# FROM WAGON TRAILS
# TO
# SUBWAY RAILS

***THE HISTORY OF***

***MARGARET HOLMES and HENRY DUNCAN WEAVER***

***& FAMILY***

# FROM WAGON TRAILS TO SUBWAY RAILS

***THE HISTORY OF***

***MARGARET HOLMES and HENRY DUNCAN WEAVER***

by

Ellen Claire Weaver Shaeffer

Brigham Young University
Family History and Genealogy Research Services
Provo, Utah
1988

Re-digitized and re-edited by the author
2010

Brigham Young University, Family History and Genealogy
Research Services, Provo, Utah 84602

Printed in the United States of America

*Re-Dedicated*
*to*
*the Grandchildren and Great-grandchildren*
*of*
*Margaret and Duncan Weaver*

Special thanks to John Duncan Shaeffer and Jo Ellen Shaeffer for their proofreading and their valuable suggestions, and to Marty Shaeffer for his help, support, love and encouragement.

*E.C.W.S.*

Editor's note:
Many of the ancestors mentioned in this history have biographies that can be accessed at (As of Jan. 2010) <http://www.OurFamilyBiographies.com>

# Contents


Foreword . . . . . 7

Margaret and Duncan . . . . . 8

Duncan's Background . . . . . 11

Margaret's Background . . . . . 25

Pioneering in Canada . . . . . 37

Early Days in Chicago . . . . . 42

The City . . . . . 47

Logan Square Ward . . . . . 52

The Neighborhood . . . . . 60

Golden Years . . . . . 66

Changes . . . . . 75

Afterword . . . . . 85

Source Materials Used . . . . . 89

Appendix A: Photos . . . . . 91

Appendix B: "From the Pulpit" . . . . . 110

Appendix C: Miscellaneous . . . . . 120

Appendix D: Genealogical Data . . . . . 135

# Foreword

This is a history of Margaret Holmes and Henry Duncan Weaver. It is about the life they shared, and how they influenced each other and the lives of those around them.

Both Margaret and Duncan were a part of the Mormon migration into Canada that took place around the turn of the 20th century. As a five-year-old Duncan rode in a covered wagon as his family moved from Idaho to Alberta. Margaret was just two when her parents made the same trek north from Utah.

From these rural beginnings and primitive methods of transportation, and through the advances of the following years, Margaret and Duncan witnessed great change. Life on the Canadian frontier was vastly different from the life they later led in metropolitan Chicago. The subway and elevated, or "L" trains, of the city were an integral part of the city's public transportation system. Margaret, Duncan and family depended on them for much of their in-city travel. The subway and "L" became as much a part of their city lifestyle as the horse and buggy had been in their early rural years.

Though all human beings have many similarities, each person's life is unique and vastly different from every other person's experience in many ways. If our subjects were here to speak for themselves, the inadequacies of language and communication would hinder our deepest understanding of them. Only through love and constant communication can we bridge the gaps between the closest of our own contemporaries. And the task becomes even more difficult when we wish to share the lives of those dear ones who have passed on. The artist's brush can capture a certain something of his subject that the clinical camera misses. Nevertheless, a portrait can never be a perfect reflection of life. If our story "canvas" fails in some area, Duncan, the artist, would understand that. Margaret would too, for she and her sister wrote their own mother's life story—a considerable effort.[1]

Our purpose here is to say some things about the two most influential people in our lives—our parents. If you read between the lines of this history you can begin to see some emerging patterns that have helped the descendants of Margaret and Duncan to cope with life's challenges. Perhaps there are some stumbling blocks, too. We do not wish to critique, to judge, to speculate, or to pose queries that only they could answer. Nor do we wish to gild them as statues on pedestals, for that would be equally unfair. Our basic premise is that they were truly wonderful, even remarkable people, though they considered themselves to be quite ordinary.

Although Margaret and Duncan had a heritage that was very similar in many respects, their personalities were quite different, as we shall see. In the episodes and recollections that follow, we hope to capture some of the essence of their individual lives, and of their life together . . . as seen through the eyes of love.

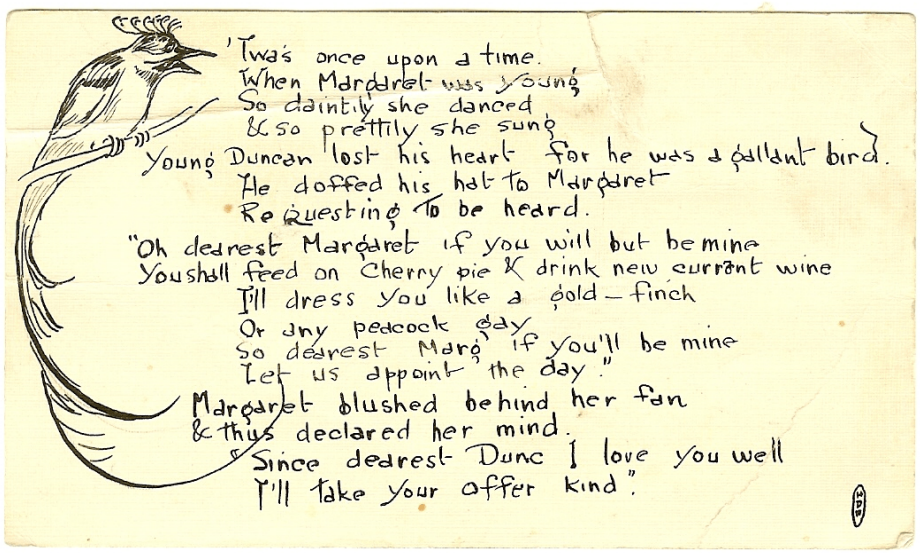
* * *

[1] Weaver, Margaret Holmes and Winkler, Ellen Holmes, *Just Jane, the Biography of Sarah Jane Godfrey Evans Holmes*, 1968; re-edit by E. C. Shaeffer, 2007; see www.OurFamilyBiographies.com

# Margaret and Duncan

We shall start at the beginning—the beginning of the life that Margaret and Duncan shared together—their wedding day. For this was truly the beginning of something new and unique in this world: The Duncan and Margaret Weaver family.

Much of the courting that Duncan did was conducted on horseback, and he proposed to Margaret with a poem and drawing that would have charmed a princess:




On the day of the wedding, December 23rd 1926, they rode the train to Cardston and were married in the newly dedicated Cardston, Alberta Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Duncan was 30 years of age and Margaret was 28.

The newlyweds first lived in Barnwell, Alberta, Canada where Duncan was principal of the only school. They both taught and saved money for their future education.[1]

Margaret worked to fix up their first little home. She refinished some antiques, and was delighted that it turned out to be a cute little place. They were very happy there, though it would be but a brief residence.

"Duncan was the main provider for his parents and six brothers and sisters," wrote Margaret. He also paid for Normal School, Canadian teacher's training, for two of his siblings. Margaret encouraged Duncan to consider various alternatives to staying in Canada. She wanted him to further his own education. Medicine was a field that Duncan considered, but inadequate funding precluded this option. Some of the local folks could not understand Margaret's and Duncan's desire to broaden their horizons and reach for higher achievements when they were already "at the top" as it were, in the social structure of the small towns of the Alberta prairie. But a decision

[1] Margaret Holmes Weaver *Autobiography* from her Book of Remembrance scrapbook.

was reached that the two of them would go to Chicago so that Duncan could pursue his interest in art at the Chicago Academy of Fine Art.

In a 1929 news clipping describing the farewell event honoring Margaret and Duncan we read the following:

> *Barnwell Teachers to Study in Chicago*
>
> *June 24*
>
> *Although today is the longest day of the year, it was not long enough to supply light for the farewell party held for Mr. and Mrs. Weaver, who left Monday for Chicago, where studies will shortly commence for them at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts. The first part of the party was conducted on the school ground lawns with lively games and activities.*
>
> *After ice cream and cookies were served the large crowd present from Taber, Jamison, as well as Barnwell, all were directed to the amusement hall where a short but appropriate program was conducted, and the gift from the students and district, an extra large leather suitcase, was presented to the two departing teachers. Dancing was enjoyed for the closing hour of the evening's entertainment. The large crowd present was only one way that the district showed to Principal Weaver and his wife the high esteem in which they are held. Their efforts in Barnwell have been appreciated, and best wishes go with them in their new field of study.*

In a farewell letter written by W. J. Anderson we read:

> *Sister Weaver was born 30 years ago the 20th of next month. And for upwards of twenty years went by the name of Maggie. In her youth she was very shy. We are told she spent the major part of her first day at school sitting on a stairway. But finally the teacher persuaded her to enter the school room. This shy trait has to this day been entirely outgrown. The outstanding character of Sister Weaver is promptness in all things, except at Sunday School. Having to come on foot is responsible for it. She always enjoys a healthy joke, but seldom could get away with it if tried at other's expense. She once made a red pepper sandwich for a friend, expecting a good laugh, but instead the pepper was spit into Margaret's eye, and the one who laughed last, laughed best. Her profession [sic] as a school teacher was completed in 1917 and a good part of the time since then she has taught in Barnwell, and all the children have learned to love and respect her. Most of her net savings the last few years was spent in service for humanity, as she practically paid her own way, while filling a mission in the eastern states, returning with an honorable release. She taught school in Raymond one year and then on she has been in Barnwell teaching school, and besides has kept Mr. Weaver as a steady boarder, and has also done his washing and assisted him in being prepared for his schoolwork. In other words, Sister Weaver has been*

*a real Helpmate. There are five things she dislikes: milk, cooked mush, washing dishes, a smoky stove and rain during weekends. But she likes radishes, bananas, salted peanuts, an early bedtime and religious arguments. We all join in wishing her success in her new venture in the study of Art, and we all hope that she and Brother Weaver will be able to reproduce the Artists themselves, for that is the Highest Art revealed to man.*[2]

Margaret and Duncan arrived in Chicago via the Great Northern Railway in June of 1929 totally unaware, of course, that the Crash of '29 and the Great Depression were just around the corner and would alter forever the course of their lives.

First, however, it is necessary to go back to the time when these two individuals made their earliest appearances in life. Margaret Holmes was born July 20th 1898 in North Ogden, Weber County, Utah, the daughter of Henry John Holmes and Sarah Jane Godfrey. Henry Duncan Weaver was born May 30th 1896 in Bennington, Bear Lake County, Idaho, the son of Riley Weaver and Margaret Duncan. In the next two chapters their beginnings will be explored.

* * *

[2] Jane Weaver Toronto, *The Weavers,* scrapbook 1985.

# Duncan's Background

Clement Weaver, our first ancestor to immigrate to America, came to New England from Glastonbury, Somersetshire, England about 1635 according to Lucius E. Weaver in his history of the Weaver family.[1] His ancestry dates back to the year 400 A.D. through the royal line of the Sovereign Princes of Wales. A direct descendant, Edward Weaver, served in the Revolutionary War as an Ensign in Captain Amos Hutchin's Company, Colonel Lewis DuBois' New York Regiment, according to U. S. Pension Records. Another Edward Weaver, a grandson of our Revolutionary War Edward was born August 15th 1799 and married Martha Raymer about 1822.

At least three of Edward and Martha Weaver's children were born in New York. Franklin Weaver, Duncan's grandfather, was born May 29, 1828 in Scio, New York. The Edward Weaver family became some of the earliest converts to the newly established Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The family followed the Church's migration westward but both of Franklin's parents succumbed to the hardships of frontier life before they could see their family established in the Salt Lake Valley. Edward contracted pneumonia while working on the Nauvoo, Illinois temple and died in 1842. Martha died about 1847 in Council Bluffs, Iowa, called Winter Quarters, where thousands, fleeing the persecution in Illinois and elsewhere, encamped temporarily preparing for the westward trek to the Rocky Mountains. Martha was one of over six thousand Mormon convert pioneers who would "die before our journey's through."[2]

However, before Martha passed on, she bade farewell to two of her sons, Miles and Franklin, who had joined the Mormon Battalion. Of course, she did not know at that time that she would never see them again in this life. Franklin was not yet eighteen, and his mother "laughed that his age would not be questioned because of the length of his manly beard."[3] She made him promise to "guard and support" his older brother Miles whose health was not robust.[4]

This group of men was called by Brigham Young to serve the nation from which they so recently had been expelled because of their religious beliefs and political solidarity. Yet the Mormon leader volunteered to provide a battalion of five

---

[1] Lucius E. Weaver, *History and Genealogy of a Branch of the Weaver Family*, Rochester, NY, 1928 Reprint: University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI.

[2] "Come, Come Ye Saints," Hymns of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Deseret Book Co., Salt Lake City, Utah 1985.

[3] Mary D. Weaver, & Barbara Weaver, *Horace and Adelaide Wright Weaver 1st Annual Family Reunion* 1958, Vol. 1.

[4] Ellen C. Weaver Shaeffer, *Franklin Weaver, a Timeline 1828-1884*, Clovis, NM, 1996; Dec. 2009, http://www.OurFamilyBiographies.com

hundred men to go and fight in the war with Mexico. He promised these volunteers that if they would willingly serve the United States that not a hair of their heads would be harmed through battle. This prophecy was literally fulfilled, and the Weaver brothers arrived safely in the Salt Lake Valley after having marched on foot from Winter Quarters, Iowa, through Santa Fe, on to California and back again to the Great Basin.[5] It remains the longest infantry march in the history of the United States military.

The two Weaver boys, Miles and Franklin, after at last arriving in Salt Lake City, rode out to meet the wagon train which was still on the trail only to discover that their mother had passed away. However, Sarah Clark, the sweetheart of Miles, was waiting faithfully for him. Sarah had bade farewell to him, to his brother Franklin as well as two of her own brothers, Joseph and Riley Clark. Her granddaughter described Sarah's sentiments of that event: "Her beautiful grey eyes would always grow misty when she rehearsed the story" of their departure.[6]

Sarah Clark was born January 27th 1831 in Clinton, Ohio, the daughter of Samuel Clark and Rebecca Garner Clark. Lucille Weaver Larson, a granddaughter, wrote about Sarah Clark:

> *Her folks came from the "deep" south [North Carolina] and were related to a family called Moons and were plantation owners. I used to imagine it would be wonderful to have little "darkies" to help me scrub board floors. I do know that my dad had a certain drawl that he learned from his mother … she was one of the early Utah people who ate sego lilies … before she came west she wore size three shoes. After she got to Utah her feet were size six and sometimes seven. In that day big feet were a disgrace.*[7]

Sarah also drove a yoke of oxen all the way across the plains, her mother Rebecca riding with her, and her father driving another team. They also herded several cows en route. The milk would be carried in a stone jar; by evening there would be a lump of butter in the jar, as the roads were rough and the motion of the wagon churned the butter. When they came to the Platt River they caulked their wagon boxes and floated them across. The animals swam and the people and their belongings were ferried across.

This family escaped a lot of the hardships that so many of the Saints endured, and they had adequate supplies of food and clothing, as Samuel was a good manager and provider. They were part of the Heber C. Kimball Company of pioneers. Sarah Clark and Miles Weaver were married Christmas Eve, December 24th 1848 in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City.

In March of 1849 they were "called," along with Franklin Weaver and his family as well as a number of others to be the first colonizers Provo, Utah. There

---

[5] Sarah Harris Mickelson, *Life Sketch of Franklin Weaver*, mss.

[6] Sarah Harris Mickelson, *Life Sketch of Sarah Clark Weaver*, mss.

[7] Lucille Weaver Larson, correspondence.

Miles and Franklin managed the Church's cattle operation. President Brigham Young was very fond of the Weaver boys and kept them in his employ. They were also known for befriending the Indians.

Not long before his death, Miles Weaver took a polygamous wife, Sarah Elizabeth Holmes. Miles died in 1854 "and at his request his brother Franklin married his two widows." In the Mormon social experiment known as polygamy it was considered a duty for the brother of the deceased to marry his widow or widows according to the Old Testament tradition "to raise up seed unto his brother." For a fuller treatment of the life of Franklin and his family see *Franklin Weaver – A Timeline 1828-1884* by Ellen Claire Weaver Shaeffer, 1996.

In 1859 Franklin was assigned to pioneer Cache Valley in northern Utah. In the town of Millville, where he settled, the first school was held in his home. Here he and his family lived for many years while he continued to manage the Church's cattle. "Franklin was a man who wanted unity and love in his family, and he never allowed his children to use the term 'my half-brother or my half-sister.' The 21 of them were all brothers and sisters and love was mutual with all. Each family had their own apartment, but all worked together."[8] When an article of clothing was needed for the men and boys, Rachel made it. Sarah Clark made the clothes for the females of the family. She also made gloves from buckskin they traded with the Indians. Sarah Elizabeth knit all the stockings and mittens for everyone.

One of the stories his descendants tell about Franklin Weaver is an incident that supposedly took place in Brigham Young's office. Evidently Franklin had loaned the Church a wagon and a team of horses which had been lost in one of the missions to rescue pioneers stranded by blizzards out on the plains. Franklin had come to the Prophet to inquire about the wagon and team and was told that there was little hope of recovering them. This naturally displeased Franklin, and according to the story, Brigham Young reacted by saying "Well now, Brother Weaver, I suppose you're going to apostatize!" At this Franklin retorted, "I'll see you in hell first, Brigham, before I'll apostatize!" This story has always delighted Franklin's descendants as much for his spunk as for his loyalty to the Church.[9]

Riley Weaver, son of Franklin Weaver and Sarah Clark Weaver was born November 24th 1868 in Millville, Cache County, Utah. His father died in 1884 when he was 16, but the 1880 census of Idaho Territory shows Riley living with his "single" mother and two siblings. Franklin had gone to work for the railroad to avoid those who were persecuting polygamists.

Riley grew up with a love of music. He sang together with Horace Weaver, Riley Clark, James Dunn and Will Cousins in minstrel shows, programs and church events.[10]

Riley Weaver fell in love with Maggie Duncan and at the age of 26 he married her in 1895 in Logan, Utah. She was just 17 years old. "Maggie Duncan gazed highly

---

[8] Mickelson, ...*Sarah*...

[9] Shaeffer, *Franklin Weaver, a Timeline*... p. 99

[10] Mallene W. Stolworthy, *Progenitors of Mallene Weaver Stolworthy.* Also see photos.

and looked with favor on our Riley," as F. C. Cummings' poem goes, noting the difference in their heights, since Maggie was very short and Riley was very tall.[11]

Margaret "Maggie" Duncan was the daughter of Moroni Duncan and Jane O. Wardrop Duncan. She was born July 13, 1878 in Wellsville, Cache County, Utah. Her father, Moroni Duncan, the son of Alexander Wilson Duncan and Jane Pitcon Duncan, was born December 6th 1850 in Glasgow, Scotland. Alexander Duncan was a talented poet, his children were writers and singers as well.

Moroni was apprenticed as a bootmaker, the trade of his father, but when he and his father came to Utah in 1866 he worked at a number of other jobs as well. "He also took courses through the early University of Utah whenever he could."[12] He married Jane Owens Wardrop in 1875. They were the parents of six children, the oldest of whom was Margaret Duncan, who later became the mother of Duncan Weaver, the subject of our history.

Moroni and Jane lived in Rock Springs, Wyoming, where Moroni was employed by the Rock Springs newspaper. He was lost in a spring blizzard in 1894 and his body was not found for some time afterward. A full account of this tragedy is found in his biography.[13]

Maggie was 15 at the time of her father's death. Jane, Moroni's widow later married Jim Collett, a widower with 5 children. Jane and Jim had four more children, one of whom, Mariette Collett Nilsson, wrote her own life story, giving many glimpses into the lives of this family.[14]

After the wedding of Maggie and Riley Weaver, the couple settled in Bennington, Bear lake County, Idaho. To this union were born seven children. Henry Duncan Weaver was their eldest child, born May 30th 1896 in Bennington. He was a towheaded baby with a mass of blonde ringlets. One day when he was about two years old a bumblebee settled in a curl near his ear. Every time he would move, it would buzz, then he'd scream. His mother couldn't get rid of the bee without cutting off the curl. So they all had to go!

Duncan said that one of his earliest memories was of his Grandma and Grandpa Collett bringing in a huge wagon load of fruit and they let Duncan have all he wanted. He never forgot the wonderful sight and smell of the ripe fruit. This doesn't seem very impressive to those of us who are accustomed to having a great variety of fresh fruit available year-round at any local market. But for a young boy growing up on the prairies where fruit was not available except for perhaps an orange or an apple at Christmas, it was truly a memorable occasion.

In a letter from Estella Weaver, wife of cousin Raeo Weaver we read: "We met your father and mother at a Logan reunion. Raeo says he used to stand on his head in

---

[11] F. C. Cummings, *Weaver Family History*, mss.

[12] Margaret Holmes Weaver, notes.

[13] Dec. 2009, http:// www.OurFamilyBiographies.com

[14] Ibid.

the corner with Duncan, and see who could stay the longest. He admired your father's beautiful curly hair."[15]

Duncan's mother, Maggie, said that he was quite precocious and that his artistic talents were evident early. His sister, Lucille, remembered "Mother and Dad dressing Duncan up in a cute little minstrel suit and he sang and danced while Dad played the guitar."[16] Later he was to pursue his talents on the violin. He even taught himself to play the cello when he was past age fifty.

