd would teach a similar lesson to one of his own sons.

LEARNING RESPONSIBILITY

Melvin was strict with his boys. Floyd learned to work while he was a youngster. He and his brothers worked around the home, doing their part as members of the family, whether milking or helping their mother in the garden. Like all boys, they preferred fun over work.

Daily milking was required if you wanted the cow to produce milk for the family. In preparation, Floyd led the cow out of the barn each morning and down to the creek for water. He liked to jump up on her back and ride to and from the stream. One day, Howard Fletcher wanted to ride with him. Unfortunately, someone kicked the cow, and she ran under the fence. The fall cut Howard up a bit. He ran to his mother for help, and Floyd ended up in trouble.³⁶

Floyd has a haunting memory of when he was twelve and failed to help his mother when she was pregnant with Douglas. Melvin pitched a tent outside for Floyd and Mervin so Eva would have privacy. The two

35. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, February 1977, Godfrey Family Papers.

36. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, January 1977, Godfrey Family Papers, 5–6.

boys were out there for a few weeks, thrilled that they were camping. One morning, Eva called Floyd, asking him to pick some peas from the garden for supper. Floyd knew what he was supposed to do, but the temptation of friends who were headed down to the swimming hole was too much. Fun won out that day, but not without consequence. When Floyd returned from swimming, his mother was feeling worse because she had strained herself picking the peas. She was in labor, and Douglas was on his way. That night Floyd's father, Melvin, took his son to the woodshed. Many a time the boys received a thrashing with a willow from the yard for their misbehavior. "I can still feel it to this day around my legs."³⁷ The next morning, Floyd and Mervin went into the house and met their new baby brother.

When Melvin started the movie theater, Floyd was expected to deliver the movie films. The train station was about a mile north of their home, and the multiple film reels were heavy. Melvin devised a two-wheeled cart that he hitched to their pony so he and his brothers could easily pick up and return the films sent from Calgary to Magrath by rail. If they missed the deadline, a fee was assessed, so punctuality was a part of the lesson. Generally, the conductor waited patiently, and when he saw them coming, he teasingly scolded, "You Godfrey kids have got to hurry up. I can't hold this train just for you."³⁸ In his late teens and into his early marriage, Floyd progressed from film delivery to projectionist and earned his Third Class Projectionists' License.

Washing the clothes was a rigorous Monday affair that required help from the whole family. The boys were expected to gather their own clothes and help wash all of the laundry. In the days before electricity, the clothes-washing machine featured a large wheel or lever on one side. The Godfreys' had a wheel model. Two boys took turns keeping that wheel spinning so the machine could agitate the clothes in the tub and clean them. This was tiring physical labor. Each took ten minutes at the wheel while the others rested. They kept up this rotation until all of the clothes were clean and hung on the outside line to dry.

37. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, February 1977, Godfrey Family Papers, 11–12.

38. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, February 1977, 11–12.

Clothes washing was different after their dad purchased his Model T Ford. The boys and their father dreamed up a washing machine idea that proved to be a labor-saving one. With their father's help, they backed the car up to the washing machine, hooked a wide, heavy leather belt around the car's back tire and placed the other end of the belt around the wheel of the washer. "You've never seen a washing machine move so fast in your life. I think it about shook the machine to pieces." But it worked. "That was the first power washer" in the Godfrey family.³⁹

As teenagers, Melvin pushed his boys to find full-time summer work during the farm harvests. A successful harvest was critical to the Canadian farmer. Grain crops, wheat oats, and barley required a lot of work to harvest. The fields were worked largely by hand. Like all farm workers, Floyd and Mervin cut and then bunched the grain into bundlers. The bundles were then stooked, or set up in groups for drying, and then taken to the thrasher.⁴⁰ "A boy is not worth his salt if he doesn't know how to work," Melvin said, and work the boys did.⁴¹ Their goal was to earn a little winter spending money and buy their own clothes. Floyd was fifteen years old when he traveled with his brother Bert and later Mervin. They worked on farms in Raymond and in the foothills west of Cardston. The ranch of Richard Bradshaw was among the first that provided work. The Bradshaws had moved from Magrath to Cardston and purchased a part of Charles Brewer Ockey's ranch.⁴² They harvested hay for winter feed, and the farmers sold grain to the elevator operators, who shipped it across the country. Harvesting took

39. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, February 1977, 11–12.

40. For Alberta farming history, see Howard Palm and Tamara Jeppson Palmyer, *Alberta: A New History* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1990).

41. Floyd Godfrey, "Large Bundles," in "Life Stories," file of undated handwritten stories from the life of Floyd Godfrey, Godfrey Family Papers.

42. On the road from Cardston to Beazer, Alberta, turning south to the Badger Valley Ranch, it was these fields seen from that turn where Floyd and Mervin worked during their teenager years. Keith Shaw, ed., *Chief Mountain Country: A History of Cardston and District* (Cardston, Alberta: Cardston and District Historical Society, 1978), 258–59. The southern portion of the Ockey homestead remains in the family today, with Rod and Joan Shaw as the owners.

teams consisting of laborers, horses pulling the cutters, and the hay wagons. A cutter mowed the hay, creating wind rows. After it dried, farm workers such as Floyd and one of his brothers walked on each side of the wagon and used pitch forks to toss the dried hay up into the hayrack. There were no baling machines, and there was no stopping to rest for a drink. There was a water jug sitting in the sun at the end of a line that was sometimes a half mile long. It was appealing to the boys, who were always thirsty from the workout in the summer heat. The hay was either loaded in the wagons and driven to a nearby haystack for storage or to the barn for immediate use. During the winter, the hay was loaded back into a wagon, driven over the frozen pastures, and scattered for the animals.

Harvesting grain was a little more challenging than harvesting hay for the animals. The work was defined by the size of the field and the yield of whatever crops were harvested. The grain was first cut and bound by hand or a mechanical grain binder and then laid in wind rows across the field. The job was to create a stook, seven to ten bundles together in a sheave; it got its name because it looked something like miniature teepee-shaped bouquets called stooks. The bouquet shape made the grain dry quicker. If a thresher was unavailable, the workers cut the grain with a scythe, a long sword with the blade forged into a C shape. The swing of the farm worker's arm cut the grain and helped gather the stalks together. The stalks were long and heavy. The stooks were tied together by hand with binder twine just above the center of the straw below the grain. The first stooks stood exactly vertical. Then others were placed around them, leaning into each other. This was stooking the grain. It was not casual nor unskilled labor. Stooking the grain was dirty, hard, and long work. Each bundle weighed perhaps thirty to forty pounds, and by evening the workers' hands were cramped from picking up and tying so many bundles. One thousand acres would produce hundreds of stooks. Proper stooking protected the harvest from rain while the grain dried and finished ripening prior to further harvest.

Once dry, the granulated seed was extracted from the straw and husk with a new separator machine. These early mechanical separators

were about thirty-five feet long, five feet wide, and six to ten feet high. The whole rig was drawn by a team of horses. This involved Floyd, Bert, and Mervin tossing the bundles of stooks up onto the separator belt that fed them into the thresher, where it removed the dust and shook the grain stalks violently, separating the seed from the husk and the stalk.⁴³ Floyd enjoyed this dusty, heavy work. Working with his brothers created lifelong memories and strong relationships between them.⁴⁴

On the Lockmans' farm, Floyd was assigned to the threshing crew. The crew pitched the sheaves of grain on a bundle rack moving up and down the fields by a team of horses. When the rack was full, the sheaves were hauled to the separator and fed along the belt through the machine. If the crew was in a hurry, then too many bundles would overload the machine, stopping the engine. Then one of the men in charge, the threshing operator, would dig out the jammed straw and restart the engine. It was a good way to get ten or fifteen minutes' rest before they could go again. Floyd's reward for the backbreaking work was one cent per harvested bushel (\$0.13).⁴⁵

Good cookhouse meals were provided for the hungry crew. They included steaks, vegetables aplenty, cold milk, and pies of every kind: "You name it, our cook could prepare it," Floyd reported.⁴⁶

Within a few years, Floyd was promoted to handyman on the harvesting crews, more commonly known as a roustabout. Floyd was paid \$7.50 (\$97) per day, and he thought he was rich. He did whatever the boss wanted done. He went to town for groceries, transported the boss to the next farm to secure the next job, got repairs done, posted the mail, took the men to and from the fields for their 3:00 p.m. lunch break, and helped the supervisor and the engine man on the thresher.

43. Seager Wheeler, *Seager Wheeler's Book on Profitable Grain Growing* (Winnipeg: Grain Growers' Guide, 1919), 175–77.

44. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, 1988, Godfrey Family Papers, *Seeds, Faith and Family History*, 4, 18.

45. A bushel is a dry volume equivalent of just over 9.1 US liquid gallons.

46. Floyd Godfrey, "Large Bundles," Godfrey Family Papers.

The job and the harvest were intense and lasted only for a month or two at summer's end. Then it was back home and to school.

Floyd learned the meaning of work early in life. He earned his longtime job at the Magrath Trading Company as a result of his reputation for honesty and hard work. At the trading company he started as a delivery boy and worked as hardware clerk. He did this ten years into his marriage, through to the mid-1930s and into the Great Depression.

LOVING DISCIPLINARIAN

Floyd admired his father's courage and work ethic. The two had a good relationship. Melvin was energetic and at times also "very emotional . . . and had a tender heart."⁴⁷ He taught work by example and discipline. Coming home from Calgary after municipal meetings, Melvin asked for little Floyd to meet him at the train station. They had one of the few telephones in town because Melvin was the marshal. Floyd was not yet in school and was unsure what to expect. Melvin told him to go and look in the baggage car, "There is something for you." Floyd ran excitedly down the station's wooden platform. In the baggage car he found an iron-wheeled red tricycle with his name on it. He was thrilled. Melvin likely thought the gift was to share with Floyd and his younger brothers, Mervin and Joseph, but "my name was on it," and he felt like one special little boy.⁴⁸

Melvin created memories for his boys even when it would have been easier to work alone. He took Floyd out for a day on a forty-acre plot he thought he might buy near the Magrath graveyard. Floyd took a sack lunch, and they went together. Worried about the gophers getting his lunch, Floyd placed it on the fence post for safe keeping while they were working. He didn't notice until it was too late, but a wild donkey had come along and eaten his whole lunch, bag and all. So his father shared his lunch with him.

47. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, 1982, 15; also oral history, January 1977, 5–6.

48. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, January 1977, 10.

As the town police officer, Melvin created unique teaching moments with his children, whether it was ringing the curfew bell or just riding along with their father. On a legal outing, Floyd went to Spring Coulee to repossess a sewing machine. Floyd was an impressionable seven-year-old. As they approached the home, the owner stepped out of the house, striding toward the gate with a shotgun in his hand. "Godfrey, I know what you want and you're not going to get it. I'll blow your head off if you come any closer." Floyd was petrified, but Melvin never slowed his pace, "Now . . . you wouldn't do that. . . . I'm here for the company. . . . I know you're having a hard time." After a few minutes of conversation, the stand-off ended and the man put down his gun. "Hell Melvin, come in and get the darn thing."⁴⁹

On a later trip to Spring Coulee, Melvin drove with Floyd in his Model T Ford. The road was rough, and they sheared off the axle, forcing the father-and-son team to walk down the railroad track back eleven miles to Magrath where they could get help to retrieve and repair the car. Floyd wrote of that experience, "Dad and son were never closer."⁵⁰

Melvin wielded a great influence on Floyd. He molded him from a shy boy into a confident young man unafraid to reach out. His often-repeated line was "You can, if you try hard enough." He instilled enthusiasm in his son and the significance of bringing a project to a successful conclusion. His acts of bravery were indelibly impressed on Floyd's young mind.

Some would not describe Melvin as a religious man, but he had a love for the gospel. He was in the elders quorum presidency in his ward. He had the solemn responsibility of caring for the dead and preparing them for their funeral and burial. He was always there when family needed him, leading, directing—sometimes rather firmly—and he was outspoken in his beliefs.⁵¹ Everyone knew where Melvin stood

49. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, February 1977. Also, Floyd Godfrey, "Great Events in My Life," in "Life Stories," file of undated handwritten stories from the life of Floyd Godfrey.

50. Floyd Godfrey, "Great Events in My Life."

51. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, February 1977.

on any issue. He was a fair man in all his endeavors as a police officer, a judge, a theater owner, and a grocer.

There was never a doubt that Melvin loved his family. He twice sacrificed his own safety saving Floyd's life. The first lifesaving incident occurred in Magrath when Floyd was small. Melvin had picked up extra work putting up hay for the Eldridge Cattle Company. There were severe storms in the area that spring. Heavy rains and melting snow filled the coulees, canals, and streams. Melvin was concerned that the hay he had recently cut would rot on the wet ground, so he headed to the Bradshaw siding to check the field. On his way, he crossed a small ravine that usually held only a trickle of water. However, this time it was a raging river. Melvin's horses hesitated until he gave them a crack with the reins. They moved forward and disappeared into the water. Midstream, the horses' heads were all that could be seen. Then the buoyant wooden wagon box came loose from the wagon frame and began to float downstream in the swift current. Melvin was holding the horses while his sons, Bert and Floyd, floated away in the wagon box. Without hesitation, Melvin dropped the reins and swam with the current, catching the box and its terrified passengers. He took Floyd, then Bert, and literally flung them out of the wagon onto the soft wet bank. Then he fought his own way to the edge of the ravine to recover the horses. They had escaped and were waiting for Melvin to come and find them. It was a dramatic rescue.⁵²

A second rescue occurred in the summer of 1919, when Melvin and Eva took the family to Waterton for a week. Waterton-Glacier was described by George Bird Grinnell as "The Crown of the Continent," with watersheds feeding the Atlantic, the Pacific, and Hudson's Bay.⁵³

52. Bertrand Richard Godfrey, oral history, 3 February 1980. Also, Floyd Godfrey, oral history interview, February 1977, Magrath Museum.

53. George B. Grinnell, "The Crown of the Continent," in *Century Magazine*, September 1901, 660–71. A forest reserve was established around Waterton Lakes in 1895. It was the rich timber, and later oil that promoted its value. Then in 1927, the Prince of Wales Hotel held out the promise of tourism. The National Parks Act of 1930 established the tone for park and land use. Graham A MacDonald, *Where the Mountains Meet the Prairies: A History of Waterton Country* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2003), 1, 106.

Floyd, now thirteen, had heard about the wonders and the beauty of this spot, where mountains supposedly reached into the sky. It was hard to imagine, so he was anxious. And Melvin wanted to show off his new Model T Ford.

Melvin left his two oldest, Bert and Lottie, in charge of the theater. He then took Floyd with his two younger brothers, Mervin and Joseph, packed groceries, frying pans, and everything else into a large wooden box and loaded it into the car along with quilts, pillows, clean clothing, a shovel, and bamboo fishing poles. Melvin cranked and cranked. The engine sputtered to a start, and they were off. The car was running, but the boys had to wait while their mother checked the stove one last time and instructed Lottie on the danger of fire.

Heading west, the roads were rough and dusty but graveled. They were used mainly by farmers, lumber wagons, and oil entrepreneurs hauling building supplies, equipment, and pipe into the mountains near Cameron Lake. There were no bridges, and the family crossed the St. Mary's and Belly Rivers where they could find shallow rapids. Reaching their halfway point, Cardston, the rear wheel of the car collapsed under the extra weight. The wooden spokes and the wheel rim broke. They hiked to the nearest farm house and found a telephone, and soon Mr. Low came with a new wheel and got them on their way.⁵⁴

As the family left Cardston, they got their first glimpse of the mountains. Chief Mountain stood out, invitingly majestic. They kept moving and finally camped at the park entrance and registered at the office. The hills were green, the water clear and refreshing. Exploring everywhere, they hiked from their camp on Crooked Creek. The fish were so plentiful they actually shoveled the white fish out of the water. At night, the boys spread their bedding and quilts. Melvin and Eva sat by the campfire, just talking and laughing. Every day was an adventure for Floyd and his brothers as they trekked down the paths left by the deer and mountain animals. One day they had hiked quite a distance from the camp and stopped for supper. Melvin cleaned the fish and was preparing supper when he could not find the frying pan. He

54. This is likely Sterling Oliver Low, who was employed at Cardston Motors. Shaw, *Chief Mountain Country*, 392–93.

improvised. Using a short-handled shovel, he cleaned it in the sand, washed it off in the creek, greased it up, and soon the fish were sizzling in the shovel over the fire. They returned to camp tired but well fed. Building a raft and heading out to the end of Waterton Lake was the plan for the next day. That idea was vetoed by Eva: "In no way are my sons going on that water." The plan was revised to a hiking excursion to Cameron Falls, which was equally exciting.⁵⁵ The boys pleaded with their father to go the next day.

They slept quietly under their denim quilt with mom and dad close by, only the food box separating boys and parents. They were sound asleep and woke immediately as a bear searching for food began tossing knives, forks, and plates across the camp. Two stunned parents with three scared boys sat straight upright from their deep sleep and in unison let out a loud scream. Their scream startled the bear, and all that the boys could see peeking out from under the covers was the bear's retreat. For an excited and still-shaken group of children, the sun rose slowly as they anticipated the hike to the falls the next morning.⁵⁶

Melvin explained that the unique geography of the falls was formed by a steep cliff and rocks plunging deep into the earth. The falls were actually created by older layers of rock, which over the centuries were displaced by the pressure of upper layers of new rock, giving it a dramatic angular presentation of water and rock.⁵⁷

Breakfast that morning was hotcakes and eggs. "We'll wash the dishes when we get back," they told their mother. Eva made jelly sandwiches, with carrots to chew on the hike. The kids stuffed their pockets full of cookies and picked out a walking stick to fight off any wild bears encountered on the seven-mile hike. They marched up the

55. Floyd Godfrey, "Cameron Falls," in "Life Stories," file of undated handwritten stories from the life of Floyd Godfrey. Also, Keystone Steno Book, Godfrey Family Papers. These comparative reports indicate ages eight and thirteen for this event. Crooked Creek is aptly named. Its headwaters start in the mountains just west of the Blood Timber Reserve, and it flows north near today's park entrance where it turns south and empties into the Lower Waterton River.

56. See Keystone Steno Book version, Godfrey Family Papers.

57. This geological wonder is called the Lewis Overthrust. See MacDonald, *Where the Mountains Meet the Prairies: A History of Waterton Country*, 58–59.

hills and forged the Waterton River and Blackston Creek. It seemed like a long hike. They had heard so much about the falls that when they arrived it was “almost, to we boys, like one of the seven wonders of the world. . . . The falls were massive. The huge cliffs rose [and] excited the opportunity to climb.” They cooled their feet in the pool at the base of the falls as they watched the waterfall. But they were not content to sit too long. They coaxed their reluctant father into going with them to climb the face of the cliff at the top of the falls. He agreed so long as they followed in his footsteps.