It was in an atmosphere of homesteading and pioneering that Riley and Maggie Weaver packed up their belongings, piled them into a covered wagon, and along with their two little ones—Duncan and Lucille—left Bennington and headed for Canada. Quite a number of others went with them. In an early photo of pioneering days the Shaffer (not Shaeffer) family is evident. Helen Weaver Shaffer was Riley's sister.

The 1902 journey from Idaho to Alberta took about five weeks by covered wagon. Though the railroads had been around for quite some time, and travel by covered wagon was becoming less common, the Weaver party used covered wagons for this journey. They went in the summertime and had a wonderful time along the way, making music and dancing in the evenings. The simplicity and speed of present day travel tends to make a trip like that seem terribly hard, and years later when Maggie was asked by granddaughter Ellen Claire if the trip had been a difficult ordeal, she replied, "Oh, no. It was FUN!"

But all was not fun when they arrived in Canada. Lucille wrote: "We got to Magrath July 27th 1902 but had to stay in Cardston, Alberta, a few days because the Belly River was too high to ford. The Milk River was high too, and while fording it little Duncan got wet and by the time he got to Magrath he had a huge swelling on his jaw, and his jaw was locked tight. He was taken to Lethbridge to the Gault Hospital, where it was lanced."[17]

The family's first winter was spent in a tent, and the first blizzard came in September! Riley established his family as best he could with scant means available. Mostly he farmed and hired himself out to other farmers. He and Jim Collett engaged in a haying business for some time.

The Weavers moved several times. One move was to Sterling,[18] Alberta to "prove up" which meant fulfilling the terms of a homesteading agreement entered into with the Canadian government. The law required three years of continuous residence. The Weavers completed their three years then sold the homestead. At one time Duncan, age 12, stayed on the place a long time alone, taking the responsibility as the oldest son, while his parents were away working. His wife always attributed his

---

[15] Shaeffer, correspondence.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Larson, correspondence.

[18] "Canadian Village Becoming Historic Visitor Attraction," Church News, Nov. 9, 1996.

dislike of potatoes to that lonesome time when he ran out of everything to eat but potatoes. But Duncan never spoke of it.

In grade school Duncan won favor for his teacher when the dreaded Inspector came. "She'd call on Duncan to sing. He'd throw back his head, raise his voice and sing *For I'm a Mormon Boy*.[19]

After Duncan learned to play the violin Riley and his sons formed a musical group that would play for town and country dances. Riley would play the guitar, Duncan the fiddle, and one or two of the younger boys on drums.

Duncan attended a teachers' college known as Normal School at Regina, Saskatchewan, arriving home with a new typewriter, as well as a light case of diphtheria. While he was recuperating he took a typing course. Dora Meldrum Thomson wrote about Duncan's typewriter: "I knew your dad very well, ever since I was a child. I can remember going to their farm home near Raymond. Duncan had a typewriter and I typed a letter, my first, on it without his knowledge. How I treasured that letter, but I bet he could have killed me!"[20]

Donald Nilsson, a cousin, also wrote about the time when his family lived near the Weavers in Raymond:

> *For a number of years when Allan and Leta [Weaver] were going to school, all of the children in our area, including them, traveled to school in a horse-drawn van, one with iron wheels. It was enclosed and even the driver could ride inside during cold weather. The lines to the horses passed through a small hole in the front wall of the van.*
>
> *Riley Weaver's farm was less than a mile from our land. We pass it several times every time we go to Canada. Their old farmhouse still stands (1981) but it sets up in the field some distance. Until a few years ago it was still in quite good shape, but hadn't been lived in for quite a while. When I was young Riley worked with the scouts. He was surely a special man. His generation lived through some difficult times.*[21]

Riley became a naturalized Canadian citizen November 24th 1905 in Judicial court, Lethbridge, Northwest Territories.

Duncan's brother, Jim Weaver (Sidney James Weaver), youngest child of Riley and Maggie Weaver wrote in a letter to E. C. Shaeffer, May 1982:

> *Mother and Dad emigrated from Utah to Canada in 190[2] by covered wagon. Mother kept a daily diary of the trip and the diary was destroyed by mice in the back room at home. What a gem that would have been!*
>
> *Duncan went into the Navy and I was born while he was away and he was a stranger to me when he came back. After I started school he was the principal…and I received a lot of flack over that…Anyway I always held him*

---

[19] Margaret Holmes Weaver, *Autobiography* from her Book of Remembrance.

[20] Shaeffer, correspondence.

[21] Donald Nilsson, *The Letters of Donald Nilsson*, edited by E. C. Shaeffer, 1991.

*in awe. He was my talented brother and I was always glad to be known as Duncan's kid brother. And I have always wished I had curly hair like his.*

*I can't remember my father very well…I don't ever remember being disciplined by him in any way, or by Mother either for that matter. I guess I grew up spoiled rotten… My brother Frank would tease me till I got angry and started shouting and screaming and then we would both get a talking-to.*

*As far back as I can remember I had a cow to milk and chickens to feed and numerous chores around the farm. We always had a big garden to hoe and potatoes to dig in the fall. And it seems there was a huge pile of big yellow pumpkins in our living room for a few days till they were disposed of in some way… We always had strawberries and raspberries to eat. And vegetables and beef and pork and eggs and chicken. And my mother's delicious gravy over her good bread.*

When reading about the dust bowl days of the American plains one ordinarily doesn't think of it in terms of how widespread it was. But Canada experienced the same phenomenon. The west Texas and New Mexico dust storms with which many are so well acquainted make Jim's recollections very vivid:

*Dirt, dirt, dirt. I just don't mean dust, I mean dirt. I wasn't tall enough to get my head up out of the dirt that was blowing. Everybody's topsoil was moving in the wind along with big round tumbleweeds or Russian thistles. These thistles would roll in the wind till they lodged against a fence or something and there the dirt would fill in around them and pile up like snow till the fence was covered. But the dirt was in our houses too, in the cupboards, in the dishes, all over the bed at night, thick on the window sills and blown in around the doors. There was no keeping it out. You shook everything before you put it on. Some dust storms almost blotted out the sun. There was a prevailing westerly wind that blew almost continuously, summer and winter. And it would blow snow in the winter.*

Martha A. Godfrey Mecham wrote the following poem at her home in Superior, Wyoming, August 1926:

*The wind is blowing up the dust*
*I'm sure it beats the devil.*
*It blows up hill and down again*
*As fast as on the level.*
*It fills our houses full of dust.*
*It surely raises Cain.*
*It blows down the canyon*
*Then it blows it back again.*
*I think I'll leave the blooming place*
*Go to a land of flowers and trees*
*Where everything is lovely*
*And the girls show their knees.*

Jim Weaver continued: "I remember my father Riley Weaver as a gentle man, something of a dreamer maybe. Dad was a large raw-boned man—not beefy but big framed. He played a guitar and sang and loved to entertain and be with people. I am told he and mother sang duets together. As he played his guitar the little finger on his

right hand, his strumming hand, rested on the guitar and had almost worn his guitar through."

Riley and Maggie Weaver saw that their children had excellent training in the home, and were given acting and music lessons. Duncan was sent on the train every Saturday from Stirling to Lethbridge for violin lessons. They had few of the world's goods, but they gave all they could for their children's advancement.

Riley also loved to hunt and fish. Jim wrote:

> *I think he would have left his team right in the field if someone had come along and said, "Let's go fishing!" He usually went deer hunting every fall. He tanned the hides and we used the hides for shoe laces and patching harnesses and other things. I don't know what kind of a rifle Dad had, but apparently it used a heavy bullet—not the high velocity of present day shell. I remember his telling us after the gun was fired you could set the gun down almost before the bullet struck.*

"Father was right-handed most of the time," continued Jim. "If his right got tired he could switch to his left and not make a bit of difference. If he became angry he was definitely left-handed. I was only twelve when he died so I didn't get to really know him."

Riley Weaver was the first District Scout Commissioner in Alberta and was instrumental in promoting the Boy Scout movement in Canada. His work in connection with scouting has long been remembered and was mentioned in the February 27th 1982 edition of the Lethbridge Herald's tribute to the 75th anniversary of Scouting.

"I often think back to the time when Riley was working with the scouts… he had a lot of talent when it came to supervising young boys," wrote Donald Nilsson.[22]

Daniel Weaver Shaeffer, the first grandson of Duncan Weaver to earn his Eagle Scout award, was given Riley Weaver's scout pin in January 1986 in Clovis, New Mexico.

In a 1981 letter Dora Meldrum Thomson wrote:

> *I was a small girl when Uncle Riley died but I can remember going to his funeral. When we came out of the church after the services there was two rows of men and boys, one on each side of the walk and we passed through it. I believe it was scout troops, honoring him. I think this [Scouting] was a great thing with him.*

Maggie Weaver, enjoyed the young people too. Martha Holmes Mitchell said of her: "Your Grandma Weaver was really a good sport. A bunch of us kids would show up at her house at night after Mutual or something, and she'd be in bed. But she'd get up and make doughnuts!"[23]

---

[22] Nilsson, 8.

[23] Martha Holmes Mitchell, *Interview*, January 1982.

"Our lives seemed very uneventful," wrote Jim. Continuing, he said,

> *We visited back and forth with our neighbors and they with us. I remember very vividly the first time I ever heard a radio. Dad took me over to a neighbor's farm where there was a radio. There were a lot of squeaks and squawks and noise and suddenly a voice came out of the box and I took off running. They really teased me about that.*
>
> *Water was a problem. We caught rain water from the roof, and it didn't rain very often that we had a lot of water. Most of the water we hauled in barrels which we filled at Lucille's home in Raymond. Every time someone went to town a small keg of water was brought back. For livestock we built ponds and filled them with irrigation water.*
>
> *When Dad died in 1929 we sold the farm and animals and equipment and moved into Raymond. Frank and I were the only children left and we had to work to keep things open. I was a printers 'devil' or apprentice at the local print shop and earned a few cents a week. Frank being a bit older could earn more than I. He learned guitar and went into music and spent his life in music, traveling with dance bands as a guitarist, bass fiddle man and vocalist a lot of the time. I stayed with the printing game and am still in it at the Seattle Times. Mother worked as a seamstress and earned barely enough to keep us alive. We had a cow and chickens and a garden and mother looked after her mother, Grandma Collett (Jane Owens Wardrop Duncan Collett). Shortly after I was married, Mother married Brian Meldrum. He was a fine man. Your daddy, [Duncan Weaver] spoke at his funeral.*

"It has been a lot of years since all this took place," wrote Donald Nilsson.

> *Each time we pass the old Weaver farm and look at the home you can't help but think of the history that was part of what still remains. The buildings were about half a mile up in the field but several years ago one of my boys and myself called there. They [the buildings] are empty now but the old farm home was still in quite good condition. I don't know why such things bring a feeling of sadness but we often look back and wish we had known how to help such special people in their struggle to survive. Those were hard times in many ways but I think neighbors meant much more to each other, maybe they needed each other more then. We often look back to the year we were married in 1930. $1.50 per day was considered a good wage, but then anything in cans was only ten cents, a loaf of bread was the same. There weren't many cars then, at least every one didn't own one, so you weren't up to your neck in car payments. In 1930 wheat was only twenty-five cents a bushel and no one wanted to buy it![24]*

An interesting anecdote came to the Nilssons in a letter from friends in Raymond:

> *I also remember Brother and Sister Weaver. They were very fine people. Do you remember the first year of the sugar-factory here? It was a very rainy fall and there was great difficulty harvesting the beets. It was the*

[24] Nilsson, Letters

*year of 1925. They let high school out to top beets for a couple of weeks. Melba West and I went out to Weavers' farm to work. I don't know how much topping we did, but it was an experience. We stayed there the full time, night and day, and I certainly learned to think a great deal of the Weavers. I was always happy to see Sister Weaver many years later. I remember Brother Weaver telling me he was related to the Clarks in Stirling.*

*The rain continued that fall. Melba and I used to tie gunny sacks around our shoes or overshoes to wade in the mud. Sister Weaver cooked us good meals. It was the first time I ever tasted chocolate pie.*

More from the Nilsson letters:

*I don't know if there really was good old days but likely each generation had some part in their life that was special … material things don't have much importance without your health or when you end up alone. It seems like we really don't own anything, merely have custody of it for a season … We were surprised to hear some of the Senators saying it was a big mistake putting the small farmer out of business. I don't think there is any way they could start up again. Buildings where small farms were operating have nearly all been destroyed, in most cases, nothing to indicate where buildings had stood, even the trees have been uprooted.*

*When I was young it seemed natural to expect some of the family would stay with the farm. There are very few places that any of the original family still operate. I think I told you that on the mile of road where the Weaver farm was, there were four sets of farm buildings where families grew up… Those were hard years—not much money and some dry years when almost nothing was raised. As young kids growing up I don't think we realized it was Hard Times, we had never known anything else. I'm sure buying land at just a few dollars per acre was as difficult as it is in present times paying several hundred dollars per acre. During our farming life irrigation water was controlled by ditches, so wasn't too expensive. Now it is done with sprinkler systems which require large and expensive pumping equipment. The man that owns the Weaver farm now said the irrigation cost more than the land… our family often wishes that we still had the farm. It was a good life, but… the good old days of our time appear quite different to the younger generations.*

Duncan Weaver, like his father Riley, was interested in youth activities. "Both Riley and your father [Duncan] were Scout Masters when I was young. On one occasion your father took the scout troop to spend a week at Waterton Park. I… remember that it rained most of the time we were there. The tent leaked and as a result our bedding was continually wet," wrote Donald Nilsson.

He continues: "When I was young and the Church sponsored the M.I.A. track meets, Allen Weaver [Duncan's brother] participated in some of the events and your father [Duncan] spent a lot of time developing the talents of the young people. I remember that he was very talented at painting." Donald also recalled that some of Duncan's paintings were hung in the school rooms at Raymond.

Robert D. Nilsson, another cousin, wrote:

> *It is likely that the Weavers lived in Stirling for a few years after coming to Canada, as his cousins Sam and Riley Clark settled there. I think there may have been more Clarks but I don't remember the names. I do remember that Uncle Rile and his family and also the Clarks were very musical and had very fine voices… Uncle Rile and Duncan were very strong in the early days of Scouting and Uncle Rile was pretty well head of the Scouts in southern Alberta until his death. He was also a keen hunter and spent a while each fall hunting deer, etc. I remember him as always having a story or song or step dance to entertain us kids. Family musicals were a way of life with guitars, banjos, violins, piano and voice. They did enjoy music!*

After attending Normal School, Duncan began teaching in Stirling, Alberta. He also had taught at Diamond City, Alberta. There he lived with Dr. Inkrote, whom he admired and enjoyed very much. He like to recall an amusing incident that took place at that time.

On his route to school each day there was a pesky dog that would bark at him, then grab his pant leg. Dr. Inkrote came up with an idea that would solve the problem. He suggested carrying a syringe filled with ammonia water. Duncan tried it and it worked. Just one squirt of the ammonia was enough to keep that dog away from him from that day forward.

Duncan also loved recounting the time he overheard the older boys in his class planning a Halloween prank for the younger kids. "Meet us at the cemetery tonight," they said. Then Duncan and Doc decided on a prank of their own. They got some sheets and were already in hiding at the cemetery before the appointed hour of the planned rendezvous. They frightened the big kids with their ghost-like sounds and motions sending them running back to town and meeting the younger kids on their way out to the cemetery. They all ran back to town together. Duncan said that years later he heard some of those former students, then grown men, discuss the incident and solemnly swear to having seen ghosts on Cemetery Hill. He kept the secret!

Another practical joke took place at the school when he was principal. Duncan had become discouraged in trying to create enthusiasm for the mandatory fire drills, and was feeling frustrated in gaining the cooperation of the teachers in conducting them. So one day Duncan got some old rags, lighted them and when they were good and smoky, placed them in the air duct that served the classrooms. Black smoke came billowing out in each room. The teachers beat the kids in getting out of the school—and the fire drill was conducted in all sincerity!

Other incidents Duncan enjoyed recalling had to do with the trips into Glacier National Park. This was before there were any roads built for park access. Because the park is a national boundary between the U. S. and Canada, it was frequently under surveillance by the Canadian Mounted police, as well as by U. S. Customs. On one occasion a pack trip into Glacier National Park was organized for the scouts and Duncan led the group with horses and provisions into the park. "Did you see the smugglers?" was the question asked upon their return. Reports had been circulated that the Mounties had spotted what were probably smugglers, but had been unable to get them. Duncan and his Boy Scouts laughed, "I bet it was just us they saw!"

On another occasion when Duncan and his father Riley were hunting deer at Waterton Park, they got up one morning and saw a huge grizzly bear about thirty yards from the tent. It reared up and just stood there staring at them. "Don't move," said Riley. Then in slow motion he picked up his gun and aimed it at the bear. He held the position silently for what seemed like a long time. The bear finally came down on all fours and began eating berries, and eventually wandered off, much to the relief of Duncan and Riley. One small rifle was no defense against such an animal—only intelligence and a cool head could do it.

Because of a need for military personnel at the outbreak of World War I, Duncan enlisted in the Royal Canadian naval Volunteer Reserve on November 26th 1917. He was twenty-one years old. Stationed at Esquimalt, near Victoria, British Columbia, he enjoyed many opportunities to see the beautiful Canadian coastline. He had a friend named Billy who had a sailboat, and they sailed all around the area on off-duty days.[25]

Duncan's teaching experience prepared him for his duties of training gun crews. He was also in charge of one of the crews. Later he was assigned to sea duty. Shortly before shipping out, he was required to go to Vancouver for some last minute supplies, but he and several members of his gun crew were delayed in getting back to the ship. As their ferry steamed into Victoria, they could see their ship, the *H.M.S. Galliano* steaming out of port at Esquimalt for Arctic patrol. Their disappointment was changed to grief when they learned that their ship went down in a storm three hundred miles off shore with all hands on board! Duncan was always grateful for what he felt was divine intervention in sparing his life on this occasion.

During the time he was stationed at Esquimalt he continued his violin studies. He also learned to wrestle and became expert in his weight and class. He was discharged from the navy December 24th 1918 and his papers showed the notation "V.G." which indicated Victory over Germany.[26]

Upon his return to Raymond, Duncan began teaching school again. He was also active in church work, drama, music, art and scouting. "He was gifted—and always continued to develop his talents and study."[27]

Don Nilsson, who was one of his pupils at school wrote:

> *He [Duncan] had served in the navy during the first World War and began teaching in the school that included students through grade eight. For a year or two students of grade seven and eight were issued army uniforms and rifles and Duncan trained them at least one day a week in army maneuvers. I remember we were quite frightened at the prospect of having to go to war. One afternoon each week the girls went to the High School to learn cooking and sewing. During this period Duncan gave the boys special instructions on hygiene and good habits.*

---

[25] Gary H Weaver, *Recollections*, audiotape 1987.

[26] Public Archives of Canada

[27] Margaret Holmes, Autobiography...

*After the war Duncan had brought home the metal part of a large shell which he kept on his desk at the school. I imagine it would have weighed at least thirty pounds. He could hold it at arms length straight out from the body. The larger students were always competing with one another in an effort to duplicate what your father was able to do with ease.*

There were several kids in the school that were bigger than Duncan was. His son, Gary Weaver told the following:

*Dad knew that he might have a problem with some of these big strong farm boys, so he decided to organize a wrestling club. At the first recess he asked, "How many of you guys would like to join a wrestling club? We could have our own wrestling club right here." The hands of all the older fellows went up as they thought with glee, "Oh, boy! This might be a lot of fun." They asked "Who is going to be our instructor?" Duncan replied, "Well, I'll be your instructor." They didn't know it, but Dad had been a real top-notch wrestler and boxer in the military. He had really learned those sports well and had been local champion on the base out there in his weight class—both in wrestling and in boxing. And I guess, most especially in wrestling. Dad stood 5'8" tall and weighed about 165 pounds—but it was all muscle and he was quicker than greased lightning. He was a beautiful physical specimen. "Well," he said, "It was kinda funny—all those kids went out for wrestling." Of course they didn't know any holds at all. Dad picked out the biggest guy and explained one or two little things and the match was on! He turned the kid every which way but loose—just bounced him all over the school yard, and then took the next kid and did the same. He did that to about four or five of those bigger boys and do you know—there was absolutely no more classroom problems. And of course it all worked out great, because he did teach them to wrestle, going ahead with the planned club. But it sure was a way to keep things in line.*[28]

At Raymond High School, Duncan and Uncle Snow, N. Lorenzo Mitchell, organized an orchestra:

*In early times in Raymond before the advent of radio and TV it was necessary for us to provide our own entertainment. Many of the young people learned to play an instrument, and spent many hours at each others' homes practicing and playing. N. L. Mitchell was an outstanding musician, and was the teacher of music in our schools. Under his capable direction, a large orchestra was formed, and played at many of the entertainments and social functions in our town. They rendered selections at [Church] conferences and many other public gatherings. Perhaps the highlight of the career of this orchestra was a recital put on by them on April 6th, 1923 at the Opera House. A large crowd attended and the evening's performance was excellent, and is still remembered by many people. N. L. Mitchell was the instructor and conductor, and Duncan Weaver was the Concertmaster and Manager.*[29]

---

[28] Gary Weaver, Recollections...

[29] Hickens, Reed & Evans, Raymopnd Roundup, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, 1967.

Noted also is Duncan's sister, Leta, who played the violin in this orchestra, as well as acting as secretary/treasurer. Duncan and Snow had many good times together, including playing for silent movies at the Opera House. Later they were to marry sisters.

Many of the teachers were not much older than the students in those Canadian schools. Normal School was only an eighteen-month intensive training school that followed grade twelve. It established the standards, or "norms" of teaching. Certified teachers often went right back to the schools they themselves had recently completed. Gary Weaver described the Canadian schools thusly:

> *The Canadian schools were always more organized than the American schools. They pushed harder on their classroom training and on the sports. It was common for the Canadian to come down to the 'States' to go to the universities and nearly all those Canadian kids got a semester or two of college credit for that Canadian High School transcript. When we lived in Canada in the early 1970s and our children had a chance to go to Canadian schools they really got something out of it. The schools were able to get a lot of effort out of the kids, and the kids liked it. They just loved it—they enjoyed the discipline, they enjoyed the training.*

Martha [Holmes Mitchell] talked about the days when she went to high school and Duncan was teaching, which was about 1920 or so:

> *Well, I had an awful case on your dad. Oh, boy! But right then he couldn't see any but Sine (Ersine) Allred. Well, she was his first girlfriend. She took the 12th grade with me, and she sat behind me quite a lot. I used to talk to her and I'd say, "Are you going to marry Duncan Weaver?" And she'd say, "Naw, I'm not going to marry Duncan Weaver."*
>
> *I used to go down to the Weavers place with Allen [Duncan's brother]. Sometimes we'd even go out to the farm in the sleigh, and I would always go with Allen. And do you know why I went? To see your dad. I didn't have a case on Allen, I had a case on your dad! But he wouldn't even look at me.*[30]
>
> *She (Sine Allred) went on a mission the same time as your mother and I don't think she ever came back to Raymond after that. She married a man who had been married before … had a couple or three children and then divorced. I think she's dead now, but I don't know. She just thought that Duncan wasn't up-and-coming enough for her, but she got a worse man by a long ways.*

It was just three years later that Duncan met Margaret Holmes, and began the courtship that would last a lifetime.

* * *

[30] Mitchell, *Interview...*

# Margaret's Background

The first of our Holmes ancestors to immigrate to America was the John and Mary Ann White Holmes family. John Holmes was born October 25th 1801 in Simpson, Buckinghamshire England. Mary Ann was born in 1810 in Bedfordshire. In 1850 John heard the preaching of the Mormon missionaries and he was converted.

From the diary of his son, Henry, we read: "On the last day of December 1850 we bid farewell to our friends and neighbors and set out for the valleys of the mountains."[31] From Liverpool they set sail on the ship *Ellen*, but in a storm the ship was damaged, and so they were detained about two weeks in Cardigan Bay on the coast of Wales. They arrived in New Orleans and took passage on the Mississippi River aboard the *Alex* to St. Louis, then boarded the *Sacramento* as far as Kanesville, Iowa. Here they stayed for two years working to raise funds to travel further. In June of 1853 they joined the Miller/Cooley Company of 70 wagons and 282 immigrants to cross the plains. They arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in mid-September 1853. John Holmes bought a house in the Sixth Ward and young Henry "hired out to obtain means to help support the family." He made charcoal for blacksmiths by burning coal. He and his father also made adobes or sun-baked bricks.

During the long winter evenings Henry studied shorthand, and thereafter kept a journal of his life. The shorthand journals have been transcribed by his granddaughters, Ellen and Thelma Hill. A shortened, edited version is also available.[32]

The journal recounts meeting his future wife: "I casually met with Miss Ellen Anderson and an affinity of our two spirits seemed so apparent that no doubt we had been associated and played on the same playgrounds in the preexistent world of spirits and consequently our intimacy was easily formed and we began to associate together regularly." Of the eight children that were born to him and his wife Ellen (or Helen) Anderson, one was named Milton Keynes after the name of the place in Buckinghamshire, England, where his ancestors had lived for many generations. Their oldest child, Henry John Holmes became the father of our subject, Margaret Holmes Weaver.

Ellen Anderson was born May 28th 1838 in Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Scotland, the daughter of William Anderson and Elizabeth Gourley. Ellen wrote:

> *[My parents]...embraced the gospel in Scotland before the death of the Prophet [Joseph Smith]. I remember very distinctly, though only a little girl, them wearing crepe on their hat for the martyred Prophet... We sailed from Liverpool, England in the ship* Zetland *November 10th 1849 with a company of 250 Saints... and arrived in New Orleans December 24th 1849... When we embarked*

---

[31] *Journals 1856-1871 of Henry Holmes*, Transcribed from the Pitman Shorthand by Thelma Hill, 1966.

[32] See http://www.OurFamilyBiographies.com Dec. 2009

*May 2nd 1850 to go up the Mississippi River for St. Louis, a salute was fired from the cannon just as my brother William was passing and it killed him instantly, and my mother did not see him and was denied the news of his death until sometime afterwards.*

*We lived in St. Louis three years [before] our journey across the plains... I was accorded the arduous experience of walking most of the way across the plains, wading the streams and gathering buffalo chips for fuel; seeing great herds of buffalo that looked almost like moving mountains, and on some occasions impeding our travel and stampeding our animals. At night my sister and I would lay under the wagon, an old carpet serving as a curtain and the howl of the wolves would verily make our hair stand on end as we could look out and see their glaring eyes like balls of fire.*[33]

In her later recollections she mused:

*We no longer are permitted to view the long train of dust covered wagons drawn by their slow plodding but patient oxen. We can't blame the poor emigrants for their diversion to the evening dance around the campfire after the bugle call had called them to evening devotion. But oh, how our hearts swelled with joy and emotion at the first sight of the Valley and the shore of the Inland Sea. 2*

After arriving in the Salt Lake Valley she went to work in the family home of President Brigham Young at the Lion House. "The impressions made on me by the system of family order will always remain with me."

On March 29th 1857 Ellen married Henry Holmes and they settled in North Ogden, Utah Territory. Their first son, Henry John Holmes, who later would become the father of our subject, Margaret, was born February 13th 1858 in Salt Lake City, Utah. From his father's diary of that date: "Doing little today but rejoicing over our firstborn." When the baby was a month old Ellen wrote: "I had to go back to Salt Lake because Henry was called to go into the Echo Canyon War to stop the approach of Johnston's Army. My sister-in-law and I traveled in one wagon with a fourteen year old boy as driver, both of us with young babies."

In a mistaken belief that the Utah Territory was in rebellion to the United States, President Buchanan had sent a military force to ensure U. S. Authority. Brigham Young responded by moving the entire population toward southern Utah in a bold step to express his views that the people would rather abandon their newly won efforts than to endure government oppression. Having made his point in a bloodless war, Brigham Young asked the Saints to return to their homes within sixty days. The army was eventually recalled because of the Civil War. The episode became know throughout the nation as "Buchanan's Blunder."

Henry Holmes returned with his young family to North Ogden and life resumed its normal flow. From the shorthand journals we learn that Henry Holmes

---

[33] Autobiography of Ellen Anderson Holmes; www.OurFamilyBiographies.com Dec. 2009

was involved in a variety of activities in North Ogden such as making adobe bricks, attending the School of the Prophets, becoming bishop of the North Ogden Ward, teaching school, farming, being elected County Commissioner, becoming president of the Canal Company, and answering the call to become a colonizing missionary for the Church in Arizona.

He was later called a second time to go to Arizona but before he could leave he succumbed to the smallpox epidemic and passed away November 1st 1876 and was buried the same day. He was thirty nine years of age. This left Ellen a widow with a young family to rear. She lived till the age of seventy-eight, having been a widow forty years. "She raised her family, kept her home, worked among the sick and dying as well as working in the temple, and kept a firm testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ always. She was a hard worker, had good health and was outspoken. Obedience was always a requirement in her household–even among her grown children."[34] Margaret was a teenager when her grandmother, Ellen, passed away the 9th of January 1916 in North Ogden, Utah.

Margaret's mother, Sarah Jane, was the daughter of Joseph Godfrey and Sarah Ann Price. Joseph Godfrey, son of William Godfrey and Margaret Barrer or Barron was born March 4th 1800 in Radcliffe Parish, Bristol, Somersetshire, England. His mother died when he was four years old. At the age of seven [age 11 by one account] "after his father gave him a terrible whipping, he stowed away aboard a whaling ship, and became the captain's cabin boy.[35]

Joseph Godfrey spent nineteen years working in the whaling trade in all the seas of the world. He also worked on a vessel plying between Liverpool and Canada. Later he served an enlistment term in the English army being stationed on the Canadian frontier. "He came from there to the United States in company with George Coleman, a comrade."[36]

Joseph and George married the Reeves sisters in New Jersey about 1840. The two couples, Joseph Godfrey and his wife Anna Eliza Reeves and George Coleman and his wife Mary Reeves, were converted to Mormonism in 1843 and moved to Nauvoo, Illinois to join with the main body of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They "lived in a house belonging to the prophet Joseph Smith and worked for him." The prophet was martyred in 1844 but the Godfreys stayed in Illinois until 1846 when they were forced to flee the state. Joseph and Anna Eliza buried two children, Albert and Eliza Jane, in Winter Quarters. After two more moves Joseph sold everything to buy a wagon to go to Utah. Joseph and Anna Eliza Godfrey settled in North Ogden, Weber County, Utah, where two more children were born to them. The last child, a daughter, was born just days before the death of Anna Eliza, who passed away the 7th of January 1857.

---

[34] Personal notes of Margaret Holmes Weaver 1960.

[35] John W. Gibson, Sketch of the Life of Joseph Godfrey.

[36] Dec. 2009 <http://www.OurFamilyBiographies.com>

Upon his wife's death, Joseph sought for someone to care for his new baby and other children. Sarah Ann Price worked for the Godfrey family for about a month when Joseph proposed marriage. On the same day, March 7th 1857, Joseph married Sarah Ann as well as his sister-in-law, the widow of George Coleman, Mary Reeves Coleman as polygamous wives.

> *Joseph Godfrey held many responsible positions in the community in which he lived. He was counselor to Bishop Dunn. [He] also had charge of the fast offerings for many years and not one ever suffered for anything that was needful that was in his power to avert. He was continually among the sick and dying and dead, the poor and needy. No one was ever turned away empty. He had great power in administering to the sick and many were healed under his hands*[37].

Early in his life Joseph had survived the dreaded smallpox and thus was immune to the disease. He cared for his daughter, Sarah Jane, when she contracted smallpox, and she always credited her father for saving her life. Joseph Godfrey died December 16th 1880 leaving Sarah Ann with nine children, the eldest aged twenty-one and the youngest just one month.

His widow, Sarah Ann Price, was born February 7th 1842 at Rhymney, Monmouthshire, South Wales, daughter of Jeremiah Price and Jane Morgan. "After becoming Mormons we walked five miles to attend services. Mother was not thoroughly converted to the idea of leaving a good home and plenty to go to Zion. So father sent two of us children ahead," in order to motivate her. At the time Sarah Ann was eleven and her brother, Josiah, was seventeen. She wrote, "We left Liverpool on the ship *Jersey* and spent six weeks and one day at sea. After landing at New Orleans we sailed up the Mississippi to Keokuk, Iowa. We spent nine weeks there. Our time there was spent killing rattlesnakes and swinging on grapevines, etc."[38]

The journey west was with the Joseph Young wagon train. Sarah Ann told about being kidnaped by Indians, after which the men of the wagon train had to barter in order to get her back. She worked at various places after her arrival in Salt Lake City earning a bare subsistence, living for a time on only sego lily roots. Her parents arrived from Wales but were never able to happily accept the sacrifices that pioneer life required. They had gone from plenty to poverty. After the death of Sarah Ann's father, her mother, Jane Morgan Price, left the Church for a number of years, eventually returning to the fold. Despite all her hardships Jane lived to the age of ninety-four.[39]

Sarah Ann's second child, Sarah Jane, would become the mother of our subject, Margaret Holmes Weaver. In her autobiography, *Just Jane*, Sarah Jane Godfrey wrote:

---

[37] Dec. 2009 <http://www.OurFamilyBiographies.com> *Joseph Godfrey*

[38] Dec. 2009 <http://www.OurFamilyBiographies.com> *Sarah Jane Godfrey*

[39] Dec. 2009 <http://www.OurFamilyBiographies.com> *Jeremiah & Jane Morgan Price*

*I was raised till about 12 years of age in the home just south of the North Ogden church house along with the families of the first wife, who died and left four boys, and the second wife with three children and my own mother and family. About this time Mary, the second wife, inherited some money from a bachelor brother in New York and built herself a home about three blocks from the old home... I don't remember any quarreling among the families, but we were glad to have the home to ourselves... It was a story and a half and was made of adobes with a rock foundation. We always had plenty to eat and wear, although many at that time never had enough. My father grew sugar cane and operated a mill to make molasses. He kept bees, so we had a supply of honey. We had apples, too. Mother used to spin yarn and dye it for sox for the family. I remember the old spinning wheel.*

*When Mother would get tired of us kids, Father would load us all into the wagon and take us wherever he would be going... When I was quite young the railroad came through Ogden. Father loaded all of us children in the wagon and took us to see the first train come in... If there was a circus in Ogden, Father would always take us to see the parade and animals. When the train went into Salt Lake City our Sunday School went on it to a Sunday School Jubilee in the Tabernacle. There were big bags of buns under every seat in the building–hundred of them–for the children. There was also a fountain where we could get a drink... in front of the pulpit. This was the first time I saw Brigham Young... the Tabernacle was lighted by gas.*

*The fall after I was fourteen I had the smallpox very badly. Everyone thought I was going to die. I would have... if my father hadn't taken good care of me and stayed by my bedside day and night–although we had a good nurse for days*.[40]

Because Sarah Jane gained immunity to the dreaded disease, she was much sought after to minister to the needs of the sick and dying. She and her father gave home nursing care to many.

"The spring I was twenty I went to cook for railroad workers in Portniff Canyon," wrote Sarah Jane. "It was at this camp I met William Evans." They were married in October 1822. Two children, Joseph and Ethel were born to them before they moved to Almy, Wyoming where William went to work in the coal mine. He was killed in the mine explosion of January 12th 1884. His brother, Joseph, and eleven others were also killed.

With the Union Pacific settlement money Sarah Jane moved back to North Ogden and built a home for herself and her two young children. She was widowed seven years before she remarried. During those years alone, Sarah Jane worked hard to make ends meet. "I washed for the Rex family a whole year for seventy-five cents a day and my dinner. I decided I was away from home too much so thought I'd do sewing... I did just that, and I soon had more [work] than I could do and had a girl to help in busiest times... a good dress brought one dollar fifty cents to three dollars."[41]

---

[40] Dec. 2009 <http://www.OurFamilyBiographies.com> *Sarah Jane Godfrey*

[41] Ibid.

Sarah Jane Godfrey Evans married Henry John Holmes June 8th 1893 in Logan, Utah. They lived in North Ogden where three of their five children were born: Myron, born in 1894, Ellen in 1896 and Margaret, who was born July 20, 1898. Margaret didn't remember much about North Ogden for in May 1900 they "sold the brick house for nine hundred dollars and went to Canada."

Henry had made a trip to investigate southern Alberta before they decided to move. Heber Holmes, Henry's brother, and family went too. "The two of us had two freight cars; horses and stock in one, house goods and machinery in the other," wrote Sarah Jane. "Henry and Heber went with the freight, Sarah and I with the children on the passenger car."

When the families arrived in Alberta they lived at Magrath. "Here we put up our two tents across the 'Pothole.' There were two or three other tents there. We used one tent to live in and the other for our chickens. Feed for our stock was plentiful, as grass was knee-high all over the prairie. That summer life was very pleasant."

Henry soon moved his family to Raymond as opportunities provided by the Knight family opened up. The Knight Investment Company of Payson, Utah had invested in several enterprises in southern Alberta, encouraging others to participate. Henry and Sarah Jane Holmes built a two room home and bought farm land from the proceeds of the sale of Sarah Jane's home in North Ogden. Land at first was purchased at three dollars an acre, and later at twenty dollars. Though many people were still living in tents and dugouts, Henry, motivated and energized, was buying more land and he also built a bigger house.

In Canada two more children were born to the Holmes family: Godfrey was born in 1901 and Martha in 1904. Margaret wrote of her childhood in the town of Raymond, Alberta, Canada:

> *Our home was happy and very busy–no weeds–no debts–no enemies! We had no close neighbors, so usually we worked and played as a family. We were taught, through example, lessons in hard work, thrift, dependability, punctuality and honesty. Father was [determined] that all should have a formal education, a thing that he and Mother had missed. And they saw to it that we always went to Sunday School. Mother had brought her organ from Utah. It had been the first organ in Ogden. Later we had a fine piano. There was always music and singing, and all had good voices. We all took part in saying pieces, home dramatics, and choirs. We had fine times when we all went to Magrath in the Democrat [a horse drawn buggy] twelve miles away for a celebration or to the river berry picking, or to the fair at Lethbridge–exhibits, races, Indians, and fireworks–then eighteen miles home, lying fast asleep back of the seat where our parents sat prodding the horses along."*[42]

Martha Holmes (Mitchell) recalled that her father was a "scientific" farmer, studying all the latest methods of farming and doing his best to implement them. This

[42] Margaret Holmes Weaver, *Autobiography* from her Book of Remembrance.

is evidenced by his Farm Diaries, a series of journals of activities, expenses, crop and weather information about his farm.[43]

She also talked about his interest in politics. Henry John Holmes loved to argue the pros and cons of current issues. "He was a Democrat from the word ***go***," said Martha. "He'd go down the street–when we'd go to town for groceries or something–and he'd get to talking. And when he got going you could hear him a block away. He never campaigned, but he would sure tell people what he thought" Like his mother, Ellen Anderson Holmes, he too, was outspoken.

Martha continued:

> *You know, we lived on the farm and Dad was an early riser. And he made a go of the farm and made money and paid for the farm when everybody around us was in debt. He did that because he'd get out early in the morning and WORK! His neighbors would say to him 'Henry, how is it that you have a good crop, but ours is scrungy?' And he'd reply, 'Well, I've been up and done a day's work before you ever came out to the farm.' They lived in town, and Dad would be out in the field working hours before they got out. Both neighbors on either side of us lost their farms because they couldn't pay for them. And Father's was one of the most prosperous farms around. He always had the best crops because he was a scientific farmer–rotating his crops and so forth. Yes, he knew farming, and knew what the land could take.*[44]

Margaret wrote about a memorable family event that shows that Henry John Holmes was a winner as well as a worker. She entitled it, "Winning the Prize."

> *I lived with my parents, two sisters and three brothers on a farm in southern Alberta, Canada. It was a bare, dry, windy, dreary and lonesome country. But as those early years passed Father and Mother managed through practical hard work and patience to build a nice house and barns, and to get trees in an effort to make this newly pioneered area more pleasant.*
>
> *The real story of how we got the fine home, big barn and another eighty acres is one of family co-operation. First, Father was careful in planting, weeding, protecting the shocks of grain when ready to thresh and then threshing. With all the children at home who were big enough to help doing their part, we were able to acquire some two or three bushes of the especially precious Marquis wheat.*
>
> *Mother and Ellen flailed the bundles. Father worked hard all day, but in the evening after school he organized a selecting project. A standard type of kernel was chosen. A demonstration was given, and all of us set to work with our knitting needles around the kitchen table to select only the very choicest kernels of the Marquis wheat. After several nights of work we had the required one bushel of hard wheat.*

---

[43] Henry John Holmes, *Farm Journals.*

[44] Martha Holmes Mitchell, *Interview,* 1982.

*This bushel, as a sample of the fine wheat produced on our farm, won the prize for the World's Best Bushel of Wheat at the World Dry Farming Congress of 1912. The prize was a Rumley engine. Dad sold it and his crop for a good price, enabling him to build a fine home, barn and implement shed.*

*He was also awarded a large silver cup. Father was able to sell every bushel of wheat he had at four times the market price that year for seed purposes.*

*The satisfaction and the thrills of picture taking, newspaper headlines and general family happiness that came through this little project are never to be forgotten*.[45]

Headlines read:

*RAYMOND MAN WINNER*

*Once more the world wheat championship stays in Canada. The sweepstakes for the best bushel of wheat open to the world was announced by Chairman Fairfield of the jury of awards last night.*

*Henry Holmes of Raymond, was the winner so that the big Rumley oil-pull engine, the biggest prize ever given in any open competition of such a nature, will remain in Southern Alberta. Once more also marquis wheat won the big prize and added another laurel to its already famous reputation as a winning wheat. It was the first attempt of Mr. Holmes to grow marquis and will establish it as the coming grain in Southern Alberta.*[46]

Also:

*HENRY HOLMES AGAIN BRINGS HONOR TO SOUTH*

*Henry Holmes, the world's champion farmer, who won the big $2500 Rumley engine at the Dry Farming congress in 1923, in competition with the world, has again attained honor as a grain grower, for he was awarded the $100 prize at the Calgary Exhibition for the best bushel of wheat at the fair.*

*In doing this Mr. Holmes figures that he is bringing as much honor to his district as to himself. While a great deal depends on the farmer, and his method of seed selection, cultivation and care, the soil and climate is the final test. Mr. Holmes' farm is located a short distance from Raymond. W. H. Fairfield, superintendent of the experimental farm here, was one of the judges making the award. The victorious sample was the Marquis variety, and was grown on 'dry' land.*

But Margaret's father was not the only one in the family to make the news in agriculture. From the Calgary Herald we read:

*A Raymond, Alberta woman, Mrs. Holmes, has been making a success of a half-acre of strawberries, from which she has netted as high as $400 in*

[45] Margaret Holmes Weaver, *Two Experiences of My Life*, term paper.