They made it to the top but needed to descend downward just a little to reach a lookout point above the falls. When they reached the point, they were again delighted at their view as the water thundered over arms of the very rocks on which they were standing. They sat and stared into the deep pool carved by the falls below. They inched a little farther along a large, flat stone outcropping where they could get an even better view. “Floyd, Mervin, Joe . . . come away from that edge,” Melvin instructed. The rock at this spot was slanting down at about a thirty-degree angle. There were small slivers of water dripping over the stone face right where they stood. They were too close to the edge, but it was spectacular. Floyd was trying to discover the source of the water noise when his feet slipped from under him and he began sliding toward the falls. He was going down. Melvin had been watching about ten feet away and immediately plunged forward prostrate on the west rock in front of Floyd, just as Floyd slid straight into his dad “with a thump.” They both stopped at the very edge of the roaring falls. “Take off your shoes, son,” Melvin directed, “and creep to that trail above.” With hearts racing, they dragged themselves back to the dry rock. Melvin was frightened, Floyd was shaking, and his brothers had already scampered back down to the creek below. Not a word was said between the two as they climbed down the fall’s cliff and hiked back to camp. Melvin reported to Eva, “The boys enjoyed themselves.” She did not find out until later what had actually happened.⁵⁸ In writing about this event, Floyd commented, “I have never thanked him [for saving

58. Floyd Godfrey, “Cameron Falls.” Also, Floyd Godfrey, oral history, February 1977; Keystone Steno Book, Godfrey Family Papers; and *Seeds, Faith and Family His-*



Cameron Falls, circa 1925. Courtesy of Cardston Court House Museum Archives, Wolsey Collection.

my life]. I would like to do it now, but he is long gone. When I see him over there, I'll do this thing and I supposed he will laugh about it.”⁵⁹

CHURCH AND FAMILY

Eva always threw her arms around her children, hugging them and teaching them to love and pray. She had a firm testimony of the gospel. She was as firm as she could be with eight children. If a child was too slow at following Mother's directions, it was Melvin who applied the motivation and the rescue. Eva pushed them to attend their Church meetings and involved them with learning and activities that taught them spirituality. Bert would serve a mission in the eastern states, spending most of his time in Vermont. Floyd would remain home to work in the theater.⁶⁰ Eva reinforced the principles of honesty and hard

tory, 15–16. The Keystone report places Eva at the scene of the falls. The oral histories indicate she was back at the camp and did not hear about the incident until later.

59. Floyd Godfrey, “Men of Greatest Influence,” in “Life Stories,” file of undated handwritten stories from the life of Floyd Godfrey, Godfrey Family Papers.

60. Bertrand Richard Godfrey, oral history, 3 February 1980.

work that Melvin taught and that they both had learned in their youth and from pioneering parents.

It was a bright sunshiny day on 7 June 1914, a day Floyd had been anticipating for a long time. The chapel had no baptismal font, so the ordinance took place in Pothole Creek, near today's Magrath Park. It was two months after his eighth birthday. His mother had scrubbed him clean for the event. He was not sure why, because he was a boy of eight who swam twice a day in the creek and did not see the need for all the scrubbing. The air was cool, so his mother put him in a pair of fleece-lined underwear, a clean pair of overalls, and a clean shirt. He and his dad hitched Old Kate to the single-horse buggy, and they all rode to the creek. Floyd waited his turn and walked down into the water with his father. It was summer, but still cold, and when he came out of the water he was almost stiff because the clothing his mother had him wear was now soaked. She took him and wrapped him in a blanket, and he stood while Bishop Harker confirmed him.⁶¹ Afterward, the family hurried home. His mom, who feared he would get pneumonia, changed him into dry clothes. "She was a wonderful mother."⁶²

It was a proud day for the eight-year-old. He was proud to be a member of the Church; "I feel (really) this was the beginning of church activity in my life." He was now expected to live, serve, and help more in Church activities. He had always had something to do, but he now felt the duty.⁶³

THE CHILDREN'S PRIMARY

Eva took Floyd and all her children to Primary when they were young. Idell Jane Toomer was an influential Primary teacher in Floyd's pursuit of those things sacred.⁶⁴ "A little smart for his britches," one day he ran

61. Certificate of Ordination, book 2, no. 477, Magrath Ward Records of Ordinations. See also Floyd Godfrey, oral history, February 1977, Godfrey Family Papers.

62. Floyd Godfrey, "Baptism," in "Life Stories," file of undated handwritten stories from the life of Floyd Godfrey.

63. Floyd Godfrey, "Baptism."

64. Magrath and District History Association, *Irrigation Builders*, 531.

into the church classroom, stepped on the bench, and jumped up into the window sill to sit and listen to the lesson. He was at the center of attention, but it was a different lesson that day. Sister Toomer saw him sitting in the windowsill, grabbed hold of his feet, pulled him out of the window and sat him down so hard the bench broke. Afterward, Floyd was the ideal of reverence and remembered Miss Toomer as “the best teacher ever.”⁶⁵ She disciplined him “very harshly, which I needed, but I loved her.”⁶⁶

Elmer Ririe was the Magrath First Ward bishop during Floyd’s growing years.⁶⁷ Louisa Alston was Floyd’s Scoutmaster.⁶⁸ Although Scouting was not as prevalent in the LDS Church during the early 1900s as it is today, it was a social experience. Floyd was a patrol leader in his troop when Mrs. Alston planned a special outing for the children to see Lord Beaverbrook, who was coming to Lethbridge. William Aitken Beaverbrook was a famous Canadian and British author, businessman, and politician.⁶⁹ The Scouts went to Lethbridge on the train. It was snowing and cold the night before the dignified British lord was to arrive. It was still snowing the next morning. Nevertheless, the Magrath Scout Troop stood in full dress uniform (short pants and bare legs), with their Scout staves, standing at attention on the train station platform as the lord stuck his head out the train window for a minute, waved a celebrity “hello and goodbye,” and that was it. Though it was only for a few seconds, the Scouts enjoyed being that close to such a celebrity.⁷⁰

65. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, February 1977.

66. Floyd Godfrey, “School Teachers in My Life,” in “Life Stories,” file of undated handwritten stories from the life of Floyd Godfrey.

67. Magrath and District History Association, *Irrigation Builders*, 354.

68. Magrath and District History Association, *Irrigation Builders*, 406.

69. See Ann Chisholm and Michael Davie, *Lord Beaverbrook: A Life* (New York: Knopf, 1993).

70. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, February 1977, 21–22.



Floyd Godfrey, at Pot Hole Creek, where he was baptized in 1914. Courtesy of Donald G. Godfrey.

Honesty was a characteristic that paid dividends, as Floyd learned from both his mother and father. The dividends for his honesty were realized quickly when he was digging a trench for Richard Bradshaw. They had agreed on a specific price for the work, and when the job was completed, Bradshaw wrote a check for more than the agreed amount. When Floyd pointed out the error, Bradshaw gave him a corrected check. He was out at his front fence making this exchange when Alfred Ririe, owner of the Magrath Trading Company, happened to be passing by, and Bradshaw hollered at him, "Alf if you want a good man to work for you, here is a real honest fellow." Ririe hired Floyd that same week, and he worked for the Magrath Trading Company for the next ten years.⁷¹

Floyd was fifteen when he started working a weekend job at the Magrath Trading Company. His first responsibilities were assisting the man who delivered the groceries and dry goods to local customers in his horse-drawn wagon. One Saturday, Floyd was cleaning and closing the store. He was working behind the counter. This was a long cupboard-style counter where parcels were wrapped and groceries bagged for delivery. Inside the counter drawers were bulk products: rice, raisins, current berries, coffee, and dry products. The customers made their selections, and workers scooped out the order into a paper bag and weighed it. On one evening, at the end of a busy day, the floor behind the counter was particularly messy. Spills from the scoops, labels, old paper bags, and a mess of scrap paper covered the aisle. Floyd's job was to sweep, clean, and separate all the paper into the burn box. As he swept, he found a \$20 (\$254) bill on the floor behind the cash register near the telephone. A thrill shot through his body. He hesitated, then hastily picked it up and put it into his pocket, wondering if anyone had noticed. It was late at night. He finished cleaning the store, closed shop for the night, and hurried home to tell his mother of

71. Floyd Godfrey, "Honesty," in "Life Stories," file of undated handwritten stories from the life of Floyd Godfrey; also, Floyd Godfrey, oral history, February 1977; and, Magrath and District History Association, *Irrigation Builders*, 418–20.

the treasure he'd found and all the things he could now buy for himself, along with a present for his mother, of course.⁷²

Floyd waited until he could talk alone with her and then told her of his good fortune. She listened quietly and asked, "Do you really think that is your money?" In his excitement, that question had barely registered with him. He thought about it, and he realized she was right. Eva paused for the right words to teach honesty and the Golden Rule, "Floyd it is not yours, it belongs to the store." After a few tears of disappointment, he knew what he must do. The next day was Sunday, but early that Sabbath he was at the door of Ben Hood, who was in charge of balancing the cash register receipts at the store.⁷³ Floyd was nervous as Hood answered his door, but he did as his mother directed. Hood questioned him about the find. Truth be known, Floyd was proud to be honest. Hood explained that he had been unable to balance the books that evening, he was \$20 off and preparing to make up the difference out of his own pocket. He was grateful that Floyd had returned the cash, advising him, "Always listen to your mother."⁷⁴

Eva loved the gospel and planted it in Floyd's heart. He attended his Primary, Mutual Improvement Association, Sunday School, sacrament, and priesthood meetings as expected. He was the deacons and teachers quorum president. He would marry in the temple. Eva and Melvin instilled the lifelong regard for ethics, honesty, and hard labor into their boys. These were the never-ending lessons of their lifetime, passed from generation to generation.