[46] Undated news clipping from personal file of Margaret Holmes Weaver.

*one season. Strawberries are now raised to a considerable extent in various parts of the province.*[47]

When Martha Holmes Mitchell was interviewed about life on the farm she said, "Aunt Ellen and I were the gals that worked outside. We were out in the hay and out in the garden and your mother, [Margaret] was in the house. She never learned how to milk cows and things like Aunt Ellen and I did." Ellen was two years older than Margaret, and Martha was five years younger. However, Margaret was always known for her ability to work hard at any given task, and with seemingly unlimited energy.

In the midst of this lively, energetic family Margaret grew up into a tall, slender, shy, black-haired beauty. She went to school at the Knight Academy in Raymond. At one time, her older brother, Myron, was one of her teachers. She was so painfully shy that going away to Normal School in Calgary was not easy. Her biggest self-confidence boost came as she accepted a call to become a missionary. "I will always be grateful to Bishop Jim Meeks for promoting my being called on a mission," said Margaret.

Margaret's call to serve in the Eastern States Mission came December 1st 1921. "Mother and I left Raymond January 31st 1922 for Salt Lake," she wrote. "I was set apart by Elder James E. Talmage in the Church offices. On February 1st 1922 I received my endowments in the Salt Lake Temple, and left that evening for Brooklyn, New York. Mother accompanied me as far as Ogden. I was assigned by Brother McCune to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania–later to Scranton."[48]

She wrote that her purpose in going was to "see the world," but that she preached the gospel instead. She loved tracting and street preaching, which was something she thought she could never do. She was released on April 14th 1924 by B. H. Roberts, but she felt "loathe to leave." She said she dreamed constantly of tracting.

One of Margaret's mission experiences was recorded as told to her mother:

> *One summer evening three elders with my companion and myself held a street meeting on Market Street in Philadelphia. Just as the meeting was closing the leading Elder offering a short prayer, a young man stopped near me. Hearing the ending of the prayer, he was impressed, and so spoke to me. He asked who it was and I immediately gave him a tract and told him we were missionaries. He said he could not accept anything from Catholics or Mormons. I asked him why he singled them out, and as for Mormonism, it would be well for him to 'know whereof he spoke' before making such conclusions or taking such an attitude. Changed, he agreed with me. I told him that Mormonism was the gospel of Jesus Christ restored in these days. I made these statements with absolute assurance. He promised to read the tracts. The moment he took the new attitude an assurance came to me–a feeling of certainty that this young man would accept the gospel and live to do a work of honor. After a few months of earnest investigation, study and conflict within his own soul and with his people, he was baptized, the Elders*

[47] Ibid.

[48] Margaret Holmes Weaver, *Missionary Journal 1922-1924*.

*having to break a thin sheet of ice on the water. That was nine years ago. He now holds a responsible position in the Church. This experience is a testimony to me. I had worked many months and had seen no real results. Brother Talmage had set me apart for my mission and among the many blessings which he gave me, he promised me that I should be the means of converting someone.*

Margaret also wrote: "I was given a wonderful blessing–the sick would be healed by my prayers. People will recognize my voice as one of truth and my words will sting and cut to the quick."

Margaret kept a daily journal during her mission. A selection of entries from her diary shows, among other things that mission 'rules' were not as rigid as they have since become. It gives us a glimpse of her life at age twenty-four, 'out in the world' for the first time.

*Feb. 5, 1922 - We are at the mission house today. We arrived in New York at 7:50 and were met by Elder Ashton. Have been to church and heard several sincere testimonies.*

*Feb. 6, 1922 - Have been sightseeing and visiting this afternoon. Have been to Trinity Church, Broadway, Wall Street. We visited Mr. And Mrs. H. F. Allen. We then went to a show, one of New York's most popular ones, "Sally" a musical comedy at the Amsterdam. A wonderful display of costumes and scenes.*

*Feb. 9, 1922 - Went to priesthood meeting at 10:30 and then was present for my first street meeting at 12 o'clock. I enjoyed it. Elder McCune took charge. And old lady came up to me and asked what he was talking about and was he for or against the Mormons. Upon my telling her that we were all Mormons she said, "My dear, I'm afraid you haven't looked into it right." She turned and hurried away.*

*Feb. 16, 1922 - I am tired of streetcars, and long for a McLaughlin or a Ford. I suppose that will wear off.*

*Feb. 17, 1922 - Some holy strains went up when I played "High on the Mountain Top." I have been organist 2 or 3 times. Brother Fleitz gave Sister Johnson & me a box of chocolate buds, "Watch out girlies."*

*Feb. 22, 1922 - Saturday. I was up early and did 2 hours tracting and had good success and enjoyed it immensely. After I came in we prepared for the party. We had all kinds of fun. Our landlady Mrs. Thompson went with us.*

*Mar. 13, 1922 - Sister Johnson & I went to Sister Vache's funeral held at her home. The house was crowded and there was a lot of hard feeling among some of the relatives who are disbelievers... I got a letter from Mother this morning. It is a terrible feeling but when I looked at Sister Vache I though, 'What if that was Mother?'*

*Mar. 17, 1922 - We were out tracting today. I rang at a priests' rectory, no answer, so turned away and on looking back there was a rap at the window, so went*

*back. Out he came in his robes. I explained, and before I got my breath: "Ah! That's perdition," disgustedly. Why didn't he show me the right path then??*

*Mar. 18, 1922 - Dr. Talmage says, "I get the wage I work for."*

*Mar. 21, 1922 - After tracting and attending street meeting... attended Relief Society in the evening. I did an unlucky stroke in turning on the jazz too soon and Sister Schladensky got huffy. I feel perfectly tonight, but last night I cried for the 2nd time.*

*Mar. 23, 1922 - Attended priesthood meeting at Elder Beard's and Bankhead's after which we went down to our corner. On our arrival 2 cops marched up and asked to see permit, and since it was for 1921 he advised us to get another and not hold meeting today. We accepted, so as to be in good standing and got an evening permit for that corner. The elders have been having trouble with Billie Wiggins, a Billie Sunday convert and a Saved Bird, but yesterday when he again took possession of our meeting, or tried to, a cop marched him out to the jug.*

*Apr. 7, 1922 - A man gave me $25 for preaching.*

*Apr. 10, 1922 - About noon a huge basket of fruit arrived from Bro. Fleitz. Was just talking about him and in it came.*

*Apr. 22, 1922 - A fine day and tracted a good deal. Met a man and woman, hard-shelled Methodists. The man was tolerant but the woman came out and passed remarks about the length of my skirt, etc. But I gave them the Word just the same. I just felt like bawling, but was cheered up after talking with a reasonable old man later on. Bought me a new hat. I vow that's the last dud I'll buy for a time!*

*May 25, 1922 - I went to the P. O. then tracted till afternoon time. Then we met Elder Bankhead at the ball park - and saw Philadelphia beat NY 4-2, National League - Saw Babe Ruth make one of his home runs - suffered the smoke.*

*June 21, 1922 - Have spent most of the day visiting investigators and Saints at Moore. Had a good time and met several people. They told us of some non-Mormons giving the Mormon people a splendid name.*

*June 22, 1922 - Attended street meeting and I spoke. It was terrible. Never did talk so rotten since the first attempt.*

*June 27, 1922 - All the old crowd and the new have spent the day at Atlantic City - 17 in all. I got my first full view of the Atlantic Ocean. Got suits and all went bathing for a few hours. Rode on the breakers, played games, etc. Sister Johnson and I had our knees uncovered and up walked a cop and said, "up with the stockings.!" Imagine Mormon missionaries getting arrested for immodesty!*

*July 20, 1922 - My birthday today. Not saying my age. The elders gave us a feed. A gentleman informed Elder Jex that Mormon missionaries did keep their teeth clean more than most damn Christians!*

*July 21, 1922 - Up early, held our study meeting and was out tracting at nine. Got a door banged in my face today for the first time. I told the girl I felt sorry for her in her condition. She said people should leave the Lord alone and enjoy themselves.*

*Aug. 1, 1922 - Visit to Washington, D.C.*

*Sept. 21, 1922 - Palmyra, NY, trip. Slept in the Joseph Smith farm house. 100 years ago the angel came.*

Margaret completed her mission and stayed on at the mission office for a couple of months beyond her release date to help with the work there. She had enjoyed her missionary service very much and always felt that it prepared her for the life that she and Duncan would live in Chicago.

When Margaret returned to Canada from her mission, she again taught school. Also, she was able to help at home during her father's illness. Henry John Holmes passed away December 29, 1924 with pneumonia, following a head injury that resulted in a depression and weakened resistance. He was sixty-five. Margaret was grateful that she could help ease her mother's loneliness, as all the other children had left home by this time.

It was during this period that she first met Duncan Weaver. She'd heard about him, and knew who he was, but could only remember him as a very young child turning cartwheels at a picnic. The time when both of their families were living in Raymond, Margaret was away at school or on her mission when Duncan was there. And when she was there, Duncan was away at school or in the Navy. So they really didn't get acquainted until 1925 when they began their courtship.

Drawing comparisons between the two families –Margaret's and Duncan's– seems inevitable in telling their stories. The Holmes' were ambitions, industrious and thrifty. Their view of life seemed to be somewhat serious and thoughtful. Self-worth among the Holmes family was often determined by accomplishments.

The Weavers' achievements had to be measured by a different kind of yardstick. Their lack of financial means is evidenced by a good many moves. But their lives were rich in other ways. It had been said that the Weavers would kill their last chicken if company came. The Holmes' were more inclined to conserve their resources.

In spite of the differences between the two families, the Weavers and the Holmes had much in common. They each had four generations of membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which encompassed experiences in both pioneering and persecution. The common religious heritage promoted strength, independence and loyalty. Though each family was unique in certain ways, everyone shared those deep Canadian winters!

* * *

# Pioneering in Canada

In 1887 the first group of Latter-day Saints under the direction of Charles O. Card left Cache Valley in northern Utah and headed north. Within ten years of their arrival in Alberta the community of Cardston had a population of over 500.[1]

An irrigation plan boosted the population even more, and aroused the interest of C. A. Magrath, manager of a railway and coal company. He proposed a major irrigation canal be built throughout the area, with the workers to be paid in cash and land for their labors.

With an economic depression in Utah, Church leaders were anxious to look into Magrath's plan. Negotiations between Canada and Salt lake City were finalized in 1989 and within a year Utah Mormons were heading to Canada in large numbers. The next surge of settlement came in 1901 when Jesse Knight was encouraged by Elder John W. Taylor of the Council of the Twelve to establish a sugar beet factory in Canadian Mormon country.

In keeping with the suggestion, Jesse Knight sent his sons Ray and Will to Canada in the spring of 1901. This trip resulted in the Knights buying land and dedicating a spot where the town of Raymond now stands. An influx of people soon came to settle there.[2]

In July of 1901 he entered into a contract with the Canadian Northwest Irrigation Company and the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Co. to purchase an additional 226,000 acres and build a sugar beet factory, to have the same ready for operation to handle the beet crop of 1903 and to keep it in operation for twelve years. Jesse Knight insisted that the town, named after his son Raymond, include in its charter a forfeiture clause to the effect that if liquor or gambling houses or place of ill-fame were established on the premises, the property holders would forfeit title to the land.

The generosity of Mr. Knight was legendary. He built a fence north of the town site so that the settlers' stock and horses could have free pasturage and not stray far away. He gave the job of plowing three thousand acres of sod to the people to help provide them with ready cash. He piped water from a spring two miles away into town at his own expense of $8,000. Sensing the need of a church, he built one and donated it to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in December of 1901.

It was difficult for the Canadian officials to understand Mr. Knight and his motives. On one occasion he was asked by them what impelled him to spend so much money in Alberta. In answer he drew from his pocket the proclamation issued by President Lorenzo Snow of the Mormon church which had so inspired him:

---

[1] D. W. Norton, "Colonists..." *Deseret News Church Section*, Oct. 20, 1985.

[2] Hicken, Reed & Evans, *Raymond Roundup*, Lethbridge, 1967.

*Men and women of wealth, use your riches to give employment to the laborer. Take the idle from the crowded centers of population and place them on untilled areas that await the hand of industry. Unlock your vaults, unloose your purses and embark in enterprises that will give work to the unemployed and relieve the wretchedness that leads to vice and crime around you. Make others happy and you will be happy yourselves.*[3]

Many propositions had been made to Mr. Knight to invest his money, but none appealed to him until he heard about Canada. The project impressed him. He could see the possibility of using his money to magnify his "stewardship," for it was only as a steward, he believed, that wealth came to him.

It was into this atmosphere of pioneering that the Weaver and the Holmes families came to Canada. They had great hopes for the future, but many difficulties had to be dealt with on a day-to-day basis, not the least of which was the Canadian climate.

Aunt Virginia (Virginia Mendenhall Holmes), wife of Godfrey Holmes, wrote about wintertime in Alberta:

*When I was a little girl going to school in Raymond, we had the same cold, clear, frosty mornings as we do now. The iron wheels of the wagons would creak and screech over the snow making as much noise as the big trucks do now getting started. My father would cut gunny sacks in six or eight inch strips, then with these he would bandage his feet...till they were shapeless clubs on the ends of his legs. He would walk beside his team [of horses] all the way to the coal mine near Lethbridge to keep from freezing to death. When he came in late at night on his return he looked like Santa Claus all covered with hoar frost.*

*Hoar frost covered our windows, collecting there between Chinooks, the warm westerly winds, until it was one-half to one inch thick. When the Chinook came we rushed around with towels sopping up the water on the window ledges before it dripped down the new wallpaper. We were glad when the frost killed the flies. On cold mornings Father swept the flies down from the eaves with a broom dipped in warm kerosene water. We girls had big lumpy chilblains on our legs from frost bite. I can't imagine why, because we wore long-legged underwear with good thick ribbed black stockings. The floors in our house were so cold we were always sitting on the cupboard or table. We tried to keep the fire burning night and day. In the evening the oven door of the stove was solid comfort. Four or five of us would sit with our feet in or on the oven door, eating hot home-made bread dripping with butter and syrup. We used to put head-sized rocks in the oven to get warm for our beds. The pillows were piled on the oven door to soak up some heat. It was hard to keep the house warm with a coal stove and no insulation in the ceiling.*

*Seems like I've been frozen and thawed out times without number, but I can't ever remember a year when we missed having a summer!* [4]

---

[3] Hicken, Reed & Evans, *Raymond Roundup*, Lethbridge, 1967.

[4] Ibid.

Many people lived in tents the first winter in Raymond. Other housing was also quite inadequate. The first blizzard of 1901 came on September 3rd! From the same source we find that F. W. McBride wrote:

> *We didn't have good warm houses. They were built of lumber, lined with sheeting and not insulated against the cold. It was too many years until some were plastered which helped to keep walls from sweating and the frost from forming on the walls. Very often when one awoke in the morning the frost from breathing would be all over the quilt so that it had to be hung by the stove to dry for night. Some people had woven carpets under which they put fresh straw. Water was brought to the homes in large water tanks on wagons. We would pay 25 cents a barrel. The only hot water was in the tea kettle on the stove reservoir.*

Henry John Holmes once became snow-blinded for several days after he and his son had been out searching, unsuccessfully, for cattle that had become lost in a May snowstorm. He stayed in a darkened room until his sight returned.[5]

Breaking uncultivated sod for the first time was hard work for the pioneers. The great grasslands of Alberta had been home to the wild buffalo for centuries. "Seen were the remains of the great buffalo herds scattered over the plains, gathered up and shipped to the glue factories in eastern Canada."[6]

The buffalo would leave "trails" all over–a narrow path grooved out by thousands of animals over the years going in single file. This was especially true on the hills and rougher country where a buffalo trail would usually be the best path for a man on foot or horseback to follow. Duncan told of one when he and about a dozen kids were racing down a steep buffalo trail. When the first kid fell, Duncan found himself in the middle of a pile of arms and legs.

V. A. Wing tells about some of the more frivolous aspects of the Canadian winters: "We used to go bob-sledding in the winter. Such fun! They used to have afternoon dances for the young people. Some of the big boys would crash the party and we would jab them with hat pins to make them leave us alone. There was always a dance on Christmas afternoon. We had the jolliest times."[7]

Margaret often told her children about riding to school in the buggy with hot rocks under a blanket to keep their feet warm. It was a six mile round trip to school from the Holmes farm, and during the worst of the winter weather the children would live in town. It is likely that they stayed with friends or relatives.

The history of Raymond, published under the title, *Raymond Roundup*, quotes other recollections of the early days of the town:

> *Of course the horse and buggy was the main means of transportation for the gasoline cars had not come out yet. Walking was indulged in by everyone and enjoyed. At night people often carried lanterns as there were no*

---

[5] Margaret Holmes Weaver, personal notes.

[6] Hicken...

[7] Ibid.

*sidewalks except beaten trails through the grass. Eventually cinder sidewalks were built along the streets. Some time later wooden walks were put down Main Street.*

*One of the pleasant remembrances... of those early days was in the building of the race track and grandstand in Raymond. It is a pleasure to look back on the fine horse races we used to have at this race track–particularly the matched race between (a horse named) Herman Johnson, whom Ray Knight had bought in Toronto, Canada, and the great Indian horse owned by Charley Powell of Browning, Montana. This was a great event in the history of the community. As I remember, the boys around Raymond relieved the Indians of considerable money because Ray Knight's horse won.*

*We remember the building of the Opera House, at the time and for many years after, the only large dance floor we know of in Alberta to have a spring floor. To build this structure was a major achievement for our small community. But with vision, determination and the will to do, anything can be accomplished. The wonderful dances, home dramatics as well as traveling shows that came here, the old folks parties and banquets held in this commodious hall became another achievement. I so well remember the entertainments staged in this building. It was also used for moving theater, minstrel shows and Chautauqua. Traveling magicians and hypnotists entertained hundreds of people here. In later years it was the home of the famous Union Jacks Basketball team. Duncan Weaver coached this team at one time.*

Duncan often told about his playing the violin with Uncle Snow (N. Lorenzo Mitchell) accompanying on the piano, for silent movies held at the Opera House. Most of the musical productions Duncan was involved in were also staged at the Opera House:

*Before the stores appeared in 1901 people had to go to Stirling to get supplies. The clerks stood behind counters and took the customer's order, then gathered it up and handed it over. Most of the food was on shelves or in drawers out of sight or inaccessible to any but the clerks. Often homemade butter or eggs were exchanged for the goods. It was not uncommon for small youngsters to appear at the counter and ask for an egg's worth of candy. Incidentally, the clerks were always generous in their measurements with such sales. Groceries were delivered to many homes in light delivery wagons. It was real excitement when a spirited team of horses became frightened and ran away while the delivery man was carrying an order into a home.*

*Refrigeration was the ice box. Ice eighteen inches thick was usually available in January and February from the mill pond or the factory lake. Ice was stored in ice houses by using cinders or sawdust. Our fondest memories of this stored ice was the home-made ice cream that was so common then.*

*Dominion Day, July 1st, was the big holiday of the year. Under the direction of the Town Fathers with the support of local cowboys the famous Stampede came into being. Ray Knight headed it. The townspeople turned out in their best for the big parade which consisted of horse-drawn floats, covered wagons, clowns, and real Indians, and of course firecrackers unlimited. After the parade there was a patriotic program at the Opera House. The Stampede was always in the afternoon. Here the cowboys*

*showed their skill at bronco riding, calf-roping, steer-decorating and wild-cow-milking. Horse racing was very popular also. The women sold refreshments from booths under a bowery of trees. Prior to the advent of cars the people either walked or rode in buggies or Democrats to and from the grandstand.* [8]

Another conveyance to make its way northwest, almost as far as the Canadian border, was the Great Northern Railway. It was in Great Falls, Montana, where Margaret and Duncan boarded the train that would take them on their first adventure to Chicago.

* * *

[8] Hicken ...

# Early Days in Chicago

Margaret and Duncan arrived in Chicago in June 1929 with little more than high hopes and the small nest egg they had saved by teaching. This would provide tuition at the Chicago Academy of Art where Duncan was to enroll.

In their first experience finding a place to live they looked at a fourth-floor walk-up in an apartment building near downtown. This area is known as The Loop–referring to the loop that the elevated train made around the heart of the business district of the city. They decided to rent the apartment and they had gone downstairs to make the arrangements and pick up their luggage. But something made Duncan feel he ought to go back upstairs and check the apartment once more. "On the way out he had shut off the lights and when he went back and looked at the apartment, the place was just literally crawling... with cockroaches. The landlord had left the lights on to keep the bugs in hiding, but when it was dark they all came out. The walls actually seemed to move with the millions of cockroaches in that place."[1] Naturally, they picked up their bags and went elsewhere!

Margaret took several jobs to help with their expenses. One such job was clerking at a candy store near the downtown area. It was Andes Candies on the near north side. She, of course, knew Andy himself, whose business has since gone nationwide. She was allowed to eat all the damaged candy she wanted and after about ten days of helping herself freely, she could hardly touch another piece!

These were hard times for many people after the crash of 1929 and one day a desperate character came into the candy store. He waved his gun at Margaret and said, "Give me the cash!" She was in the store alone and so she simple emptied the contents of the cash drawer into a candy sack and handed it to him. Margaret always enjoyed recounting the episode of "The Great Candy Store Stick-Up" to her children, though she had been somewhat, but not a lot, frightened by the experience. She was quite stoic and took most events of an alarming nature in her stride.

In spite of a very tight budget, Duncan pursued his education in art. From the Chicago Academy of Fine Art he transferred to the Art Institute of Chicago, one of the most prestigious art schools in the nation. Duncan taught Saturday classes at the Art Institute to supplement their income as well as doing janitorial work at the Logan Square Ward chapel.

Duncan received his bachelors degree in June 1935. After graduating and finding out that there were very few, if any, openings for graduate commercial artists, Duncan revised plans and resumed the teaching career he had begun in Canada, in order to "ride out" the Great Depression. In his foresight he had pursued art education and was awarded his teacher's certificate from the Chicago Board of Education in March 1935. His first teaching assignment had been at Hertzl Junior High in 1931 when he was still attending school himself. Then he took leave to go full-time to school until October 1934 when he was appointed to Tuley High School.

---

[1] Gary H Weaver, *Recollections.*

In February 1935 he was transferred to Wells High School where he headed the Art Department for a number of years.[2]

At Wells Duncan was in charge of the Student Council as well taking the lead in conducting the school dances. He soon changed the practice of having intermissions in the dance program because of the fights that would break out on the dance floor as soon as the music stopped. He insisted on having a band that would keep playing straight through the evening. This was successful in curtailing violence at school dances. He also had the responsibility of making the daily bank deposits. He staggered his routine so that his trips to the bank could not be predicted by a criminal intent on robbery. He also carried a blackjack in his pocket for self protection.

During these years Margaret and Duncan were maintaining close ties with their families in Canada. Though they spent the rest of their married life in Chicago, they made numerous trips back "home" to Canada. The first trip during the summer break in school was to show off the new baby–Gary. Gary H ("H" not Holmes) Weaver was born November 11th 1930 at Ravenswood Hospital in Chicago. Starting her family at age thirty-two, Margaret felt challenged with the adjustment. "Life is never the same again, after you have your first baby," she said.

Margaret made the trip to Canada with Gary when he was about nine months old aboard the Great Northern Railway. She stayed in Canada about a month while Duncan remained in Chicago. She showed off the new baby all around and had a good time.

The next trip to Canada, for the family of 3, was in the summer of 1934. The vehicle Margaret and Duncan bought for the trip was a 1929 Oakland for which they had paid about $275. Camping equipment was piled into the car and off they went. It was their first car and they thought it was wonderful–until they got to the Idaho panhandle where the rear axle broke. It was on a mountain road, "and I remember the rear wheel sailing past us going into the ditch. The road crew let us stay in an unused crew cabin for the three weeks it took to send to Detroit for a new axle."[3]

Margaret said that it almost drove her nuts, waiting on that axle, camping and managing a three-year old. But Gary's viewpoint was different: "Dad made a fishing pole for me out of a large willow and I caught brook trout in the little stream that was close to the cabin. I really enjoyed that adventure."

The reason Margaret and Duncan had detoured into Idaho to approach Canada through the parks instead of using the more direct route through Montana was that a Canadian immigration official had suggested that they enter as tourists, and keep quiet about their true status as former Canadian citizens. The explanations always created a long delay at the line. Both Margaret and Duncan, having been born in the United States, became U. S. Citizens again in 1939.

Gasoline cost about nine cents per gallon before the war and lodging was not costly. Pitching a tent in a vacant school yard was free, so as a result these trips were economically feasible for them. Gary explained that, "We always camped in school yards. They were ideal. Temporarily vacated, they usually had a swing, an outhouse

---

[2] Henry Duncan Weaver, Letters file.

[3] Gary H Weaver, *Recollections.*

and a pump for water. We had an umbrella tent, folding cots, a Coleman stove, lantern and all the necessary equipment to make camping successful."[4]

Another trip, in 1938, was wonderful. It had been four years since the last trip to Canada, and Margaret and Duncan had a brand new car, a 1938 Plymouth as well as another new baby to show off.

Ellen Claire was born January 21st 1936–also at Ravenswood Hospital and delivered by Dr. Ariel Williams, a close family friend. Though Margaret was well prepared for motherhood this time, she and Duncan were not at all expecting to have to deal with an almost fatal illness for their new child. Ellen Claire was born a very healthy baby but contracted whooping cough at six weeks of age. There was an epidemic in the city and many infants were succumbing to the dreaded disease for which there was no immunization available at that time. But Margaret and Duncan were willing to sit up night after night with a round-the-clock vigil in order to frequently take the baby by her heels, reach up into her throat to clear the airway of mucous. She did survive, though many of her contemporaries in Chicago did not. She was soon back on track with her growth and development, secure in her cherished place in the growing family. Ellen Claire's very earliest recollection was the excitement of buying that new car, though she would have been only two and a half years old. Gary recalled:

> *Things had moved along pretty well for the family and by 1938 the folks could shop for a new car. They looked at different models and I think they kinda liked a Ford, but the Ford was $925.00 with a V8 engine. So after much deliberation they settled on a Plymouth at $850. The color was black. In those days there were about three or four choices of color. You could have a deep maroon which always faded in a year or two, a dark blue which did the same a year later, or a dark shade of green and, of course, black. The easiest to keep maintained was the black. The paints were not as fine then as they are today. But the bodies were much sturdier. The fender could be replaced easily–just unbolt it and put another one on. That Plymouth was purchased and a trip was taken up to Canada in it.*[5]

Gary recalled that the Plymouth lasted throughout the war years. "That car did a lot of duty. It was the car I learned to drive in. I remember one beautiful fall afternoon on my sixteenth birthday going down and taking a driver's test around a few blocks to get my license. I always took good care of that car. I never hot-rodded it. I shined it up often, and whenever I needed a car Dad was very accommodating if he didn't have something else scheduled."

More about the1938 trip to Canada, Gary recalled: "That was a glorious trip to Canada that year. On the road the car hit a prairie chicken. Mother insisted that we go back and get it. She cooked it but it was just too tough to be eaten."

"In those days most of the roads north and west of Minneapolis were gravel, and no roads in Canada were paved." Car trouble was not infrequent and flat tires were commonplace," he recalled.

---

[4] Gary H Weaver, *Recollections*.

[5] Ibid.

The Weavers' arrival in Canada sparked a family reunion as well as other special events. Gary said:

> *One day Dad said, "Go over and look at that old purse on the fence and see what's in it." Well, it was full of firecrackers and my friend and I were delighted with the fun we had shooting off fireworks all around town. July 1st was Dominion Day, comparable to our Independence Day. But the town constable got us for disturbing the peace and locked us up for two hours in the city jail.*
>
> *That same year the marvelous film "Marco Polo" came to town and it was so frightening when Genghis Khan fed his victims to the lions that we ran out of the theater. But we ran back in to peek around the curtains and see some more of the action*.[6]

Gary continued: "About once every year or so someone, usually Grandmother Holmes, would come down to Chicago from Canada and visit with us. So we maintained family close relationships with the families in Canada."

In 1940 Margaret's mother, Sarah Jane, made the trip to Chicago to be of assistance with the newest baby's arrival. Margaret Jane Weaver made her appearance at Ravenswood Hospital on October 22nd 1940, again assisted by Dr. Williams. She was a baby that was simply adored by her brother and sister, as well as by her parents. Ellen Claire believed that never had a cuter baby been born in the whole world!

Another trip to Canada took place in 1944 when Margaret took just Janie and Ellen Claire. Gary and Duncan stayed home so that Gary could attend scout camp. Gary remember that "Dad and I kept the icebox full of root beer while they were gone."

Ellen Claire recalled those trips to Canada and the experiencing of life on the farm as a special "going home" feeling. Swinging from a rope suspended above the hayloft of the big barn, walking through fields of tall wheat, sleeping on Grandma's featherbeds and getting reacquainted with dozens of cousins was just what a little city girl thrived on.

The Weavers plans to return permanently to Canada began to fade. By the time Margaret and Duncan had been married ten or eleven years they had become firmly established in Chicago. The challenges and enjoyments they discovered in the city were sometimes frustrating, but more often, rewarding. Throughout these times, and well as in future times when things became a bit easier, their marriage remained strong.

---

[6] Gary H. Weaver, *Recollections.*

On Christmas day of 1937 Duncan accompanied his gift to Margaret with the following note:

> *Margaret,*
>
> *This little gift is to commemorate the eleventh year of our wedded life, the anniversary of which was on the 23rd of December. It is meant to express my appreciation for the years of fine companionship, understanding, love and cooperation that have been ours chiefly through your own good endeavor. For your beauty I love you, for your good common sense I honor you, for your fine character I hold you above all women and am proud to call you "wife" and honor you. May God bless you always.*
>
> *Merry Christmas!*
>
> *Duncan* [7]

* * *

[7] Margaret Jane Weaver, *The Weavers*, scrapbook 1985.

# The City

"It's almost inconceivable how few cars there were in those early years in the city," reported Gary Weaver. "As affluence progressed cars began to clog the cities, but at one time you could drive all over Chicago and if you were quick you could gun out ahead of the streetcar when the light turned green."[8]

The streetcar was probably the oldest method of Chicago's public transportation, and was in full use when the Weaver children were growing up there. Riding the streetcar was a noisy and jostling experience. At the end of the line the conductor would walk through and flip all the hinges on the seat-backs to change the direction the passengers faced. That way they could all face forward, no matter which direction the streetcar ran. The motorman could drive the streetcar from either end, as both front and back were alike. At the end of the line he would just remove his big speed-control wrench and walk through to the other end of the car to position himself in control to take the trip back down the line. There was no steering necessary as the streetcar ran on tracks. All the motorman had to do was stop and start and of course he was very busy with many stops and starts. Power was supplied by an overhead trolley system. Sometimes power would be lost as the trolley bumped over intersecting power lines, and the motorman would have to get out and maneuver the power arm back on to the trolley line.

Eventually all the streetcars were replaced by trolley busses, and the tracks were paved over by asphalt. Some of the thoroughfares in Chicago were provided with diesel powered buses. There were even some old double-decked buses. The smell of exhaust, coupled with the invariable old codger puffing on his illegal (on buses) cigar, was enough to make the passengers nauseous.

Then there were the elevated trains known as "The L" which ran on tracks about twenty feet off the ground–sometimes above the street. First built in 1892, the "Loop" track around downtown was completed in 1987. So of course the "L's" routes ran through some of the older parts of the city.

By far the most exciting means of transportation around the city of Chicago was the subway. Built in 1943-51 to ease the growing congestion of the inner city, the Chicago Transit Authority boasted one of the finest public transportation systems in the world. But by the late 1950s the subway stations seemed dark and dirty. The noise of the subway trains was deafening. And for people who spent a lot of time on public transportation, it seemed that too much time was spent in unpleasant surroundings. But that was only a minor inconvenience of travel around the city. One could really get around the city quite well without owning a car. In-city fares in 1950 were fifteen cents, with a free transfer from one line to another. Chicago also had an excellent commuter train system to all the various suburbs.

From the wagon train in which Duncan, as a child, had immigrated to Canada, to the Chicago subway trains, there was a huge leap forward, if not in actual

---

[8] Gary H Weaver, *Recollections*.

years, at least in technology. But Duncan and Margaret never glorified the "old days" of their youth. They always seemed to take particular delight in the advances of science and innovation.

During the Great Depression Margaret and Duncan were always energetic and enterprising, "rising quickly to the top," as Gary said. "There was never the typical Depression panic about paying the rent or buying food...They were young and strong and they had none of the typical ... hopelessness. And of course the doors at home [Canada] were always open."

In spite of all that, the structure of life for the Weavers as defined by economic realities put on a perspective with the passage of time that adds a certain charm to the more mundane aspects of living. Gary said:

> *I can remember an interesting thing that we no longer hear about. Each October 1st and then again each April 1st was what was termed "Moving Day." And just literally half of the city would pack up and move in tremendous numbers. The streets were just filled with vehicles moving. Most of the time it was just a few blocks, but people would shift from one apartment to the other, to save two or three dollars in their monthly rents, or to get a little more space, or to get a little closer to work, or a little closer to a certain theater they liked or what have you. The Weavers were no exception. We moved many times while I was a little guy. I've lost count of the exact number of times, but it was considerable, in jockeying for a slightly better situation. Rents in those days were approximately $25.00 per month for a two bedroom apartment.*
>
> *One of my earliest recollections was a place called Hujars which was about six blocks away from the Logan Square Ward chapel. The rent was very inexpensive because we lived on the third floor, but we had some good friends there and had a good time.*
>
> *The Great Depression was in full swing and the hobos [homeless] would come down the alley behind our apartment looking for a handout. Many of them would come up the flights of stairs and ask for something. Some would want a dime for a cup of coffee, as they said, but often the dime would get spent on beer. Mother would provide sandwiches, and from time to time one of those guys wouldn't eat the sandwich, he'd just tuck it in the rain-gutter as he left. I can remember Mother fishing a sandwich out of the rain-gutter and refurbishing it to give to the next fellow.*
>
> *The ice truck came by to furnish ice for the ice-boxes, which were the forerunners of refrigerators. And one day my friend Donny and I climbed up on the truck to get some ice. Now Donny's father was raking leaves in the yard and he saw the truck take off with us on board, and he started running after us. Of course, the driver of the truck was completely unaware that we were there. The truck got a full block and then went through the intersection and started up the other side, and as it slowed just a little bit to check the street, Donny's day caught up with it. He snatched his boy off and he just dropped him and I remember seeing Donny just bounce along the alley and holler. Just as the truck shifted into high gear in the next alley, the driver paused for a split second and Donny's dad caught me and pulled me off the truck. Of course, the danger was that when the truck would have gotten into traffic we'd have bounced off and been run over. Then my dad came running down the alley. He'd seen the whole thing occur, but he*

*was on the third floor porch and couldn't do anything about it. But I got marched upstairs and I got my pants tanned good! And I remember after it was over, Mother got out the Tinker-Toys and said, "You play with your Tinker-Toys!."*[9]

Hard times shaped many of the activities of the Weaver family. Margaret's duties of stretching the budget by frugality were time-consuming and every bit as serious as Duncan's efforts at earning the dollars in the first place. Gary continued:

*I can remember as a little tiny guy that Mother had a little perambulator–a kind of modified wicker buggy. It had an area up front where she could stick a couple of bags of groceries and when I would get tired she would put me in that and she'd make the grand tour of all the local stores. Right east of us about two blocks was a main drag called Milwaukee Avenue. And there were quite a lot of shops along that thoroughfare. Where another street intersected Milwaukee Ave. at an angle was a large pie-shaped store called the Logan Store. And Mother would go through and price most everything–all the way around Milwaukee Ave., usually winding up at the Logan Store. Then she'd go all the way back around and pick out the best of the bargains. So it was almost a double trip each time around.*

*In those days many of the small stores specialized in one item. You'd go to the meat store for the meat, the fish store for the fish, the dry goods store and so on. And I always enjoyed certain portions of the trip. The pet store where you could see the little animals was wonderful. And the fish store was always very interesting. One of its front windows was the side of a tank that held several hundred gallons of water, and you could watch the fish swimming around. Then when you wanted fresh fish they'd reach in there and dip one of those fish out and dress him on the spot for you. I always remember sitting and watching as those fish would swim around.*

*Shopping trips were kind of adventuresome. With one exception. As I grew older I noticed that Mother spent a lot of time in the dry goods stores, and I just didn't like dry goods stores. In fact, even to this day I have an aversion to going into a dry goods store because I spent so much time there with Mother, going through the different yard goods, and picking out what she wanted, then dickering over it and so forth. But Mother was very frugal and very conscientious at getting the best items for the best price, and over the years that paid. That paid well, for they always had–not an abundance–but they always had enough to get by on, and they did well with what they had.*

Margaret often kept a bushel of apples on hand for everyday eating. She would always pick out the apples that were going bad and pare them for fresh slices or applesauce, saving the best apples. She did the same with clothing. She always saved the best clothing for special occasions. In later years the family often laughed about wearing their "best apples," not heeding Margaret's disposition to "wear out the junk."

---

[9] Ibid.

An example of Margaret's frugality is demonstrated in the regular trips to Southwater Market Street for produce. The adventure of shopping there was at least as much fun as the money she saved. Gary described it thus:

> *In the late summer and fall Mother used to love to go downtown to the market area which was near Halsted Street where all the farmers would bring in their produce–peaches and pears and tomatoes and those things that she like to can. And she would down fairly early in the morning and she would go up one side of the street pricing all the fruit and vegetables, making notes and dickering as she went, and then go down the other side of the street. And that took about two or two and a half hours or so to do that, and then she'd go back to the ones that had the best fruit or talked the best, and then dicker and bargain for approximately two, three or maybe four bushels of peaches and a couple bushels of pears and so on. And this would happen maybe two or three times a summer until she got all she wanted for canning.*
>
> *And whenever Father would accompany her he would just almost be beside himself because of this five-hour hassle which saved maybe a dollar or two in the cost of all the fruit. He could never understand why she couldn't go down and look through a few guys' trucks, as they would sell off the back of their trucks, and then gather it up and get home and get canning it. But that was part of Mother's makeup–she loved to dicker on the price of things and going to Southwater Market Street was one of her big entertainments. When Father finally realized that, he became resigned to it, and stayed home. But I have many recollections of family members going with her.*[10]

Ellen Claire also recalled trips to that farmer's market for produce. She remembered it as being a very exciting way to spend a Saturday morning. The early sunshine filtering through the city smog, the dark and dirty brick streets, the old trucks lined up with their canvas back cover rolled up, the vendors shouting out their wares and, of course, the wonderful fruit were all impressions left indelibly on her memory.

In fact, much of Chicago seemed dark and dirty. There were dark brick buildings and dark brick-paved streets. The streetcars always seemed dirty, even after they were all redecorated and the seats were recovered in a sort of straw-colored vinyl. When Ellen Claire visited the city in 2003 with her grandchildren it looked much cleaner, more prosperous. It actually looked wonderful, especially downtown. They had shined up the old city quite a bit!

And yet Chicago was a wonderful city with parks, museums, fabulous stores and a magnificent shoreline/skyline along beautiful Lake Michigan. How everyone loved the beach! In the days before air-conditioning many people from the near lakeshore apartments would sleep on the beaches on hot summer nights. It would always be cooler down by the lake.

---

[10] Ibid.

"Chicago was a very interesting place to grow up in," recalled Gary Weaver. "Of course, that's all I knew, but I thought it was really a marvelous place because there was lots to do and lots to see."

The city was also an exciting place for friends and family to visit. Throughout the years the Weavers received many visits from family members as well as old friends that were passing through. In a 1981 letter from Dora Meldrum Thomson to Ellen Claire we read: "Margaret Hill (Cal's wife) ... proceeded to tell me about the time she and Cal went to Chicago and you took them all over and showed them around and what a wonderful time they had. So she hasn't forgotten."

There were even visits from British relatives. Particularly memorable was a visit from Miss Enid Colfer of London, and another visit from Colonel Pennant, an impressive gentleman from Great Britain who was as much remembered for his appearance–a long handle-bar mustache, walking stick, spats and a three-piece suit of light tan–as for his charm. Both Miss Colfer and the Colonel visited the Weavers in the late 1940s after World War II.

Chicago was blessed with a wonderful park system as well as forest preserves all around the city. The family often enjoyed going to one of the many forest preserves for picnics and family outings. One favorite was the forest preserve near the Des Plaines River. Duncan enjoyed sketching scenery and it was generally a fun outing for the family. During the coldest months when the river was solidly frozen, ice skating on the river was an adventure.

One of the favorite Saturday activities for the Weaver children was spending the day at the Field Museum. It was such a glorious place to go! There were Saturday morning nature films for the kids, and a big lunchroom where they could eat their own sack lunch. They loved the huge stuffed elephants on the main floor, but the most fun of all was the fabulous Egyptian exhibit with all those mummies.

Nearby was the Shedd Aquarium and the Planetarium, both of which were visited regularly. The Art Institute became a special place for the entire family, with a certain sense of belonging because of Duncan's association with it. Wonderful exhibits from all over the world came to the Art Institute.

Margaret and Duncan made every effort to see that their children took advantage of the cultural opportunities of the city. It provided a sense of balance with the circumstances of their home neighborhood. They learned that there were Chicagoans who never ventured beyond their own neighborhood perimeters, and they were astounded with that discovery.

Yet as a fellow Chicagoan later stated, "I just ... had to get a picture of the back porches, gangways and alleys of my youth... I had to make contact with the reality of the world that shaped me."[11] He realized that Chicagoans have always had strong feelings for the places where they have lived out their lives.

But the Weavers warmest feelings were probably for the church at Logan Square. It was the one constant amidst that which was ever changing.

* * *

[11] Ronald P. Grossman, *Guide to Chicago Neighborhoods*, 1981.