FRONTIER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

At age seven, in the fall of 1913, Floyd started elementary school. The school was a four-room, two-story, square wooden structure that faced south, with a belfry dominating the front of the building. The school was in the center of town about two blocks from Main Street and a

72. Floyd Godfrey, "Honesty," in "Life Stories," file of undated handwritten stories from the life of Floyd Godfrey.

73. Magrath and District History Association, *Irrigation Builders*, 144.

74. Floyd Godfrey, "Honesty."

block and a half from Floyd's home. There were two classrooms on each floor and two windows on the east and west sides of the building.⁷⁵ Two outhouses were behind the school and just beyond a small barn housing the horses students rode from nearby farms into school. The blackboards at the front of the room were small, and the pupils sat two to a desk. There was a two-inch hole drilled through the center top of the desk for an inkwell, which held a small glass bottle of black ink. A young lady sitting in front of a spirited young male might get her braids dunked into an open inkwell. Pencils and straight pens were stored in grooves cut on each side of the inkwell. Books were stowed under the desktop.

Within a few years, a second, much larger brick building was constructed under the supervision of Daniel T. Fowler, with the assistance of Melvin Godfrey.⁷⁶ The old wooden schoolhouse was abandoned, and "it became the local ghost haunt."⁷⁷ The new structure had sixteen rooms and until 1930 served for both the elementary and high school students.⁷⁸ The curfew bell was retained from the old school and placed atop the new structure. It was here that Floyd climbed the stairs with his father to ring the nightly curfew. The bell could be "heard for miles, especially in cold weather."⁷⁹

Floyd's education took place in both of these school buildings. In the old school hall he would often sneak into the attic at night, nervous but determined to catch a pigeon from the flock that nested in the

75. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, February 1977.

76. B. W. Dow, "Our Elementary School," in Magrath and District History Association, *Irrigation Builders*, 332–36, 452.

77. Floyd Godfrey, "The Old School House," in "Life Stories," file of undated handwritten stories from the life of Floyd Godfrey.

78. The dates of the construction related to the two schoolhouses conflict. Floyd describes attending the old four-room schoolhouse, but his first attendance would have been 1913–14. Dow reports this structure was "abandoned in 1909 and torn down in 1917." Dow, "Our Elementary School," 332–33. Harket and Bly, "School Days," in *Power of the Dream*, 53–65, indicates the first schoolhouse was constructed in 1902.

79. See "Why Does Sound Sometimes Seem to Travel Farther on Cold Days?," *New York Times*, 10 March 1981, <http://www.nytimes.com/1981/03/10/science/q-why-does-sound-sometimes-seem-to-travel-farther-on-cold-days.html>.

rafters. He climbed to the top and crawled his way through the trusses, feeling his way to where the pigeons nested. The pigeons couldn't see the boys, and the boys couldn't see the pigeons. It was too dark, but the boys heard the cooing. They followed the sound and the birds were easily caught. They would crawl in, reach out, grab one, and carefully cross the wings so that in the struggle the birds were unhurt. Then they would place them in a gunny sack and head home. Floyd fed and watered his captive in a box he kept in his father's barn. Within a few weeks, they were his pet pigeons. "I remember I had so many in the top of our barn, they were spoiling the hay. Dad was not too happy." He seemed pleased when one night some boys from across town snuck in and stole most of them.⁸⁰

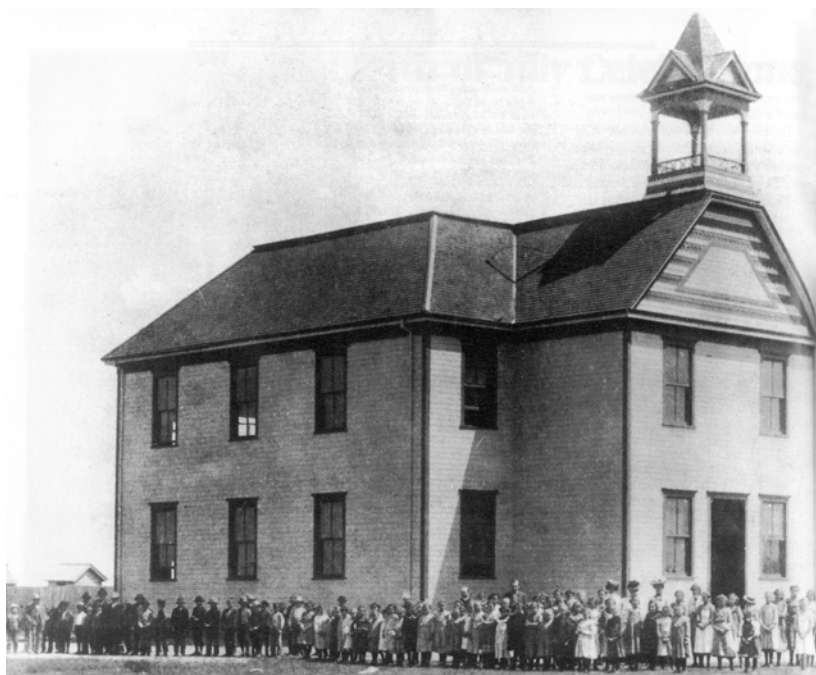
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND WAR

Elementary school between 1914 and 1918 was about reading, writing, and arithmetic, along with military training. World War I began 4 August 1914, when Britain declared war on Germany, and Canadians of British ancestry supported the war.⁸¹ War was frightening even for those not on the front lines. In addition to scholastics, the boys at the Magrath schools were marched to the north side of the building, where in the park they trained using wooden guns to be the soldiers of the future. This was World War I preparation for service and possible attack. Floyd and his classmates were taught how to lay prone, run, drop, and shoot in one motion. After the outside exercises, they went to the school basement for target practice with 22-caliber rifles. The Canadian Army almost immediately began recruiting. Floyd was eight, obviously too young, but he felt the strain. Farmers were in the middle of their harvest. "Men from 19-40 Your King and Country Needs You," the posters advertised.⁸² Patriotism was strong among the Mormons, no matter which side of the border they settled.

80. Floyd Godfrey, "The Old School House."

81. See Tim Cook, *No Place to Run: The Canadian Corps and Gas Warfare in the First World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1999).

82. See poster photo in Magrath and District History Association, *Power of the Dream*, 77.



Magrath High School. Courtesy of Magrath Museum.

Prior to the war, a recognized LDS southern Albertan, Hugh B. Brown, had handpicked men to serve with him in the “C” Squadron 13th Mounted Rifles of the Canadian Overseas Expedition Force, the “COEF” of Calgary.⁸³ Eventually, sixty-six soldiers from Magrath served in World War I. Six were killed in action. The town’s population would have been around nine hundred people.⁸⁴ Emotions were high everywhere, and Magrath was no exception. German Kaiser Wilhelm II, blamed for starting the war, was depicted as a straw man, like a scarecrow standing in the fields. The town built a mock scaffolding

83. Eugene Campbell and Richard D. Poll, *Hugh B. Brown: His Life and Thought* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1975), 52–77.

84. Magrath and District History Association, *Irrigation Builders*, 279–84. Also, Harker and Bly, *Power of a Dream*, 75–79; Floyd Godfrey, oral history interview, February 1977, transcript and certificate in Godfrey Family Papers. The Magrath population in 1916 was 938.

from which they hung the straw man, set the hay on fire, and burned him in effigy. It was a patriotic action repeated across nations.⁸⁵

Floyd was blessed to miss both wars. He was too young for World War I and too old for World War II.

HIGH SCHOOL IN THE ROARING TWENTIES

World War I ended and history moved into the Roaring Twenties as Floyd reached high school age. US President Woodrow Wilson characterized the 1920s as moving from war “Back to Normalcy.”⁸⁶ Canadian author Pierre Berton implied that as a result of their success in WWI, the “Canadians were a cocky lot in the twenties.”⁸⁷ They kicked up their heels dancing the Charleston, and the morals and manner changed in the decade.⁸⁸ There was no such thing as cinema. Early film was experimental, moving into the ’20s with silent film entertainment.⁸⁹ “There was no such thing as radio broadcasting.”⁹⁰ Stations were experimental, and technology was just developing before the radio boom.⁹¹ This was the environment of Floyd’s teenage growing years.

High school changed Floyd’s life. He broke free of his boyhood shell. He started noticing girls. Following the encouragement of his father, he went to work outside the family, earning his own money.

85. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, 20 March 1982, 25.

86. Ernest J. Wrage and Barnett Baskerville, *Contemporary Forum* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962), 51–60.

87. Pierre Berton, *The Great Depression, 1929–1930* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), 25, 68.

88. Wrage and Baskerville, *American Forum*, 87–98.

89. Terry Ramsaye, *A Million and One Nights: A History of Motion Picture*, 3rd ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), 308–33. Also, Charles Musser, *The Emergence of Cinema: The History of Motion Picture to 1907* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 109. Also see Donald G. Godfrey, *C. Francis Jenkins: Pioneer of Film and Television* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014).

90. Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920’s* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 11.

91. Christopher H. Sterling and John Michael Kittross, *Stay Tuned: A History of American Broadcasting* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002), 63–74.

He worked harder and grew respectful and “more considerate of his mother and father.” If Floyd asked his dad for a little cash for a weekend date, he knew the answer before he asked: “How do you suppose I got mine?” Melvin responded.⁹² Melvin’s boys got what they needed in terms of home, food, and shelter, but they had to earn their own spending money and pay for school clothing.

Floyd remembers his instructors fondly and fell in love with the beauty of his first grade teacher, Miss Parish. Floyd appreciated all of his teachers, including Miss Sutherland in grade four; Drew Clark, grade five; Ammon Mercer, grade eight; Drew Clark and Nephi Head, grade nine; Mr. Pharis and Miss Redd, grade ten; and Golden Woolf, grade eleven.⁹³ His high school teacher Golden Woolf survived Floyd’s pranks and instilled in him the idea that he could accomplish something if he would apply himself.⁹⁴ In high school, a group of friends in his science class decided to play a trick on Mr. Woolf involving chemistry and electricity, which they were studying. From inside the classroom they created a battery and connected it to the doorknob. As Mr. Woolf approached, the boys poured water under the door. Of course, when Woolf grabbed the doorknob he was shocked and could not let go. Several students, including Floyd, were temporarily expelled. Ironically, Mr. Woolf, who later became the principle, reached out when Floyd was in the eleventh grade, giving him the responsibility to monitor the twelfth-grade chemistry class. Woolf’s assignments and mentoring gave Floyd confidence to be trusted, and the prank was forgiven.

Floyd competed in debate and won several awards. One judge thought he might have even been more effective if he had only stopped pacing back and forth behind the podium during his speech. “Well

92. Mervin J. Godfrey, oral history, 25 March 1982, Magrath Museum.

93. His 1977 oral history names his teachers: Miss Parish, Miss Sutherland, Levi Head, Ammon Mercer, Mr. Ferris, Miss Read, Golden Woolf, and Willard Keith. Only Keith, Mercer and Woolf appear in Magrath and District History Association, *Irrigation Builders*, 333–35, 490. Some teachers were called by the Church to teach, and they took a Canadian preparatory normal school course in Calgary to prepare for the assignment, Magrath and District History Association, *Irrigation Builders*, 335.

94. Floyd Godfrey, “School Teachers in My Life,” and “The Band Wagons,” in “Life Stories,” file of undated handwritten stories from the life of Floyd Godfrey.

done, now young Godfrey, had a good talk if he'd just stand still."⁹⁵ Floyd's favorite subjects were geography, math, chemistry, and the study of foreign countries. He did not care for English or grammar.

Floyd played the clarinet in the high school band. "My dad wasted a lot of money on me playing the clarinet," Floyd said. He "hated every minute of it," but his mother was persistent.⁹⁶ The day his band leader tuned all of the instruments to Floyd's clarinet's middle C bolstered his confidence, and he continued with the instrument several years. The Magrath Band performed around the town for the 1 July "Dominion Day" parades and celebrations. Dominion Day was created to celebrate Canadian independence, 1 July 1867. It was changed to Canada Day 27 October 1982.⁹⁷ Band members were up at 4 a.m. A loud cannon announced the beginning of the day, and the sixteen-member band rode round town in a hay wagon decorated in red, white, and blue, along with the Union Jack (Canadian flag at the time). All climbed aboard the wagon with their instruments and kitchen chairs borrowed from their mothers' tables. The wagon was drawn by four beautiful Clydesdale horses, a powerful breed used to pull heavy loads. They stopped at the corners of the town blocks. Sleepy people emerged out of their houses for the national anthem, "O Canada," or a rousing march. Spectators sometimes brought the musicians a cake, which delayed their progress as they ate. It was a morning revelry lasting until 6:30 or 7:00 a.m., after which the band left to prepare for the big town parade down Main Street, and the townspeople readied themselves for the celebrations.

Floyd might have thought the clarinet was a waste, but the band added to his self-confidence and gave him an appreciation for John Philip Sousa and good music that he carried all his life. As an adult, he loved the town celebrations, rodeos, and parades. He sang in the ward

95. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, February 1977.

96. Floyd Godfrey, "The Band Wagons."

97. Journal of Floyd Godfrey, 1 July 1982. Godfrey Family Papers. Dominion Day was created to celebrate Canadian independence, 1 July 1867. It was changed to Canada Day on 27 October 1982. Also, Floyd Godfrey, oral history, 1982.

choirs and around the house. If he knew the melody but had forgotten the words to the song, he would just invent them and keep right on singing.

DATING, DANCING, AND SCHOOL

Teenage Floyd was initially a reluctant dancer. His mother had tried to encourage him during a community-wide assembly hall dance, but he clung onto the post of the balcony for dear life as she pulled him onto the floor. Drucilla Passey, a young girl his own age, was a little more persuasive.⁹⁸ He didn't like it at first, but he warmed to the notion as he began paying attention to possible dance partners.

It was about this time he started noticing the girl across the south fence from his home—Clarice Card. As teenagers, she and her girlfriends generally attended the dances alone, but as they matured, a boy would escort them home. Floyd saw Rose Bennett, May Sabey, and Clarice home from various dances. Sometimes they all came home in a group. Occasionally, Clarice was escorted by Reed Bennett (Rose's brother) and Floyd.⁹⁹

Dancing with Floyd was quite the Charleston experience. He was always into the swing of the music, carefree and fun. Chaperoning adults sat on the sides of the dance floor and watched with a careful eye. These new freestyle dances were far different from those of their parents, which were more rigid.¹⁰⁰ Floyd and Rose were dancing one evening when her petticoat suddenly fell to the floor. Rose was faster than the eyes of the chaperones. She leaned over, quickly pocketing her undergarment, without missing a step.

Floyd was a cutup. He loved a teenage good time. After a dance or a movie, revelers all headed uptown to the Jones Bakery, where ice cream and pie topped off the night. The dances were, of course, all

98. Magrath and District History Association, *Irrigation Builders*, 503.

99. Rose Hudson, "Our Early Friendships." Letter from Rose Hudson to Floyd Godfrey, 7 April 1982, Godfrey Family Papers. Reed and Rose Bennett were the son and daughter of Austin R. and Alice Emily Harding. Magrath and District History Association, *Irrigation Builders*, 411–12, 481. Rose would eventually marry Eldred "Dad" Hudson.

100. Kyvig, *Daily Life*, 205–6.

chaperoned by the mothers of the community, who positioned themselves on the stage where they could watch and make sure their teenagers behaved. After a dance one evening, Floyd's father asked if he had been drinking alcohol at the dance. "No, I have never drank in my life," Floyd responded. "Well," his father replied, "somebody said you were cutting-up at the dance last night." Floyd had indeed led a chain of dancers, holding on at each other's waists in the bunny-hop fashion all around the dance floor while chanting to the music. "There must have been 150 of them following me," Floyd recalled.¹⁰¹ Floyd's teenage memories of fun and frolicking stayed with him as he enjoyed life.

As president of the student organization, Floyd was at the forefront of those organizing the parties and dances throughout the year. They relied on lots of teenage creativity generating their own entertainment. One Halloween night, Floyd and fellow students constructed a tall water slide where students slid down and landed in an old sofa at the bottom. It was fun until one of the girls broke her leg. Every event featured the Magrath High School song. There were no radio stations and few record players, so the dance bands were local and live. Their only entertainment beyond Floyd's father's Empress Theater were dances, school, church, and community socials.

In the late 1920s few students finished high school. Most completed the eighth grade and headed for the real-world work opportunities. A small group graduated, but most were unable to afford university studies. Floyd finished the eleventh grade. His high school experience in leadership and academics had helped him out of his shell. He was a member of the student body leadership. He mixed with the girls and worked summers in the harvests. He was evolving into an adult with a new respect for the wisdom of his parents.

FRONTIER HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

In pioneering days, holidays were comparatively few and all locally organized. Even then there were chores to be done, cows to milk,

101. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, February 1977.

and animals to feed before the fun began. The national holidays were Dominion Day, Easter, and Christmas.

Dominion Day, 1 July, is the celebration of Canadian independence from Great Britain in 1867. Magrath's commemoration started at sunrise with the firing of the cannon, followed by the band touring the town, the parade, and the evening baseball game and feasting. The parade floats were farm wagons decorated with Canadian flags and red, white, and, blue crepe paper. They were organized by local groups and included a few of the businesses.

Baseball games featured regional competition. In the Godfrey tradition, Floyd was the catcher for the team, as his father had been earlier. Once he caught the ball on the end of his fingers and split them, after which he was not too fussy about being the catcher. Games were mostly a social event and were played in every community. The teams piled into a wagon or the car as they rode into neighboring towns to play ball. The evening concluded with more food, more dancing, and the singing of "Oh Canada." Dominion Day was a highlight of the year.

Easter and Christmas were more family celebrations. School was dismissed for only Good Friday and Easter Monday. Hiding and finding Easter eggs was unique to a child's memories of these days. Floyd, with his brothers and sister, checked the chicken coop and selected one or two eggs each day. They hid them in the barn until Easter, and by then they might have a dozen eggs each. Eva hard-boiled the eggs and colored them with food dye for her children. For the finale, they walked to the coulee hill, just a half block south of their house, and rolled them down toward the stream.¹⁰² The prankster in Floyd appeared one year when he found a fresh egg and slipped it into the pocket of one of his sister Lottie's friends. He thought it was a big joke when he kicked her pocket. However, the joke was on him! As she reached into her coat, retrieving what she could of the broken egg, she threw it right in his face.¹⁰³

Christmas was the most exciting children's holiday of the year. Eva decorated the house with brightly colored green and red crepe paper.

102. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, January 1977, 11–12.

103. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, February 1977, 11–12.