# Logan Square Ward

"For each of us there is a special place that forms a focus for the best of what lies in our memory. Tucked away in the back of our heads, a vision of it remains with us always, to return–whenever our thoughts wander back to those days–clearer and more distinct than many of the objects of our everyday existence."[1] For Gary, Ellen Claire and Janie, that place was–and is–the chapel of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at Logan Square in Chicago.

One of the first things that Margaret and Duncan did when they got to Chicago was to locate the Church. Logan Square was the headquarters for the Central States Mission and the mission home was located right next door to the chapel. The Logan Square Ward–it was a branch when the Weavers first arrived in Chicago–was the center of the social and religious life for Mormons in the entire Chicago area.

Duncan was successful in obtaining the position as custodian of the church. The income from that position was very helpful during his years of study. He and Margaret worked together to maintain the chapel, and they lived in various apartments close by so that the coal-fired furnace could be stoked daily during the cold winter months.

One of Gary's earliest memories was of standing in the crib peeling off the wallpaper while Margaret had gone across the street to stoke the church's furnace. Later he was to help with the work himself. He said:

> *The church boiler was quite an interesting heating system. It was coal-fed and you had to scoop the coal from the bin and throw it quite a distance to get it in there. Eventually they put a stoker in which would feed the coal automatically, but in the early years you had to actually shovel that stuff in. And every day you had to take out the clinkers. So it was quite a process to keep the thing stoked up and to keep the clinkers and ashes cleaned out. [This meant every day, not just on Sundays.]*
>
> *All winter that process caused soot to collect around the boiler jacket and the pipes that fed hot water to all the radiators in the building. And it would build up something tremendous. Each summer Dad would have me go through the access hole which was too small for a man to crawl through, and with my brush and my little scraper tools, I cleaned all the soot from that boiler jacket. And he'd pay me two or three dollars to do that. It would be an all-day job and I can remember that there would be three or four bushels of soot from that furnace. Of course, Mother would put me in old clothes and the only thing that wasn't black when I came out of there was the whites of my eyes. They got quite a kick out of seeing me crawl out.*

---

[1] Ronald P. Grossman, *Guide to Chicago Neighborhoods*, 1981.

*Father retained the job of custodian...although from time to time he had people working with him and under him. He did the redecorating of the Logan Square chapel on at least two occasions.*

*I can remember one occasion when the scaffolding was all in place and he was lying on his back repainting the ceiling of that chapel. Like a modern Michelangelo, he did it in many colors. It had a lot of...[ornamental plaster work] and it was nicely done, really beautifully done, and Father was hand painting all that. I would assist him from time to time, handing him his brushes and so forth. I was about five-and-a-half at that time, perhaps six, and there was an aggressive little Jewish boy in that Jewish neighborhood that just kept me in hot water all the time. He teased me and poked me and just kept me on the whine–and bawling a bit–and coming to Dad and complaining. Finally Dad told me, "Until you stand up for yourself you are just going to have to put up with being picked on." After several more days of badgering and whining, my opportunity came. Dad said he was lying on his back painting one afternoon. It was summer time and he was out of school... and had time to put in full-time upkeep on the chapel. Well, while he was up on the scaffold he heard the most blood-curdling yell he ever heard a kid give out, and he got off that scaffold and beat it outside and there I was. I'd finally cornered this kid, and I was just pounding him good...After I let him have one, why that felt very satisfactory, so I just kept on going. And Dad had to come down there and separate us. But you know, that kid left me alone and was quite a good friend after that. But I do remember Dad coaching me to stand up for myself, and showing me how to clench my fists and what to do. But when my time for retribution finally came, Dad thought someone had been run over!*

*It was quite interesting to spend a lot of time with Dad down there working on the chapel doing various things. I knew every nook and cranny of the building. There were little places you could crawl in and especially one little place that had a ladder up a back hall that would go clear up to the roof and you could open a trap door and get out on the roof. And how I loved to get up there on the roof of that building and play and be able to go down the back stairs and up into the balcony. It had an interesting balcony overlooking the chapel and you could literally crawl through and around and in and out of that building and just have a glorious time. So when I heard recently that the old building had gone the way of all the earth and that they'd replaced it with a new one, it left quite a nostalgic feeling with me.*

*As teenagers we would love to get together up in the balcony where we could be in our own little group and often we'd get carried away with talking and fussing and once when things were just a humming I heard a creak on the balcony step, and I knew that it was someone of heavy weight. Bishop Williams was a big man, weighing well over 300 pounds. And I looked out and I couldn't see the Bishop sitting in his usual place on the stand, so I though, "O, oh!" I sat real still and quit talking. Oh, I was just paying very good attention all of a sudden. When he got up there it was his own kid who was sitting just in front of me with another kid... who was just raising the dickens. And I remember he reached over my shoulder across the bench where I was sitting to the next bench and grabbed his kid, Ariel, by the ear. He didn't say a word. He just took him by the ear and squeezed it and then lifted him up until he was just on his tippy-toes and he walked him*

*carefully down the aisle, down the back steps with his toes just touching all the way down to the basement. And the rest of us kids just sat up there and snickered to think one of our buddies was really going to get it. And he did! He got punished thoroughly–for our sins, I'm sure, as well as his own.*[2]

"I used to dream about that old chapel," said Ellen Claire, "–dream about being there and seeing it the way it used to be–Daddy's painting of the sacred Grove hanging in the Relief Society room–the baptismal font where Hannah Mae Williams and Maren Biggs and I were baptized the same day–the spooky back stairs to the furnace room–the big kitchen where we used to have summer welfare canning projects–the two separate cloakrooms, one for men, the other for women, each with its own stairway to the basement whereby one could choose or avoid an encounter with a 'certain someone'–the creaky old stairs to the creaky old balcony–the recreation room where we held Primary and Mutual dances and all sorts of parties, with its wonderful iron fire escape, a cantilevered balance-beam type. I remember there was always a battle about how bright the lights should be for dances. The young people always wanted them very low. Sometimes there would be an adult around who would brighten things up, only to return a time later to find that someone had dimmed them again."

Throughout the years there were lots of wonderful events associated with the Weaver's church activity, but none surpassed the annual Fourth of July picnic at Humboldt Park–that is–in Ellen Claire's opinion. She recalled the excitement of the day's food preparation–fried chicken, homemade ice cream and the potato salad that Margaret made only on July 4th, as well as trying to hurry the family to get there. E.C. didn't want to miss anything. There was a lake where you could rent a rowboat for just an hour or two. There were games and races and Ellen Claire won more than her share. And there were prizes galore, all furnished by dear old Brother Pickering who always had candy and gum for the kids whether it was the 4th of July or not.

In 1936 Duncan was called as 1st Counselor in the Bishopric to serve with Bishop A. L. Williams. The bishop wrote about his early morning meeting with Church president Heber J. Grant. "President Grant asked me how I was. I said, 'Alright, but I didn't sleep–I dreamed.' 'What did you dream?' 'I dreamed I was bishop and Duncan Weaver and Leslie Matheson were my councilors.' Then President Grant said, 'That is a revelation for you. The Lord has done that much for you, so now all we have to do is set you men apart.'"[3]

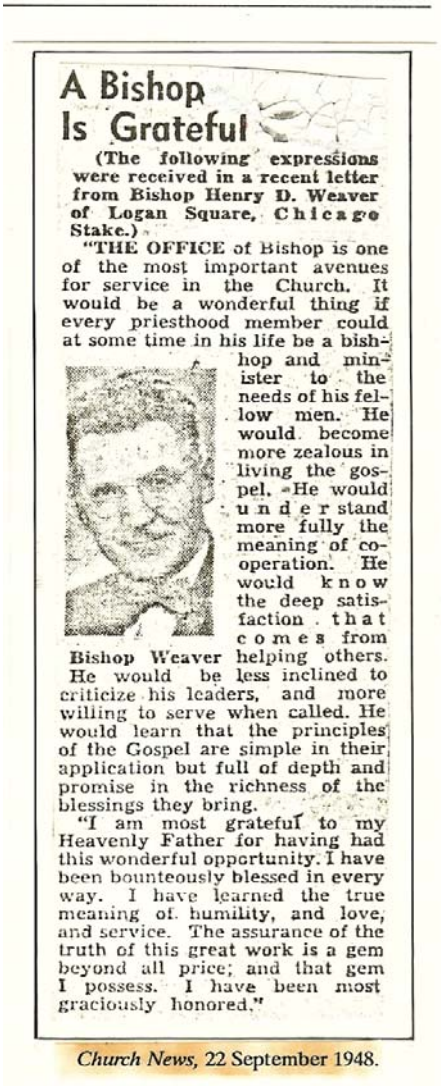
When the Chicago Stake was organized in 1945, Duncan was set apart as Bishop of the Logan Square Ward by Harold B. Lee. Duncan's councilors were Glen Turner and Bill Bower, and later Frank Stonesifer. Some of the clerks and assistant clerks were Hans Symthe, Jasper Smith, Frank Willie and Emery Mulnix.

Duncan wrote a letter to the Presiding Bishop of the Church expressing his sentiments about his new calling. LeGrand Richards responded:

---

[2] Gary H Weaver, *Recollections*.

[3] *Logan Square This is Your Life*, 1964, program.



## A Bishop Is Grateful

(The following expressions were received in a recent letter from Bishop Henry D. Weaver of Logan Square, Chicago Stake.)

"THE OFFICE of Bishop is one of the most important avenues for service in the Church. It would be a wonderful thing if every priesthood member could at some time in his life be a bishop and minister to the needs of his fellow men. He would become more zealous in living the gospel. He would understand more fully the meaning of cooperation. He would know the deep satisfaction that comes from helping others. He would be less inclined to criticize his leaders, and more willing to serve when called. He would learn that the principles of the Gospel are simple in their application but full of depth and promise in the richness of the blessings they bring.

Bishop Weaver

"I am most grateful to my Heavenly Father for having had this wonderful opportunity. I have been bounteously blessed in every way. I have learned the true meaning of humility, and love, and service. The assurance of the truth of this great work is a gem beyond all price; and that gem I possess. I have been most graciously honored."

*Church News*, 22 September 1948.

*Aug. 24, 1948*

*Dear Bishop Weaver:*

*Your letter of August 15th expressing appreciation for your calling as a bishop is beautiful. Isn't it really wonderful how the Lord can compensate his servants for such a magnificent service as they render in a calling that requires so much time by filling their hearts with joy in the service they render. May the Lord bless you in your continued activities in the Church. We may be able to find an opportunity to quote from your letter in the Church Section of the Deseret News as an encouragement to others, which we hope will be satisfactory to you. Accept all good wishes.*

*Sincerely your brethren, the Presiding Bishopric,*

*[signed by] LeGrand Richards*

Margaret and Duncan's social life, indeed life itself, seemed to revolve around the Logan Square Ward. It provided a network of friends and associations that were culturally and philosophically compatible. If the L.D.S. Church was an island of peace and safety in the vast sea of life, then Logan Square Ward was its fair harbor. However, that did not preclude a few "waves." In their hearts both Margaret and Duncan were peacemakers, but they each had the courage to stand up and be heard on issues they considered important.

One issue was the parking problem. Before 1945 among "all the people who came to Logan Square Ward only about a dozen had cars. A car was certainly a status symbol for members of the ward, and the small parking lot was adequate for many years."[4] But as times changed the parking situation became quite inadequate. Duncan pushed for years for the Chicago Stake to buy land far enough from the city for a Stake Center that would provide a large parking area, but they wanted an "impressive" downtown site where public transportation would give access, and his idea was vetoed. Eventually, however, a site was chosen that would have pleased Duncan greatly had he lived long enough to see it.

"When Dad was in the High Council," recalled Gary, "he once asked visiting Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith if the blacks were ever going to have the priesthood. And Brother Hatfield, a fellow member of the Council, said 'It was completely

[4] Gary H Weaver, *Recollections*.

uncalled for the way Brother Smith dressed your father down for suggesting such a thing.'"

Gary continued, "The ivory-tower boys far away in Salt Lake City didn't have to live with the situation like the Chicago Saints did. Dad had brought up the subject as a regularly encountered problem and he was seeking a hopeful answer, but was literally squelched." Again, Duncan would have been greatly pleased had he lived long enough to see the blacks receive the priesthood in 1978.

Duncan was always supported in his church work by Margaret, who was equally devoted. Their service always seemed more of a joy than a burden. "Although I can remember," noted Ellen Claire, "one time when we returned home a few days early from our vacation, and Daddy wouldn't let anyone answer the phone." He wanted his fully scheduled peace and rest from all the cares of his professional as well as church duties.

Margaret was to write in 1949: "Those thirteen years [were] a most important part of our lives. Three children were born and raised. Their lives were centered around Logan Square Ward. All were our friends. The many workers and teachers can never be repaid."[5]

She recalled some of the experiences of those years. One night she awoke and Duncan was not home yet. "One o'clock, two, three came, then I called Laura B. Just after three he came in. It was closing-the-books time, and he'd been looking for three cents–and found it."

Once during a church service when "talks were being given on the theme of reverence, a sudden bumping and screaming were heard right down those back stairs. All darted out to help. When arms and legs and fists were untangled it was Ariel Williams Jr. and Gary Weaver! Reverence by whom??"[6]

One memorable time was the Weaver family program at Sacrament Meeting. Margaret did the announcing, Janie, age five sang "I Think When I Read That Sweet Story." With Duncan on the cello, Gary on violin and E.C. on piano, musical selections were played. The trio also played carols for the neighbors at Christmas time.

Duncan's church duties included responsibility for the church's Welfare Farm for quite some time. This provided opportunities for many young people, including the Weaver children to learn gardening.

The Church had rented some land from an Italian lady who had a truck farm. "We always called her 'the Old Lady' and the farm was always known as 'The Old Lady's Place.' She actually was the mother-in-law of Carl Waldvogel, a close friend and fellow church member. She always dressed in black to show her widowhood as though she was still in the old country, and she wore a babushka on her head. But she could grow the most beautiful plum (Italian) tomatoes!

As a result of this farm, and later when Margaret and Duncan had a vegetable plot at home, there was always an abundance of fresh produce on the Weavers' table.

---

[5] *Logan Square This is Your Life*, 1964, program.

[6] Ibid.

Sweet corn was the favorite! A dozen ears or more at a time were served. At 25 cents a dozen the corn was a bargain!

Margaret held a variety of responsible positions in the Church. She explained her commitment in this way: "My parents and my grandparents had firm testimonies of the divine work of Joseph Smith. I grew up with a firm belief. In the mission field the gospel, through study and work and prayer, was revealed to me as an open book. The words of Brother Talmage in setting me apart were true."[7]

Margaret was active in the Relief Society for many years. She wrote: "In Chicago I have worked almost continuously in Relief Society as teacher, counselor and Stake Board member. At conference in September 1957 I was sustained as President of the Chicago Stake Relief Society, and on January 29th, 1958 I was set apart by David M. Kennedy."

In organizing material for the *This Is Your Life Logan Square* program in 1964, Margaret received many letters about Duncan's work in the church. In her presentation she said: "It may be that the actual accomplishment of a Bishop is reflected mainly in the lives of the people around him." Quoting from some of these she wrote:

> *It was his ideas on family and the book, "Family Life," he loaned me, mainly... that converted me. Duncan Weaver is the most talented man I've ever met. My life was enriched by knowing and having the friendship of this man. He was a shining example to his fellow man–as a friend, a father, as Bishop of the Ward, and as an artist to bring the beauty of this world into focus.* ----- *Rosetta Nichols*
>
> *I became financial clerk, and I enjoyed working with him. All our family thought Duncan was a wonderful and faithful man, endowed with talent and a good sense of humor. We first met with him and his young family during the Depression when he was branch custodian and finding things difficult when teachers were paid irregularly and often in scrip.*
> ----- *Frank G. Willie*
>
> *He always had a wonderful smile for all. When we were first married he gave us a set of rules to govern our marriage* [see appendix]. *I enjoyed doing his autograph on our Relief Society tablecloth. I was president of the R. S. at the time.----- Lorna Rubow*
>
> *I remember Duncan Weaver for the sincere love he had for people and his enthusiasm for the work of the Lord–for the fun he had and was at parties–his reading "The Preacher and the Bear" at our Relief Society party in 1946–his love and appreciation of all things beautiful, whether design, texture, color, face or figure–his kindness, beaming smile and gentle understanding–the energy and goodness of him. I remember the intense pride he had in his teaching career and the love his students had for him–the lovely pictures he painted, especially the ones of the Sacred Grove. I remember the talk he gave to the women of the ward on correct use of color*

[7] Margaret Holmes Weaver, *Autobiography*, from her Book of Remembrance.

*for your individual coloring–also for home and walls–and what to use to wash walls and how to do it best. ----- Geneva Young*

*It was my pleasure to serve as counselor to Bishop Weaver... He was a man of quality. He possessed that common touch with humanity which anyone might envy... He was a man of great artistic ability. He was a joy to work with, a fine bishop and I am sure, a wonderful father and husband. When he passed away we lost one of God's choice children and servants, but heaven found him and welcomed him home. -----Bishop Glen Turner*

*I never realized just how much I was going to miss going to Logan Square, seeing all the wonderful people every Sunday... I was imagining myself standing in the back of the cloak room and looking over all the people. Bishop Williams smiling, looking as he always does, as if he had the biggest secret in the world and the next minute he was going to tell everyone about it... then over to one side of the bishop sits one of the best men I will ever know, Brother Weaver. ----- Richard Oniones*

*My first contacts with Duncan came about when I was a member of the Cardston, [Alberta, Canada] basketball team and he was coach of the Raymond team. Although there was a strong rivalry between these two teams we always knew the Raymond boys would be good sports and well coached. I came to Chicago to attend Northwestern University and was fortunate to have you folks come here later. Duncan soon took considerable interest in me and my problems and his encouragement, advice, and friendship were great helps to me then. On many occasions I and other young fellows were invited to your home for Sunday dinner. These afternoons of music and fellowship, not to mention the fried chicken and luscious chocolate cake, were wonderful. I have never known a person who I thought had so many fine characteristics and talents as Duncan did. He was well versed in the gospel and used it as a guide in his life. He had outstanding leadership qualities and in his many positions in the Church was able to influence those he came in contact with to try and attain excellence. He was an excellent teacher and gifted in art and music. He was an outdoors man and if I needed advice on how to hang a door or thread a pipe or when to plant strawberries, he knew and was willing and able to show me how. ----- Dr. Mark Low*

*... when I first met Duncan Weaver it was more than thirty years ago ... I immediately recognized him as an intelligent, truly devoted Latter-day Saint... After several years of faithful service as bishop we called him to serve on the High Council, a position he held until the time of his death... I never knew him to refuse any office nor any calling or duty ... His faith and courage never failed him even in those last hard and painful months of his life. When he passed away the Chicago Stake lost a valuable man and I a good friend and brother. ----- John K. Edmunds, Chicago Stake Pres.*

In 1980 ground was broken for a new Logan Square Ward chapel. Geneva Young wrote to Ellen Claire about it:

*The new building is going now. We bought three more lots toward the monument. The chapel will be on them and the old parking lot and when it is completed the old building will come down and the house, the old mission headquarters, then that part will be landscaped. The new building will have ground floor parking with the chapel, etc. on the second floor. It's the first of its kind built for inner city chapels because of vandalism. I'm glad I won't be there to see the old building come down. That would be pretty hard to take–too many precious memories and years tied up in it.*

*Ellen Claire, do you know your father's very favorite Christmas song was 'Silver Bells?' When he was bishop it was always on the program. Lorna Rubow, Mary Grace Andrew and I used to sing it.*

Ellen Claire felt nostalgic about the old building, too. "When I took my boys John Duncan and Daniel to Chicago in 1980 along with Naomi Weaver and her three youngest boys, John, Robert and Mark, I could not bear to go inside the old chapel." At that time plans were already under way for a new building. Was the old building really beyond repair? E. C. said:

*The old stained glass windows had been removed and plain opaque glass had been installed in their place. How well I can remember those beautiful stained glass windows. In the summer they would be opened to let in the breeze, and I can recall lying in Mother's lap when I was very young during sacrament meeting on a summer evening and watching the setting sun shine through the beautiful green leaves of the trees outside the lovely colorful windows.*

*When I was a teenager I recalled coming down dark old Wrightwood Ave. After getting off the Milwaukee Ave. streetcar that took us to church of Friday evenings for Mutual, and I can still see the warm glow of light through those beautiful windows beckoning me to safety.*

*I can still feel the special warmth of that chapel contrasting the cold Chicago winters. The chapel was always warm from the well-stoked furnace. The warmth of friendly faces, the feeling of belonging, the warmth of the gospel message shared by teachers and leaders and the warmth of their encouragement to seek the better things of life have continued to feed the fires of faith, imagination, creativity, searching and endeavors of all sorts throughout my life.*

Though the old building is gone now, it will remain forever in the memory and the hearts of the faithful members of the Logan Square Ward, who for many, many years worked and wept and laughed and prayed together within its walls.

* * *

# The Neighborhood

Not all of the Weaver's social life revolved around the Church. They made good friends in the neighborhoods where they lived. Chicago was and is a cosmopolitan city. Ethnic neighborhoods where old-world culture was intact, became dividing lines between neighborhoods, and were almost like national boundaries. But the freedom and openness of America made newcomers welcome in almost any neighborhood. Margaret and Duncan had the ability to adapt and to fit into the various neighborhoods where they lived.

After a car was bought in 1934 the Weavers rented a house about five miles from Logan Square. It was a single-family residence called a bungalow on Linder Street just off Diversey Avenue, and was a nice change from the crowded apartment buildings they had previously lived in. It seemed a wonderful place with lots of playmates for Gary, whose best friend became Bobo Nichols. Margaret and Duncan enjoyed getting acquainted, too. Bob and Ivadell Nichols became intimate and lifelong friends. Gary wrote:

> *One of the highlights of the Linder Street days and on into future days was that Bob Nichols would take some of his family and go up into ... the North Woods [of northern Minnesota]... There, in literally thousands of lakes that dot the land, were some of the finest and biggest fish in the world–the great northern pike and the walleyed pike, as well as the huge muskellunge. Now the northern and walleyed pike were extremely good eating, weighing from about three pounds up to ...fifteen pounds. Mr. Nichols and his older boys and sometimes some of his friends would go up and spend about a week each summer or longer camping and canoeing. They would rent canoes at an outfitter.*
>
> *And they would have a good time fishing and they would bring back several hundred pounds of fish and they would throw a big fish-fry for all the ... neighborhood. And, Boy! Was it glorious to go to these big fish-frys. They would occur on Friday night or Saturday and it was a whole neighborhood party. The Nichols did this for many years*.[1]

Duncan was included on some of these trips and eventually a trip was planned to include the entire Nichols and Weaver families in 1946. Margaret wrote about it in a college class paper. It was entitled, "Going to the North Woods."

> *A neighbor family had explored the North Woods on various vacations and convinced my husband that our two families should go together to the North Woods. The plans were all set up that the families*

[1] Gary H Weaver, *Recollections.*

*should spend two weeks there and portage to Lake Insula with all the gear in three canoes. I had never been in a canoe, and our youngest was barely three years old. I was completely against the idea, but to save face I went along with it, occasionally questioning about things. I even asked, "Are you taking us all up there to drown us?" I was really scared. I liked better the big fish fries our friends would have after they came back, which was the easy way out. Or I liked the usual trip to western Canada every summer in my precious routine!*

*With the help of a completely efficient and wise husband, and the fact that there was just no way out, we had a never-to-be-forgotten experience. Everybody helped cooperate and learned what and how to do things for themselves and the group. Over and above the give and take, we got all the fish we could use, beautiful color slides of the whole trip, some priceless paintings–my husband was an artist–a wonderful illustrated log of our experiences, and some priceless memories.*

It was truly a glorious time for everyone, long to be remembered as a high point of family happiness and enjoyment. The water was warm enough that year for swimming, and the fishing was rewarding–even for the kids. Ellen Claire can vividly remember catching an eleven pound walleyed pike!

After living a couple of years at 3639 Linder Street, the Weavers moved about three blocks to another bungalow on Waveland Street. This house had once been the home of a man who had put in a beautiful pond with a little bridge over it. Even though the garden was in a rather dilapidated state, we had a lot of fun as kids. Duncan built the children a sandbox and even made them a small canvas-lined wading pool.

One day when Gary was about eight years old and Ellen Claire was three a memorable accident occurred. Gary recalled:

*Ellen Claire came outside and for some reason started fussing like crazy and I teased her of course, and she picked up a rock, a pretty good sized rock and threw it up in the air at me then turned around and started walking away and the thing came down and knocked her out cooler than a wedge. We thought she'd been killed–myself and another buddy who was up in the tree with me. We jumped down to see what we could do for her. Pretty soon she came around, but she wore a pretty good goose-egg on her head for a long time.*

Ellen Claire recalled it a bit differently:

*The real story was that Gary, who was up in the tree, requested that I throw him his ball. And I tried very compliantly again and again to throw that ball up to him. And because I was so little and couldn't do it, he began to heckle me, saying 'You can't even throw a ball–ha, ha.' etc., and I became angry as well as frustrated, so I did, indeed pick up one of those big flagstones from the garden flowerbed to throw at him. And of course, it did, indeed, come down and hit me on the very top of the head. I remember a lot of blood, and I remember Mother comforting me and taking care of me. As a matter of fact, I've been able to use that incident to illustrate to my children*

*and students alike the message that when you try to hurt someone else, as I did, you always end up hurting yourself!*

The family's big move came in August 1941 not long before the infamous bombing of Pearl Harbor and the outbreak of World War II. Margaret and Duncan purchased their first home in a subdivision called Schorsch Village named after the developer. And it was a lovely home at 6612 Melrose Street not far from the Belmont and Central commercial area. And it still looked good in 1980 when Ellen Claire, Naomi Weaver and boys visited the Chicago area. The Kimball Candy Company at the end of Melrose Street was as busy producing candy bars in 1980 as it was during the war; the smell of chocolate pervading the whole neighborhood was just as wonderful! In those days there was a bumpy shortcut to Belmont Ave. dubbed "the Burma Road" after a famous World War II scene of action. Gary wrote:

*The house at 6612 Melrose St. was a basic two-bedroom home with an unfinished upstairs, which Dad later finished in knotty pine. It also had a full basement. It was 900 square feet so that three levels made approximately 2700 square feet. It had a two car detached garage out back, the lot being about 65' wide and 100' deep. This was the typical "suburbia" of Chicago at that time.*

*The price was quite high on this house. It was about $9200 and I remember my parents worrying and fussing about how they were going to meet that obligation. However, wages had been going up and they felt comfortable with Dad's salary. He had also put in an application to move from Wells High School where he had been teaching for about six years, to Steinmetz High which was just about six blocks away from the new house. Dad's salary was approximately $4000 annually at this time. And I remember the fellow next door who worked for a big diesel electric company that had a fabulous $5000 salary. He had a pool table in his basement, and we thought he was fairly wealthy to have that kind of salary and have that "thing" in his basement.*

Ellen Claire loved her home: "The house on Melrose Street holds my fondest memories. We all loved that house! I can recall playing outside on an early winter evening watching huge snowflakes coming down in the glow of streetlight–then coming into the house to wonderful smells of baking apples, squash and bread. I can remember hot summer afternoons in the backyard–Daddy mowing the grass with a hand push mower and listening to the ball game on the radio –baseball of course!"

E. C. continued:

*The house on Melrose Street had a coal-fired furnace, and there was a coal storage room next to the furnace with a little window from the inside so you could see how much coal there was, and a little window on the outside that received the coal when the delivery man came. His face was always black with coal dust and I thought he looked scary. The furnace was fed automatically with a "worm" auger and the only work Daddy had to do was to remove the clinkers. He would put them in a big galvanized can to be taken out every so often. Mother kept the bedroom doors and the heating*

*ducts closed off most of the time, often the living room as well, to conserve fuel. Coal was a very economical means of heating the house. I recall she said that the annual expense would be around $50. I remember those cold, COLD rooms. The living room was heated so we could practice the piano, but at other times it was closed off. We had beautiful green striped canvas awnings to protect the windows from the hot summer sun, and we had a big electric fan to draw cool air upstairs at night.*

The house on Melrose Street was the first house that the Weavers owned–and without doubt, the best loved. Ellen Claire recalls a burn-the-mortgage party the folks had when it was finally paid for. As a child she was very surprised to learn that there was such a thing as a mortgage, with payments, etc., and that when you "own" a home you have to make payments if it has a mortgage.

That house was more than just a residence. It embodied the creativity of Duncan–he designed the interior spaces–including the lovely art studio on the second floor–and the frugality and domesticity of Margaret–she had saved for the down payment, made the drapes, as well as slip covers for the furniture. It was a charming, comfortable home and a suitable place in which to rear their three children. And it held the pride of ownership and success for Margaret and Duncan.

The neighborhood became part of the Weavers as they became a part of it. "For born and raised in a Chicago neighborhood, a person early acquires a way of looking at things that almost no subsequent experience is likely to change. To the end of his days he will still be measuring the world by knowing exactly where his neighborhood ends and theirs begins."[2]

"Dad put in a nice big patio in the back yard," wrote Gary, "and we also planted a garden. I was the keeper of the garden, basically, and it was here that Dad taught me to work quite thoroughly." E.C. also remembers the garden: "Mother and Daddy always seemed to enjoy the gardening. Of course, we kids *hated* weeding, but we *did* help!"

Gary had other jobs as well: "I also took on the job of painting fences; and after I'd earned $5 or $10 for painting Dad's fence, the neighbors got me to do theirs too, and that first summer or two I painted fences all up and down the neighborhood and earned for myself a new Schwinn bicycle."

Ellen Claire remembered:

*The laundry, which was done in the basement in a Maytag wringer-washer, was always brought outside to dry in nice weather. We would string up a rope clothesline back and forth across the yard from hooks mounted high on permanent posts. (The line was always removed after the clothes were dry to keep it clean.) Then we would attach the clothes on the line with wooden pins. Lastly we would prop up the clothes on the line with clothes-poles to keep the wash from dragging on the grass. I always loved the way the clean, dry clothes smelled after drying in the open air–not at all like today's clothes which are all machine-dried and commercially scented. In the winter or on rainy wash days we hung clothes in the basement. Washing*

[2] Ronald P. Grossman, *Guide to Chicago Neighborhoods*, 1981.

*was always a big production, with all the various hot washes and rinses, twice for the socks, once inside out and once outside in. How I hated turning the socks! The water always burned my hands but didn't seem to bother Mother's. I have to smile now when my own kids ask me how I can handle hot things that they can't stand. I guess the hands, as well as the heart can become desensitized over the years*.

Margaret would always hide the *Life Magazine*, which arrived on Saturdays, until chores were finished. "Work first, play later," was her motto.

Other fondly recalled backyard scenes in Ellen Claire's memory included the making of playhouses with blankets in a corner of the side yard; playing with the cutest baby ever born (Janie) in her amazing eight-sided playpen; running to tell Mother when the "Ragsalarm" man came down the alley. He was actually shouting "rags and old iron" which he purchased to recycle in some fashion. And as kids we did our own share of "alley-picking," scouting for wonderful junk the neighbors may have tossed out.

Margaret and Duncan taught their children to appreciate the beauties and wonders of nature. Ellen Claire remembered being awakened one night and carried outside to watch the amazing Aurora Borealis–the northern lights. Once we watched the emergence of the beautiful cecropia moths from their cocoons that Mother had placed in a jar in the garage window.

There may have been tranquility on the domestic scene, but in the larger world a war raged on. The family listened attentively every evening to the reports on the radio. Of particular interest to Duncan and Margaret was the nightly commentary of Gabriel Heater.

At one time Duncan brought home war materials piecework for the family to do. Every evening we would sit around the kitchen table and sand off the edges of solid aluminum alloy blocks. When information was later declassified, it was learned that the parts were bomb release latches. It was a family project in which the Weavers could contribute to the war effort, but we were cautioned not to discuss it.

All the boys at school would decorate their papers with airplanes, guns, tanks and bombs. They played "war" after school in vacant lots with a strong identification to the united war effort. Children of German and Japanese ethnic origin were shunned. But Margaret and Duncan made an effort to shield their children from the anxieties of the war as well as promoting an accepting atmosphere for those who had become the unfortunate victims of prejudice.

In a letter from Margaret's mother, Sarah Jane Holmes, dated March 1st 1944 we glimpse at a little of the Weaver's domestic life reflected through the eyes of the elder generation, and she includes some advice as well as expressing some regrets:

*It does seem good to hear from you often. I am glad the baby is getting over her cough so good and the rest of you well. I wish I could be there to help you quilt and mend a little... Margaret, it's nice to have them where you can bathe them, comb their hair and put them to bed, and to make the nice little things for them The best time of your life is right now. You know, all that comes to an end and sometimes, left alone, one has time to sit and think over the years and wish you could have done things just a little*

*better. But if they turn out as good as mine have done you will some day be thankful for them all and wish you had done more if that is possible. I have always been sorry I let Mother stay in Preston (Idaho) when we went down there (to visit) and... I wish I had taken a little better care of your father while he was sick and done nice little things for him. I've had twenty years now to think these things over.*

Margaret and Duncan were too busy to realize fully how "golden" their years in the Melrose Street house had become. There was so much work and responsibility for the two of them, that it is only in looking back, like Grandmother Holmes had done, that an assessment can be made.

* * *

# Golden Years

These were the years when Margaret and Duncan enjoyed the good life to its fullest, 1940 - 1955. The good life–not the easy life. The days and years were full–of work and worry, of pursuits and pleasures. They filled gardens with vegetables, and galleries with paintings. They gave unselfish service to church, to family and to friends.

Though Margaret and Duncan never learned to *love* the city, they enjoyed the advantages city life brought. They bought season tickets to the Goodman Theatre. They encouraged the children to take advantage of the city's museum programs. They gave their children opportunity for cultural development–violin lessons, piano lessons, art lessons and dancing lessons.

Gary did well on the piano but he did even better on the violin. Ellen Claire was persistent about her piano lessons, beginning at age five with Elsie Waldvogel, then taking lessons from Veldron Matheson. Later she studied with Bea Ward and Felix Ganz at the Chicago Musical College Prep School. The CMC was in an old Victorian hotel on Van Buren St., and was complete with heavy brocade upholstery, a beautiful wrought-iron openwork elevator, and Rudolph Ganz himself–dressed in his striped trousers, spats and cut-away coattails–was the essence of old-world charm.

An old Victorian mansion just off Milwaukee Ave. served as Miss Zwiefka's dance studio where Ellen Claire went for ballet classes. She recalled the beautiful old stained glass windows of that house as well as the rigorous training she never felt equal to. "Why I got dance lessons," she wrote, "was because I was so clumsy." Even though she was the fastest girl runner in the eighth grade she lamented her lack of dance talent. "All the other girls could do everything with grace–including sliding down the broad, curving bannister from the second floor–but not me," she wrote. "The worst day of all was the recital. Mother had forgotten to cut open the buttonholes of my costume which she had made and we could only find one safety pin to hold it together right before we had to go on stage. Oh, how I hated being *different*, and I felt different in every way!"

Jane studied piano, but her real interest was in singing. Not a lot was done to encourage her vocal training, but she was persistent and developed a truly beautiful singing voice. She sang with the high school choir and with the A Capella Choir at Brigham Young University. Later she sang with the renowned Ralph Woodward Chorale and was also accepted into the Mormon Tabernacle Choir shortly before her death.

Margaret and Duncan both enjoyed singing in the Chicago Stake Choir. The choir was directed by Van Ward, who was also the assistant conductor of the Chicago Symphony. It was a topnotch, award-winning choir made up of voices from all the wards of the Chicago Stake. Gary recalled, "Once when Janie had forgotten her door key, she sat on the front porch whimpering, waiting for Beryl to come home and let her in, because Mom and Dad had gone to an early Stake Choir practice."

The year that Gary went away to college at Brigham Young University, Beryl Jensen from Provo, Utah, came to live at the Weaver's house. Dr. and Mrs. Jensen wrote to Bishop Weaver for help in locating a suitable L.D.S. family for their daughter to live with while she attended Roosevelt College. Since Gary's upstairs room would be vacant, it seemed like a good idea for the new student to take up residence there. Cousin Betty Mitchell had been there the year before briefly as a student at the Stevens Modeling School.

Beryl had a beautiful singing voice that was being professionally trained. She sang for many church functions and would sometimes use Ellen Claire as accompanist. Beryl was a wonderful addition to the family. Her charming personality and depth of character made her a much loved and admired "big sister" for E.C. and Jane. They loved to hear all about the Provo schools she had attended and all about her friends and the fun she had–especially in junior high school–something Chicago did not then have!

The Weavers later followed the progress of Beryl's career with great interest. She earned many wonderful opportunities for her musical development and wisely took advantage of them. After Margaret's death Beryl somehow lost touch with the family, and so it was with great joy that a reunion took place in 1984: after the performance by Beryl Jensen Smiley on Temple Square that Jane and Ellen Claire attended, she wrote about her memories of her Chicago days:

> *It was an important and significant part of my life–my growing up. I think of those years often.*
>
> *It was my first time away from home, but I moved to another "home," which made it pretty painless. Moving in with Bishop Weaver and his wonderful wife, beautiful and vivacious daughters and handsome son was a totally positive experience.*
>
> *My voice teacher at BYU, Dr. John Halliday, was afraid I was too young, at 19, to leave home for the wicked city of Chicago. But I felt good about it, and really, that is the time I got closer to the Church and have stayed that way. I have told many people since then, that living with the Weavers really put a new and more important emphasis on Church in my life than had ever been. I will always be grateful for that.*
>
> *I enjoyed my study with John Howell at Roosevelt College. I developed my voice a great deal. The un-serious romances were fun. The weather was awful.*
>
> *I remember, with awe, Ellen Claire–always smiling and good natured–up at the crack of dawn, or before, practicing the piano. Cute Janie with her wonderful dimples–also smiling. And handsome Gary, also eyes twinkling and smiling. In fact I can't recall a sour note in my time in the Weaver home. All of you are good natured and happy people. Brother Weaver, the painter-teacher in the upstairs room, kind and soft spoken. Margaret–strong and capable–and good natured. I loved you all!*

Beryl had forgotten what an unbearable tease Gary had been when he lived at home, keeping his sisters and herself always "en garde" for a prank of some sort; or how disappointing it was to come home to a cold room when Margaret had forgotten to open the heat registers for her.

Duncan held the position of head of the Steinmetz High School art department for quite some time. He also continued his education until he earned his master's degree in art education from the Art Institute of Chicago in 1950. He then responded to the opportunity to move to Chicago school district headquarters in the Loop to illustrate brochures produced by the curriculum department.

Duncan continued with his personal artistic pursuits, producing a remarkable number of very fine paintings. Quite a few were sold. He worked in oils, watercolors, charcoal, chalk and casein. His paintings were exhibited in shows by the Chicago Art Institute, the Austin, Illinois, Town Hall Art Guild and the Springville, Utah, Art Center. One exhibit at the Austin Town Hall was a memorable and rewarding experience for the entire family.

The following invitation was sent to family and friends:

*This invitation is cordially extended to you to see the*
*Fall Exhibition of Drawings and Paintings*
*which are being displayed by the Austin Town Hall Art Guild in the*
*Austin Town Hall, Lake and Central Avenues,*
*starting on Saturday, October 23, 1948 and ending Saturday,*
*October 29, 1948.*
*There will be an Opening Tea on Sunday, October 24, 1948 from*
*2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., at which time Dr. C. O. Schneider will show*
*Kodachromes of the Grand Canyon Region.*
*Mr. Henry D. Weaver*
*will exhibit his latest*
*portrait and landscape*
*paintings.*

Duncan also worked on paintings commissioned by various patrons. After his death in 1955 Margaret made some attempts to reacquire what paintings she could. Even though his artist's loft was often used as a bishop's retreat (many people came to see him there), he always kept his brushes ready. He used his camera to photograph landscape scenery, and would paint from his color slides, and he became a very good photographer. After Duncan's death Margaret divided the paintings among the children. The art work that hangs on the walls of their homes has been a continual source of pleasure to them and their families. Even though Duncan lived only long enough to see his first grandchild, Kathryn Weaver, it is his paintings more than anything else that have helped his grandchildren to become acquainted with him and to develop a special kind of closeness to him.

D. H. Lawrence, the famous author, once said: "Thou shalt acknowledge the wonder." Duncan could do that, and he passed it on to his children. He had an eye and an awareness for color. He could see the truly purple mountains. He loved the rugged western landscape–the power and the mystery of the land. He could feel the vibrations of past cultures–the buffalos still stirring. For as a very young child he had seen the vast herds of them across the prairies.

The myths and images of the west have shaped the work of many American artists. Duncan loved and painted the Canadian Rockies but some of his best works were his paintings of the Tetons Mountains of Wyoming.

Duncan did quite a number of portraits. Some were in charcoal, but most were in oil. He was very good with the likenesses, but found it difficult to please certain patrons.

Duncan also had a clever and unique artistic signature, which was a caricature of himself. Veldron Matheson recalled it: "Last summer we saw a beautiful Logan Square tablecloth at Lorna Rubow's home. The tablecloth was enhanced with various size circles containing autographs of members of the Logan Square Ward. This was prior to 1947. Your father's signature was most unusual–it outlined a profile."[3]

In a tribute by Roland Kaiser at Margaret's funeral, Duncan's talent was mentioned: "Duncan was a gifted artist with oil paint and canvas–many of his creations are to be found in Illinois and in Utah. As supervisor of art in the Chicago schools, he made his talent available to hundreds of boys and girls and we can presume that some of them went on to achieve success, perhaps fame." Roland and Duncan used to meet regularly for lunch:

> *This weekly contact, in the Chicago "loop" was for the purpose of exchanging views and experiences on a wide range of subjects and from them I learned how deeply rooted he was in the Church, of his extraordinary understanding of life in general, of his nobility of character. These conversations I recall vividly, and with deep satisfaction.*[4]

Margaret began teaching elementary school in Franklin Park when Jane, her youngest child, started school. Teachers were in great demand, and she began her work in Franklin Park with a provisional certificate. She also continued to upgrade her education by taking night courses and summer school workshops until she completed her bachelor's degree. She attended Pestalozzi-Froebel[5] Teachers College, Wright Jr. College, Concordia Teachers College and Brigham Young University.