The children cut paper into strips and created paper chains that hung from the ceiling. The chains were draped from the corners of the room to the center where Eva placed a large decorative Christmas bell. Eva and Lottie did most of the decorating. The family popped corn on the stove in a wire basket. Shaking the basket over the top of the red-hot coal was intriguing, as the kernels of corn exploded. After it cooled, the children took a needle and thread and crafted long strings of popcorn cascading around the tree. These were family activities as well as holiday preparations. The tree was likely acquired from the Magrath Trading Company or a local entrepreneur who had a license to cut trees and had ventured into the foothills to Pole Haven or Dug Way on Lee's Creek near Cardston. They were scrawny trees compared to the lush trees harvested today for the holiday, but in the eyes of the children they were a wonder as they stood in the northeast corner of the front room.¹⁰⁴ There were no lights on the Christmas tree, as there was no electricity. Eva and Lottie cautiously placed and lit the candles on the branches. Eva's memories of the fire in her childhood home kept her fearful even as an adult. The candles were lit only briefly and not too often. They were placed in a small cup to capture the melting wax and held the flame steady on the branch. There was a large stove with windows on three sides. As the fire burned, it would cast flickering light across the festive decorations and the tree.

Christmas was simple and exciting. On Christmas Eve a small wooden box of Japanese oranges (imported tangerines) appeared. The Godfrey family sat around the stove and ate them all. Often on Christmas Eve the children had to wait for their father, who was patrolling the streets. It was his job to see that the people and cattle were home at night. It was always snowy and cold, but they waited patiently for their father.

One Christmas the snow was twelve inches deep. Sleigh bells rang passed their home. There was a long expectant pause as Melvin dramatically threw open the door, covered with snow, and hollered, "Santa just drove by and may not come back if there are any lights still

104. Floyd Godfrey, "Christmas," Floyd Godfrey Life Stories.

on, so you guys better get to bed.” The children were already tired but too excited to sleep. They scrambled for their beds. Bert, the oldest, pretended to sleep for a few hours. It was more than he could take. He slid from under the covers and crept “very quietly, into the front room, found his long black stocking” and scurried back to bed. He hid under the covers, took out one orange and one apple, and down in the toe of his sock he found Santa’s present. He had left Bert with his “own cherished dollar watch.”¹⁰⁵

Christmas mornings the children were allowed to light the candles on the tree. Gifts were simple. Santa brought each child a gift or two: perhaps a pocket knife, a new flashlight, and a doll for Lottie. Eva got Lily of the Valley perfume every year from her son Douglas. Cast iron toy cars came from Santa.¹⁰⁶ Gifts such as a sleigh or a wagon were often shared with one another. Each child had their own stocking hanging on a chair with their name on it. The stockings were filled with apples, oranges, peanuts, homemade candy, and sometimes a package of the new sweet chewing gum. Gifts of clothing were always needed and received. “We didn’t have to have much, but we were happy with what we had.”¹⁰⁷

Christmas dinner was turkey, dressing, potatoes, carrots, and gravy. Plum pudding, apple pie, and homemade ice cream were dessert. Eva cooked the plum pudding in a cloth and a pot of boiling water. It was a traditional Christmas treat and often called Christmas pudding. It had no plums but was a mixture of dried fruits, hard beef or mutton fat, molasses, and spices—such as ginger, cloves, nutmeg, or cinnamon—providing a fragrance throughout the house for several weeks as Christmas approached and their mother prepared.

105. Bert Godfrey, “Canadian Christmas,” December 1980, Family Files, Magrath Museum.

106. Today these cast iron toys are highly collectible. Douglas Godfrey’s grandson Mason now has the toy Douglas received from Santa as a child.

107. Floyd Godfrey, “Christmas,” in “Life Stories,” file of undated handwritten stories from the life of Floyd Godfrey. Also, Douglas Godfrey to Donald G. Godfrey, 18 February 2014; Floyd Godfrey, oral history, February 1977.

All holidays were a delightful respite from the physical demands of work, but there were always chores and the cows to be milked both morning and night. They were heartfelt celebrations and a day or two to relax and socialize. They came too slowly and left too quickly in the pioneer lives. Soon the holiday was over and done, and it was back to work meeting the challenges of keeping food on the table.

FRONTIER MEDICINES AT HOME

Pioneers relied on their own knowledge when it came to medicine, and it was no different for the people of Magrath. Healthcare came in the form of herbal remedies passed from previous generations. Accidents and illnesses were treated with a poultice, a tonic, and a prayer. There were no ambulances or emergency rooms. Medical doctors were just beginning to appear in the local communities, and they drove to the homes of their patients to administer their services. Until 1938, child birth generally took place at home with assistance from female relatives, a midwife, or a local physician.¹⁰⁸ For those living in Magrath, if the patient did not get well, the Lethbridge hospital was two hours away by horse and buggy, assuming the family had a fast horse and the patient was well enough to make the journey. Dr. C. W. Sanders was the first doctor in Magrath. He visited the homes of his patients.¹⁰⁹

The mustard plaster was one such natural cure applied to Floyd's legs and feet when he "got the itch." His feet and legs below his knees were covered with welts. When he sat on the lawn scratching his legs, they bled and he cried. A midwife was called, and she applied the mustard plaster. A typical treatment plaster included mustard powder and flour with water or egg whites mixed into a paste. This was applied to a cotton cloth and placed on the infected areas. The paste never came in contact with the body, as it would burn the skin, but it was believed to have the capacity to reduce inflammation. Eva held Floyd tightly as she tried to prevent him from scratching while the mixture was applied.

108. Kyvig, *Daily Life*, 141–42.

109. Magrath and District History Association, *Irrigation Builders*, 365–67.

How he contracted the infection they did not know, but it was common for kids to go barefoot, and as an adult Floyd speculated that this was how he had caught the disease.¹¹⁰

Mervin caught diphtheria when he was small. This was an acute, often fatal disease at the time, often a major cause of death among children. It was an upper respiratory infection growing in the throat of the patient, producing a thick coating on the back of the throat, which could be caught simply by touching.¹¹¹ Eva was ill, and she was down in bed. The family was frightened. Floyd particularly so, as Mervin was his best buddy and only three years Floyd's junior. Melvin sent for the doctor from Lethbridge. The doctor came and examined Mervin, and Floyd overheard the conversation. "Melvin, that boy [Mervin] won't live until morning. You had better go in and tell your wife." Fear shot through Floyd. He knelt that night, praying like he had never prayed before. "I knelt down on my knees and prayed hard for my brother, and the next morning he was well. Our Heavenly Father blessed him." The doctor had stayed the night to help Eva, and when he saw Mervin the next morning, he could not understand: "All that puss and stuff in his nose and throat was just gone, I can't understand it." But Floyd knew the Lord had answered his prayer.¹¹²

Floyd always had problems with his teeth. In the early twentieth century, dentistry was in its infancy. There was no thought to brushing one's teeth or even a toothpick to remove food from between the teeth. When the cavities grew, the pliers from the toolbox were the answer. Floyd lost several teeth that way, with his father on the other end of the tool. Sometimes Melvin got creative and tied one end of a linen thread around the troublesome tooth and the other end to a doorknob. Whoever came through the door next then extracted the patient's tooth. Floyd never forgot how his father had pulled his aching teeth.¹¹³

110. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, February 1977 and 1982.

111. See "Glossary of Medical Terms Used in the 18th and 19th Centuries," <http://www.thornber.net/medicine/html/medgloss.html>.

112. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, February 1977, 23.

113. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, 20 March 1982, 24.

In his teenage years, while working in the fields, Floyd got a severe toothache. His brother Mervin, working at his side, told Floyd to just toughen up and take it. One of the workmen provided Floyd with a little paste he indicated would take away the pain. Just put a little in the mouth and “don’t swallow it, but keep it in your cheek, your mouth will be moist and you’ll be all right.” It was chewing tobacco. Rather than relieving the toothache, the nicotine made Floyd very sick. He was driving the team and had to stop the horses. He laid down in the hay for several hours and missed dinner before his boss found him. After learning what had happened, he took Floyd to the barn a mile away where Floyd slept. Then the boss went off to take care of the boys who had given him the tobacco.¹¹⁴

In 1919 the most serious health issue of the era arose after World War I—the Spanish flu pandemic ravaged the world. It killed more people than World War I and was remembered as one of the most devastating epidemics in world history. Almost every family in Magrath lost someone or knew friends who lost a loved one. Businesses, churches, and schools were closed. Infected homes were quarantined. In southern Alberta, it had also been a year of drought. Tumbleweeds followed the wind across dry farm fields, and dust storms blew in from the north. In the Magrath Godfrey family, no one contracted the disease.¹¹⁵ Melvin struggled getting permission to open the Empress Theater just once a week, and everyone was required to wear a mask. Selling tickets at the theater frightened both Eva and Lottie, so they wore masks to ward off infection. “It was a sight I won’t forget, to see people with this white cloth over their nose and mouth” filling the theater.¹¹⁶ Eventually, everything, including the theater, was closed by government order.¹¹⁷

114. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, 20 March 1982, 22.

115. Floyd Godfrey, “The ‘Flu’ of 1918–19,” in “Life Stories,” file of undated handwritten stories from the life of Floyd Godfrey. Also, recorded in a Keystone Steno Book.

116. Floyd Godfrey, “The ‘Flu’ of 1918–19,” in “Life Stories,” file of undated handwritten stories from the life of Floyd Godfrey, Godfrey Family Papers.

117. Floyd Godfrey, oral histories, February 1977, March 1982.



Third home of Melvin and Eva Godfrey. Courtesy of Godfrey Family Files.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The Great Depression hit the world, including Canada and Magrath. People lost their jobs, unemployment relief was scant, and a steady job was the supreme goal as people huddled around the new technology of radio, listening with hope to government leaders. The old adage of “rugged individualism and minimal government was obsolete,”

replaced with “the new conception [that] government had a positive responsibility for social and economic welfare.”¹¹⁸

Two years before the Depression started, Melvin built his third and final home, a new brick house at 125 1st Street, and they moved uptown. Mervin, Joe, and Douglas were the only children living in this home. The older brothers, Bert and Floyd, along with their sister Lottie, had married and moved on. The new home was modern. There were two bedrooms, a kitchen, a living room, and an indoor bathroom on the main floor. Upstairs in rooms with sloping ceilings were two more bedrooms where the children slept. Downstairs, the basement had a coal bin and a cistern for collecting water.

The Great Depression of the 1930s hit like a financial landslide. In Magrath it was no different. People incurred debt just trying to keep ahead. There was no cash, so “in-kind” payments were common. This meant goods were exchanged for services rendered and the like. Those attending the Empress Theater brought potatoes, eggs, and produce in exchange for admission.¹¹⁹ Families struggled to pay taxes and put food on the table. Their gardens were their main source of sustenance. Magrath was a little farm town, and people never had the best of riches. They had their challenges in life, but whatever the challenges, they kept the family and community pulling together. The Depression and poverty failed to dampen their spirits. The Magrath Trading Company, a food and hardware store, accepted a farmer’s credit until the harvest, when bills could be paid. Mothers improvised. They could take a fifty-pound flour sack, wash it, sew it, and create clothing or simple dish cloths. Coal was dug from the creek bank. Ice for refrigerators was cut in the winter from the stream. People moved, searching for employment. Melvin’s sons Bert and Mervin left for Cardston and Lethbridge in the middle of the Depression. Bert would later encourage Floyd and his young family to join him.

118. Wrage and Baskerville, *Contemporary Forum*, 143. Also, Pierre Berton, *The Great Depression, 1929–1939*, 11–15.

119. Magrath and District History Association, *Irrigation Builders*, 157. Also, Har-ker and Bly, *Power of a Dream*, 101–11.

From the broadest perspective, the Depression affected the farmers of the world, including those of Magrath, differently than people in the cities. There were few soup lines in farm towns, but the farmers had the ability to grow their own food. They had been independent from the beginning of the settlement years. They traded in kind. However, some farms were lost. George Card was behind in his taxes and was asking for relief.¹²⁰ Homes were lost, including Floyd and Clarice's second home, which was under construction. Taxes were in the arrears. Everyone was suffering. The stress of the Depression was balanced by family, friendships, and the Church. Continuing Church socials and dances provided an escape. During the Christmas season, dances were nightly.¹²¹ Summers were still full of baseball, Church activities, and even the occasional vacations to Waterton Lakes.

FAMILIES COMING TOGETHER

Clarice Card Godfrey was the oldest daughter of George Card and Elizabeth Rose Plant. She was born 30 March 1907 on the Magrath farm, which was located two and a half miles west of the town. Her father had earned the farm working on the Kimball-to-Magrath irrigation canal. This is where Clarice spent most of her childhood. She and her older brother, Leland, helped their parents with the chores. They entertained themselves with things surrounding them. The new railroad tracks ran by at the eastern end of their sugar beet field. The trains mesmerized the children as they passed, heading west to Cardston or east to Raymond, Stirling, and Lethbridge. When children heard the train whistle, they carefully placed pins, pennies, tacks, and nails on the rails and watched the train flatten them. After the train passed, the children ran to the tracks to check their railroad crafts. Two nails crossed, one lying over the other, resembled a pair of miniature

120. Minutes of the Magrath Town Council, 20 May 1931, Magrath Museum.

121. Harker and Bly, *Power of the Dream*, 108–12. "Magrath Store News," in-house newsletter of the Magrath Trading Company, 7 September 1934. Magrath Museum.

scissors after the heavy train bound them together. Pennies were smashed beyond recognition.¹²²

An irrigation ditch flowed on the north side of the Cards' farm, providing water for growing crops and a summer swimming hole for Clarice and her friends. Clarice's father placed wooden planks in the ditch to hold back the water and channel it into the field when needed. It also made a good swimming hole and even a stage for putting on a water show for an audience of parents or friends. Clarice never owned a swimming suit, but she was modest and wore her dress whether playing or swimming. In the summer, she picked bouquets of the sweet-smelling Alberta wild roses that grew wild along the ditch. She gave them to her mother—a rose for a Rose.

As a child, Clarice raced with the geese her father raised on the farm. On one occasion the gander thought she was getting too close to its little ones, and he turned the tables, chasing her. Frightened by the suddenly aggressive bird, she ran, fell, and hit her hand on an open-end gate lying on the ground. The force of the fall closed the gate on her left hand and crushed her little finger. The doctor was called, but Clarice was uneasy about him touching her. When she saw Doctor Norman T. Beeman approaching in his horse and buggy, she hid under her bed.¹²³ There was no antiseptic or dulling of the pain when the country doctor worked on a patient. Clarice carried the scar for her lifetime.¹²⁴

George Card's farm was next to the William Sabey farm. The Sabey family had big hearts and were generous with their neighbors. After each harvest, William loaded his wagon with produce and drove into town sharing what he had with the needy.¹²⁵ The Cards were alone in Alberta for a while. George's father, Charles Ora Card, had become ill and moved back to Logan, Utah, and the larger Sabey family had children Clarice's age. As a result, the Magrath Cards were taken into the Sabey family circle, and lifelong friendships evolved. They helped

122. Floyd and Clarice Godfrey, joint oral history, 8 May 1977.

123. Normon Thomas Beeman was a physician and surgeon. See <http://canadiangreatwarproject.com/searches/soldierDetail.asp?ID=108190>.

124. Clarice Card Godfrey, handwritten story in Godfrey Family Papers.

125. Magrath and District History Association, *Irrigation Builders*, 514–15.



George and Rose Card farm home, circa 1977. Courtesy of Donald G. Godfrey.

one another in planting and harvesting. They were friends, babysitters, party companions, and fellow church-goers. At the Card and Sabey family gatherings, the adults always ate before the children. This was the family order of things during the early 1900s. Clarice, her brother Leland, three years her senior, and the Sabey children all congregated near the kitchen door, fearing there would not be enough food left to eat after the adults, “who were sure eating a lot and taking a lot of time,” Clarice remembered. Of course, there was always plenty for everyone.¹²⁶

126. Floyd and Clarice Godfrey, joint oral history, 8 May 1977.

Once all stomachs were full, the hour was generally late. The bedroom floors of the host's home were covered with quilts as the children curled up to sleep. The adults spent the rest of the evening playing "Hi Five."¹²⁷ As the late night approached, fathers prepared to return to their own homes, while mothers helped with the cleaning and restoring of the host home to normal. Dads placed large rocks in the wagon. These stones were between the size of a fist and a small boulder and were heated in the kitchen stove then placed in the back of the buggy. A quilt covered the warm rocks. Sleeping children were placed into the back of the wagon, with a second quilt covering them. The children traveled in the warmth of an open buggy in what felt like loving luxury.¹²⁸

RIDING THE HORSE TO SCHOOL

Farm life was not limited to work, play, and parties. Education for their children was important to both George and Rose. George served on the Magrath school board, and Rose was a former school teacher.¹²⁹ They saw to it that Clarice, Leland, and all of their children attended school in town.

Clarice's first school year began in 1914.¹³⁰ In grade one, her teacher, A. I. Wall, graded her reading and arithmetic as "excellent." Her conduct and writing were "good," but her report card showed she missed twenty days of school that year.¹³¹ As an elementary school child, Clarice had more than her share of ailments, including earaches and sore throats.

127. Clarice Card Godfrey, story in Godfrey Family Papers. "Hi Five" was a popular card game of the twentieth century. Often called "Pedro," there were four adults to a table, two partnerships, and multiple tables rotated throughout an evening's entertainment. A little like "Rook," the high trump card was a five.

128. This was a common method of keeping warm while traveling short distances.

129. Minutes of the Court of Revisions in School Land, 10 July 1916, Magrath Museum.

130. Clarice indicates in her history that she was past eight years old when she went to school. She was born 30 March 1907, and her first report card is dated 1914–15, which would make her seven, almost eight. See "Clarice Card Godfrey," story in Godfrey Family Papers.

131. The scale at the bottom of the report card was as follows: Excellent, 99–100; Commendable, 80–90; Good, 70–80; Fair, 60–70; Unsatisfactory, 50–60; and Poor, below 50. Clarice Card Godfrey, story in Godfrey Family Papers.

Her legs ached painfully, emanating from the bones into the muscles. Her mother heated bags of salt and placed them around Clarice's legs. The salt retained the heat and soothed the pain. The school absences were likely related to these ailments. There were no cars or school buses for transporting the farm children. When she was feeling well, her father took her and her brother in the buggy, or Clarice simply rode the horse with Leland. At school there was a barn for stabling the children's horses. In the spring and early autumn, they sometimes just walked. It took them two or three hours to get from the school back to the farm.

Clarice's first grade class was released out of school an hour earlier than the other classes. This made it sometimes hard for a little sister to wait a whole hour for her big brother. One day Clarice decided to start walking home without him, likely figuring he would catch up to her on the horse. But as children do, she wandered and lost track of time. Leland hunted for her but finally went home. Clarice stopped to play at the home of Sarah Poulsen.¹³² As the sun started setting, Sarah sent Clarice on her way and notified her parents. It was the only time Clarice received a spanking.¹³³

Corporal punishment was rare in the Card home. If the children were misbehaving, they were sent into the garden to fetch a good switch, a "swishy limb of the currant bush."¹³⁴ At times, a child was sent back, making several trips to the garden, assuring that their pick suited their father. It was never used, but George placed it behind the mirror over the wash basin and left it there for the child to see. Selecting then displaying the right switch was enough to reinforce appropriate behavior.¹³⁵

132. There were several Pouslens in Magrath, but it is difficult to determine to which family Sarah belonged. See Magrath and District History Association, *Irrigation Builders*, 506–7.

133. Floyd and Clarice Godfrey, joint oral history, 8 May 1977.

134. The currant bush has spindly vines and produces a white or red berry from which jams and juice were preserved. The story of "The Currant Bush" was made famous by President Hugh B. Brown in his 1968 BYU commencement address. See "The Current Bush," *New Era*, January 1973.

135. Floyd and Clarice Godfrey, joint oral history, 8 May 1977.

Leland and Clarice were joined by three more siblings, two younger brothers and a sister. Cyrus Henry, born 5 September 1909; Glen Charles, born 27 December 1911; and, fourteen years later, Melva Rose, born 17 March 1925. Transportation to and from school for four children magnified the difficulties. George tackled the problems head on. He rented a room in town from Grandma and Grandpa Sabey.¹³⁶ Now the children had only a short distance to walk.

Tragedy struck on 23 June 1916. Leland had come home thirsty and wanted a drink. He went to the cupboard and took what he thought was a bottle of currant juice, harvested from the backyard bushes. There were no labels on these home-bottled preserves. Unfortunately, instead of the sweet fruit juice he expected, the bottle contained a poison used to treat field potatoes, fertilizing the soil and killing the bugs. His body went into convulsions, and he died. There was no undertaker. So George placed Leland's body in the bedroom, covered him with bottles of ice, and spread pansy flowers over the body. Clarice remembered this scene as "about the most beautiful I had seen," but Leland's death was a catastrophe no one forgot. He was buried in the Magrath Cemetery.¹³⁷

MOVE TO TOWN

It was 1918 when George and Rose purchased a home in town, just two blocks east of the school and immediately south of the Godfrey's home. Clarice was now eleven years old. Their new home at 181 1st Avenue South was perhaps 1,500 square feet, at the corner of the block. The front door faced south. There were irrigation ditches running on the east and south sides of the lot. Across the gravel road to the south, over a larger ditch, and down the hill was the Pothole Creek. The Cards' visitors walked a short path north from the road across the lawn then up one small step and across a wooden sitting porch. Through the

136. To the children of small LDS towns, older people were often addressed as "grandma/grandpa" or "brother/sister." It was simply a term of endearment.

137. Floyd and Clarice Godfrey, joint oral history, 8 May 1977.

front screen door was the living room. Outside, around the eaves of the main house, there were wooden rain barrels. Rose, just as Eva Godfrey and other pioneers, used the soft rain water for washing her hair and watering her favorite flowers. The rainwater was soft and rich in nitrogen. Huge vegetable and flower gardens surrounded the Card home. The vegetable garden ran north and south, just west of the house. The flower garden was north of the house. The gardens were fun for the kids. What they did not eat in the summer their mother preserved, and anything left over was fed to the farm animals. Nothing went to waste.

THE SPANISH FLU

While the tragic events of this global tragedy skipped over the Godfrey family, they targeted the Cards. Clarice was thirteen, the oldest of three siblings, with Melva on the horizon. The Spanish flu frightened everyone.¹³⁸ One day a person could be walking along the road, and the next day he or she would be dead. How did this disease spread so rapidly? No one knew. Was it an exotic disease brought home by soldiers who had served in foreign lands? Was it spread by the unsanitary condition of farmers' milk delivered from the farmer to every household and not always properly sanitized?¹³⁹ The fear of the disease was both physical and psychological, especially in the little farm towns. Being outside in town for any reason required cotton masks be worn over the mouth to guard against infection.

In Magrath, brave neighbors went into homes and cared for entire families who were sick. Home nurses tried natural remedies from their pioneer experience: mustard and onion plasters again. Heated remedies were spread on a cloth and laid on the body. Sometimes they were successful, sometimes not.

138. Kyvig, *Daily Life*, 139–40.

139. This idea actually spawned the creation of the paraffin paper bottle still commonly used today. A patent held by a little-known inventor whose primary work was in film and television. See Godfrey, C. *Francis Jenkins: Pioneer of Film and Television*, 85–88.

Amidst these fears, Clarice's mother, Rose, caught the disease. She was sick for an entire winter and almost lost her life.¹⁴⁰ Despite everyone being ordered to avoid contact, a nurse and neighbors stayed by her side. Brother Ammon Mercer, a member of the Magrath Ward bishopric, visited regularly and administered to her. "I think this was all that saved my mother's life."¹⁴¹ People were warned to stay away from anywhere they might catch the flu, but Mercer and others ignored the warning to offer care and priesthood blessings. The flu subsided and routines were reestablished, but no one could say for certain where it came from nor why it left. The pandemic simply ended.

WORK, FRIENDSHIPS, AND COURTSHIP

Clarice finished school through the eleventh grade. This was a common end to the education of children of the time. There were only a few students in the ninth- through twelfth-grade classes.¹⁴²

Following her formal schooling, Clarice worked in the Jensen and Brothers Mercantile Company, one of the first stores in Magrath. It was a general store established by Charles Jensen and his wife, Allie. It sold a little of everything, from hardware to groceries. Clarice clerked and waited on the buyers. She liked her job, except for selling shoes. There was no instrument for foot measurement and proper fitting. The buyer simply tried on all the shoes available until a pair that felt comfortable was purchased. Clarice simply cringed when touching another person's foot. When she turned eighteen, Allie took her under her wing and

140. Floyd Godfrey, "The 'Flu' 1918-19," in "Life Stories," file of undated handwritten stories from the life of Floyd Godfrey.

141. See Clarice Card Godfrey, story in Godfrey Family Papers. Ammon Mercer served in the bishopric for twenty-three years. He was the counselor to Bishop Levi Harker, who was the first bishop of Magrath, serving thirty-two years, as well as two terms as mayor of the town. Magrath and District History Association, *Irrigation Builders*, 465-66, 490.

142. In 1913 there were twenty-one students attending in Magrath and only one in the twelfth grade. Magrath and District History Association, *Irrigation Builders*, 333-36.

trained her in finances and bookkeeping. It was a skill Clarice would take into her marriage.¹⁴³

Friends, fun, and dating were enjoyed after school and work. If a student missed school without an excuse, his or her parents would get a visit from the truant officer. Normally that was all it took to return them to class. While it might have been exciting to skip a class or two, they never missed work. Work was a family responsibility.

It was in the last two years of Floyd's schooling that he and Clarice began noticing each other. They had been neighbors, but Clarice's opinion of the roughshod Godfrey boys was not the highest. She never thought she would wed one of those ruffians. "If anyone had told me I'd marry a Godfrey, I would have slapped them silly."¹⁴⁴

Floyd and Clarice's dates revolved around dancing and the Empress Theater. They danced in Magrath's open air pavilion, in the assembly hall, and atop the old schoolhouse. Floyd was making the transition from working in the fields to working full time in the Magrath Trading Company, in addition to his job as evening projectionist at the Empress. It was said that whenever Clarice accompanied Floyd to the projection booth and reached over to give him a kiss, the old hand-cranked movies moved faster.¹⁴⁵ There was no hanky-panky in the booth. The movie had to keep moving, and Floyd's mother was right below in the ticket booth to make it so. Eva supported the growing relationship between Floyd and Clarice. As she sold movie tickets, if she came across a \$2 bill (\$26), Eva would place the bill on the floor in the projection booth, where she knew Floyd would find it and have sufficient funds to buy an ice cream soda after the movie. He had to have \$1.35 (\$17), as that was the price of a chocolate sundae. If Clarice's friend Janet did not have a date, she added to the cost. She would always accompany them if she didn't have a date. Neighbors often wondered which girl Floyd would marry.

143. Floyd Godfrey, "Great Events in My Life." This is Janet and Harold Boucher and Rose and Eldrid "Dad" Hudson. See Magrath and District History Association, *Irrigation Builders*, 470, 480–81. Also, handwritten letter from Rose Hudson to Floyd Godfrey, 7 April 1982, Godfrey Family Papers.

144. Floyd and Clarice Godfrey, joint oral history, 8 May 1977.

145. Floyd Godfrey, oral history, February 1977.



Jensen Brothers Mercantile Company, Magrath, Alberta. Courtesy Glenbow Museum.

LIFE'S TRANSITION IN HISTORY

The Canadian families passed through significant historical transitions. Floyd's and Clarice's parents migrated northward on an open frontier in Canada with horse and buggy. Then the railroads opened the West to increased migration, with spur lines running north and south throughout southern Alberta, fanning agriculture and industrial growth. In Montana and southern Alberta, these interests were in mining and farming. While the railroads brought coal and industry to the consumers, they also brought settlers to areas once far removed. The Charles Ora Card, George Card, and Melvin Godfrey families utilized the new products that the railroads brought in.

The families of these pioneers witnessed the early days of the frontier West and particularly southern Alberta. They chased the cows down main street Magrath. New Mormon settlers brought irrigation and an economic stimulus. Floyd's father purchased one of the first automobiles in Magrath. He opened a new world of movies and local entertainment to his community. The automobile replaced the railroad spur lines for local transportation. Blood, sweat, tears—World War I, “the war to end all wars,” took lives from every community. Another global threat would follow—the Spanish flu epidemic. The Roaring Twenties were a complete contrast—a revolution in morals and manners. It was party time for young Floyd and Clarice. They danced the years away and fell in love—just as the Great Depression arrived.