Both Janie and Ellen Claire went with Margaret to school in Franklin Park, and Margaret taught Jane in her third grade class one year. Many of her years teaching were spent with the third grade. Some years later a letter came from one of her former students. He hadn't realized that she had passed away, and so the letter had been forwarded to Naomi Weaver. In the letter he talked about his pleasure in the life he was enjoying and he expressed his appreciation to the one teacher who had, some twenty years earlier, inspired in him such a desire to lead a happy and successful life.

When a faculty memorial was sent by the Franklin Park Public Schools a letter from Vance Hester, Superintendent, said of Margaret: "Her Christian leadership

---

[3] *This is Your Life Logan Square*, folder and program 1964. Also see Appendix.

[4] Roland G. Kaiser, *Margaret Holmes Weaver eulogy.*

[5] Pestalozzi-Froebel Teachers College, a family-run school centered on training its students for teaching kindergarten; Nov.2009< http://www.lib.colum.edu/archives/briefhistory.php >

will long be remembered in this community. We who worked with her cherish her memory. We are grateful for her service and friendship."[6]

Margaret was an intense worker. Whatever she did, she did it with great energy. She could accomplish more in one day's time than all the rest of the family put together. People were always amazed at her capacity of for work. Both her parents had been dedicated to making the best of life. They epitomized the hard work ethic. They did indeed make something out of that Canadian prairie. Margaret brought that same enthusiasm and gusto to her tasks, whatever they were. She was just as energetic in the classroom as she was at home with the laundry or scrubbing. Her students at school were high achievers.

They also learned to play the Song Flutes[7] very well because of her endeavors. Song Flutes were inexpensive recorder-like instruments that had a beautiful tone when played in large groups. The children learned the rudiments of music and could play harmony as well as melody.

But Jane always said that it was a mistake for her to be in Mother's class when she was a third grader. Both Margaret and Jane had strong personalities, full of "pepper" and "vinegar." Being together in a classroom put an unnecessary strain on their relationship at home and at school. Jane said: "The teacher I remember best from grade school was my mother, I am sure, if for no other reason than the fact that it was the biggest struggle of my little life to remember to call her Mrs. Weaver at school, and at the same time to refrain from smashing the kids that called me teacher's pet."

Ellen Claire found it easy enough to be the child of a teacher in elementary school as long as she wasn't in Margaret's classroom, but she was reluctant to admit to friends that her father taught at Steinmetz High when she attended there during her freshman and sophomore years.

The summer between her sophomore and junior year of high school E.C. helped Duncan build a house in Mt. Prospect, a suburb of Chicago. It meant getting up very early every morning and driving out to Mt. Prospect to proceed with work on the "shell" they had purchased. Framing, roof, brick, slab and rough-ins were all completed. Duncan and E.C. did the insulation, sheetrock, tape and bedding, painting and all the trim carpenter work. They worked sixteen-hour days and managed to get the house finished for occupancy by the time school started in the fall.

It was hard to leave the lovely home on Melrose Street and the Logan Square Ward. Looking back, it seems like a questionable thing to have done. The thought behind the change involved purchasing two homes–one in Utah for retirement, and a

---

[6] Margaret Holmes Weaver, Estate Papers file.

[7] The Song Flute is designed so it can be used for musical training as early as 4th grade. The fingering is so simple and the instrument so easy to blow that playing is fun. Tone holes are scientifically located for the natural position of the fingers, to simplify fingering. The Song Flute is built in the Key of C and no tuning is required.

smaller "temporary" home near Chicago until they could move to their "Orchard in Orem" (Utah) which they had purchased the previous summer. Also at that time there was a fair amount of fear among many Americans regarding a possible atomic disaster. Many bomb shelters were being built and many people wanted to move out of the cities to be safer. And having a missionary, Gary, out preaching "last days" to others and writing home about it carried added impact to the fear of another full scale war. World War II had made such a tremendous impact on everyone who lived through that era that when our nation became involved in the Korean conflict, many thought it would become World War III.

The Mt. Prospect house seemed to be a good idea at the time. But after two years of difficult commuting to the city for work and to the North Shore Ward for church, Margaret and Duncan sold the Mt. Prospect house. In Melrose Park on Grand Avenue they found a house that was quite convenient to Margaret's school. But it meant changing wards again. This time they attended West Suburban Ward. A lot of energy went into fixing up the Grand Avenue house and planting a large garden.

After completing three years of pre-dental education at Brigham Young University, Gary had accepted a call to the Texas-Louisiana Mission. He served until September 1952 when he was honorably released three weeks early in order to accept his registration in the University of Illinois Dental School. A fear of the draft if he were not directly enrolled in school made this seem very important, especially to Margaret. He also managed to work a wedding into this tight schedule. Of course, this turned out to be the best decision he ever made. He married a wonderful girl whom he had met at Brigham Young University, Naomi Bangerter of Granger, Utah.

The wedding was on September 27th 1952 in the Salt Lake temple. They had kept up a correspondence during his mission and decided to marry as soon as his mission was completed. She had completed her education before their marriage and so she was fortunate to find a position teaching in Franklin Park alongside her new mother-in-law, Margaret.

Duncan and Margaret were very fond of their new daughter-in-law. She was bright and beautiful and so thin that Duncan would make her a milkshake every evening to help her "put a little meat on her bones!"

The family worked together in every way to help each one meet his or her goals. Gary and Naomi, "Nana" shared the small house in Mr. Prospect briefly before they found a mobile home of their own to rent. Later they rented an apartment over a garage in an affluent neighborhood in Oak Park. Their landlord was an eccentric old millionaire.

Their first baby, Kathryn, was born November 1st 1953 and she was adored right from the start by everyone. Duncan composed this little poem reflecting his great fondness for his daughter-in-law and the new baby:[8]

[8] Henry Duncan Weaver, Letters file.

*Hands!*
*Hands that have known toil;*
*Whose fingers lovingly enclose a tiny fist.*
*Hands that put aside the hourly task to wipe a*
*Tear that's very like a mist–*
*Hands that gently touch an injured cheek*
*And smooth a tiny wrinkle on wee brow–*
*Hands that clasp a form so tenderly,*
*And with an infinite love endow.*
*My daughter's hands, so beautiful and sure–*
*Naomi's hands*!

Ellen Claire graduated from Arlington Heights High School before the move to Grand Avenue and worked that summer at American Air Filter Corporation. This business was located in the same thirty-story skyscraper at 228 N. LaSalle Street that housed the Chicago Board of Education, so Duncan and Ellen Claire would ride the commuter train to work together every day that summer. She wrote:

*We would ride the old commuter trains into the city every day and on hot days the windows would be open and the soot from the coal-fired engines would blow in. I would have to dust myself off as I got off the train. I remember the white eyelet dress I often wore would be just covered with little black flecks.*

*My post as a switchboard operator and receptionist looked directly out at the Merchandise Mart and down at the Chicago River. My office was on the 11th floor and Daddy's was on the 17th. Sometimes I would go to his office at noon and we would spread out a little sack lunch on one of the back room art department worktables.*

*If the weather was nice we would walk down by the river and maybe sit on the steps under the bridge on Wacker Drive and eat our lunch there. Occasionally something exciting would be happening on the river, like waterskiing for the TV cameras. It certainly looked unwholesome, skiing on that muddy old Chicago River!*

*Daddy always seemed so pleased to have my company and he liked to talk about important things–ideas, philosophy. He had lots of friends and he liked showing me off to them. I was as tall as he was which always surprised people, for I really looked more like my mother.*

*I recall that my perceptions told me that not everyone gave him sufficient regard. I thought he was such a great man that it disturbed my sense of equity to have people treat him like just an ordinary good-old-boy. I was used to the adulation he received at the high school from the students and from the members of the Church where he was a key figure, but his work at the main office on the art staff of the curriculum division of the Chicago Board of Education was not as rewarding for him as teaching was. He missed the students.*

Ellen Claire wrote more about Duncan:

*Dad was an armchair philosopher. He always had an astute observation to make about life–sometimes humorous–sometimes painfully truthful. He was never stoic, just a little bit wistful at times. He loved puns and plays on words. He could make up a jingle to suit any occasion.*

*He drew people to him, naturally and easily. He was truly non-judgmental. I remember his mother as being astutely observant, but also very understanding and forgiving. And so this family trait of non-judgement made Daddy approachable, and lots of people did. I can remember many visitors to our home–people who needed to have a private talk and a sharing of burdens. I never remember his having broken a confidence before, during or after his years as bishop. He was a man of principle. He was not afraid to voice his opposition to that which he felt needed a dissenting viewpoint.*

*Whenever I think of him now I see him in his prime–robust, vigorous, hard-working, never with a complaint, always with a joke–sometimes corny, sometimes brilliant.*

E. C. remembered her father's hair:

*It was so thick and curly that he used to wear a little cap on it when it was wet to hold it down. The cap was an old nylon stocking of my mother's and he would knot it and cut the leg and foot off and there would remain this little tassel. Off he went to church on Sunday mornings with his hair still wet. In the thirty minute drive to church it would dry and he'd have that nifty plastered-down look that was popular then. Our good neighbors on Melrose Street would see him going out looking like that every Sunday morning, and what else could they conclude? We later learned that they thought that cap was a sign of the priesthood! And when we found that out, we all thought it was a great joke. As the gray began to creep into Duncan's hair he looked quite distinguished, though whenever he got a close haircut, and most of the gray was clipped, he looked years younger–at least temporarily.*

*Daddy was often preoccupied. It would sometimes take a long time to get an answer to a childish question. I have often wondered what it was he was preoccupied with, or if it was just a habit. I find myself doing the same thing–rather absently going along in my own world, only to discover that one of the children as been try to get my attention. (And I have noticed the same trait in my own children when the grandchildren need attention.)*

When E. C. went off to college at Brigham Young University, Duncan kept up a very good correspondence with her though the mail. Cartoons and drawings often enlivened his letters.

*I have never forgiven myself for the one instance when I should not have been obedient. My first semester he (Duncan) sent me a beautiful, magnificently eloquent letter of his deeper feelings. It contained a good deal of the essence of his inner world of hopes and fears, sensitivities to people*

*and to the beauty and pathos of life around him. I destroyed that letter, as he requested. But I have always been sorry. Had I been mature enough to read between the lines I may have recognized his suspicion that his life would be shortened.*

At this same time Jane was a busy teenager. She was involved in school and church activities. "For the first time in my life I had a bedroom all to myself. It was wonderful, and I even enjoyed helping Mom and Dad take care of the acre of lawn and garden."[9]

Jane excelled in school and participated in lots of activities. She also enjoyed the West Suburban Ward because they had such a good youth group at the church. Life was busily rolling along through these "golden" years, and Margaret and Duncan were beginning to realize some of the rewards for which they had so diligently toiled.

But all this was soon to change.

* * *

[9] Jane Weaver Toronto, *My Story*.

# Changes

One day in the summer of 1955 while the family was enjoying a restaurant dinner, Duncan experienced difficulty in swallowing. The trouble persisted, and the doctors did an exploratory operation only to find the cancer of the esophagus had already metastasized throughout his body. He made a brief recovery after surgery, but declined rapidly and passed away on December 5th 1955. Several letters he wrote to his mother reveal both the anguish and the courage with which he faced this ordeal. And it was a difficult time for the family, too. Gary was in dental school and Nana was teaching. It was decided that Ellen Claire would remain home from college to care for her father so that Margaret could continue with her teaching. E.C. was forever grateful for the experience of caring for him and sharing a special time together. She wrote: "I learned to be brave, but I felt I had to. My little niece Kathryn who was about eighteen months old at the time, would come every day and her presence was a sweet and cheering influence during a rugged time for all." Letters were exchanged between Duncan and his family in Canada:

> *July 29, 1955*
> *Dear Mother,*
> *Thank you for your wonderful letters! They helped. I am on my way to the office this morning, have been away from it three days. Feel much better this morning. Wed., 27th I went in for more x-rays and the doctor wants to do another (tomorrow) gastroscopic examination. These are rather rough! I had one last Saturday and really don't relish this one too much. Last night we were at Frank Stonesifer's home for a buffet supper. I ate carefully–did OK. Later I was administered to and Margaret and I both felt better.*
> *Our medical advisors are getting the difficulty narrowed down to the cordia, the connection between the esophagus and stomach. This closes up in spasm and food does not pass into the stomach. I weigh 147–lost 27 pounds in 6 weeks. My "bay window" has vanished!*
> *Our weather has been very hot, will go to 100 degrees again today. Last week when we decided we could no longer stand the heat a whiff of cool Canadian air came in to stay for a day only.*
> *We are trying to arrange our vacation to go to a nearby place for a couple of weeks where we can just loaf and rest. Much will depend on the outcome of the next two days. Gary is back in Salt Lake. E.C. is still working. Margaret will be through with her summer school next week. She is tired! ... I'll write you again on Monday to tell you details. We all send our love, Duncan*[10]

[10] Henry Duncan Weaver, *Letters* file.

*Aug. 8, 1955*

*Dear Mother,*

*I came home from St. Luke's Hospital last Thursday p.m. to wait for cooler weather for my operation. I am feeling fairly well–just loafing around the house and trying to eat enough to hold my own. My trouble is a congestion in the cordia... there is a growth or condition that has it blocked to such an extent that food is very difficult to get down. I am down to 145 lbs. Which is what I weighed in 1928-29 when I left for Chicago. I usually weigh about 174-5. This is a loss of about 30 pounds. If I can keep this weight and regain my strength it will be wonderful.*

*I underwent two gastroscopic examinations; a 3/4 inch tube is pushed down the throat and esophagus and with lights, mirrors and lenses the doctors can actually see the inside of the stomach. The operation is a strenuous one since the patient must be conscious in order to cooperate with the doctors. I came through with flying colors the second time. The first time I underwent it, I sustained too much shock.*

*I was at the hospital for six days and am scheduled for the end of this week (likely) if the weather holds. This next trip will be a matter of 10-12 days and then likely a couple of weeks convalescing before I can get back to the office.*

*Jane went to the beach last Friday and has a bad head cold. She is not too strong! Ellen C. Is working steadily and is getting ready to return to the Y this fall. Gary phoned me the other night. He and his wife are enjoying Salt Lake City this summer.*

*We had very hot weather last two weeks but now cool Canadian air is giving us considerable relief. The day is bright. Margaret is washing. E.C. is shopping, Jane is sleeping.*

*I had intended that this should get to you long before this. My energy has been low. I spend ½ time in bed–watch TV and try to eat. The doctors have me on a high protein diet–meats, eggs, milk, cheese, all things I like–but I have arrived at the state when food is not interesting. I can't eat strawberries or raw fruit and I'm especially fond of them. We have had all the strawberries we could eat and more all summer. But the girls have been able to enjoy it all.*

*I am in fine spirits. I know that everything will come out OK. I am amazed at the great number of friends I have who write and call and inquire about me.*

*May God grant you the best of health, and send you comfort. My regards to Lynn*[11] *and his family, I shall always be grateful to him for his wonderful treatment of you.*

*With all my love,*

*Duncan*

[11] Lynn was the son of Bryan Meldrum, Duncan's mother's second husband.

*Aug. 27th, 1955*

*Dear Mother,*

*I'm flat on my back in bed, but feeling very fine considering this is the start of the third week only. Margaret gave me my breakfast at 8 a.m. Menu: bacon and egg, oatmeal, ½ cantaloupe, tea with cream and sugar. I'm certainly pleased with my new stomach!*

*I'm at home, came out of the hospital Wed.–there only 12 days. The Dr. thinks I'm a miracle man.*

*I kept close to the administration of the priesthood. Friends rose up from everywhere. I did not know I had so many. The cards poured in just like Christmas time and are still coming.*

*You people have been wonderful. I appreciated your letters. Mother, you are certainly a queen. God bless you!*

*I was on the operating table 8 hours. A whole battery of surgeons worked on me right straight through from 7:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. I remember nothing except the general hurry and scrubbing etc. going around me.*

*One of the doctors explained that when I wakened up, not to be alarmed at all the tubes and pipes and fixtures I would fine–just routine he said.*

*Dr. Reynolds was the major surgeon. He is the first man I have fallen in love with at first sight. My own doctor Midgley stood in to observe, and a young Mormon doctor was present for 4 hours. He gave me the hypo that put me off! Just 10 seconds and I was gone.*

*I was packed in a thermal bag, temp. reduced to 80 degrees. I took 8 pints of blood. My left arm was stretched on a board to expose my left side. I was fed through a vein in my left ankle, and for 8 more days. My doctor tells me that they cut out the cordia, the connection between the esophagus and the stomach. This had completely closed up. They took the upper ½ of the stomach, or a sizeable area, the spleen, and part of the pancreas. They sewed the stomach directly to the esophagus and then made a new outlet for the stomach.*

*To prevent clots they tied off the large femoral veins in each leg. These are giving me my greatest difficulty as all the blood into my legs has to find a new way back.*

*For 5 days I had special nurses round the clock, and for three more days, day and night nurses. The hospital is the best in the U. S. if not the world.*

*Margaret has been most devoted. She made the 50 mile trip every day in the meanest weather, 90-98 degrees, and when I needed her she just always seemed to be there. The Dr. said I could come home after the first week. We were surprised when it actually materialized.*

*So here I lie, minus a rib and all the junk they found. I have had a most glorious strengthening of my testimony. God has been merciful unto me. His Priesthood bore me up.*

*Frank and Allen both called. I'm so grateful.*

*My family is all now together. Gary got here Wed. E.C. will stay with me this quarter. She will also take care of Kathryn.*

*Everything is progressing beautifully. I report back to clinic in 4 weeks. I weigh 130 lbs. I can walk, but slowly. I praise God. "Though I*

*walk through the valley of the shadow of death I fear no evil, for Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."*

*We all send our love, precious mother. May God's blessings be yours.*

*Humbly and devotedly,*
*Duncan*

Margaret was very frightened at the prospects of losing Duncan. But she courageously faced each new challenge without panic. She did her best to shield Duncan and the children from her own fears, but she did communicate to family and friends, reaching out for the comfort the family so desperately needed. The response was overwhelming. She kept a scrapbook that contained over 225 cards sent to Duncan while he was ill. She also saved several letters. One was from N. Lorenzo "Snow" Mitchell, his brother-in-law:

*Dear Duncan,*

*The telephone call of last evening to your home seemed to bring you so near that I had a strong desire to give you a blessing. I wish I were close enough to lay my hands on your head and give you a Priesthood blessing. This I have so much wanted to do.*

*I have thought about you so many times during your illness but have put off writing to you until "tomorrow" only to learn that tomorrow never comes.*

*I shall never forget our close association. The summers we spent at the University of Alberta and the most enjoyable times we had together playing violin and piano duets. And then the grand climax of that association to culminate in marrying into the same wonderful family. You and I have been so wonderfully blessed in the mothers of our children, and I am sure you have felt as I have that we have each a choice companion.*

*My heart sorrows at the pain and distress you have suffered and being so far away from you I have been unable to do anything about it except pray to God that He would be good to you. You have been and are such a wonderful friend. You have disseminated so much love and kindness to others and have been so helpful to God's children. Long have I loved you for your integrity, your faithfulness, your devotion to your family and your loyalty to the Church. You have been and are one of the stalwarts of the Church and Kingdom and stand by Jesus Christ in the promulgation of the truth. God bless you beloved friend. May God be good to you and may your wounded body be healed that you may continue to fill the full measure of your creation. And may God bless your wonderful wife. It is wonderful to have a companion so loyal and true as Margaret has been and will continue to be.*

*At this moment I leave with you my love, my peace, my benediction. May the powers of Heaven bring you continued faith, courage and an assurance of your well-being.*

*Be of good cheer and all will be well, for the sunshine of God will penetrate your soul and you will rejoice in his goodness and his love.*

*Again, I love you as a brother,*
*Snow*

At a family gathering at the Holmes's in Raymond, Aunt Melba Holmes had everyone write a line or two to Duncan. His brother-in-law, Myron, Margaret's brother started it off:

> *Dear Duncan,*
> *Who would have thought when we walked down LaSalle Street [Chicago] of a major operation for you, old timer. I would very much like to be at your side as I am in spirit. To bother you with platitudes is far from my idea. You possess more fortitude than I ever had. We shall see you next winter. My blessing on you and Margaret and family; you will battle it out to its success and you know it. I have measured your mettle–Myron.*
>
> *Just a note to you. The group has just cleaned up a watermelon, and we all wish you could be here too. We surely hope Duncan will soon be OK again. Martha has shown us her pictures of the trip to England. We are about ready to move into the home in town and then we will find out just how much junk we have gathered during the past years. As ever, Godfrey*
>
> *Just a little line from me too. I'm glad to tell you of all you folks have meant to us. Many's the time I suppose you have felt that we were very unappreciative of you and what you have done... I hope that thru this time you will be blest and things will come out as you want them to. We all here wish you all the blessings that can come to you and that not too many days of worry will come to you. As ever, Ellen*
>
> *Dear Margaret and Duncan–Just finished the dishes after one of our usual good family dinners. Good stories, good family feeling and plenty food. There's nothing like a good family. We missed you, Weavers. There's not much to write, our thoughts are mostly feelings. Your place was vacant. We hope next time we can all be together. It's hard to write, but you have our prayers and best wishes. Love, Virginia*

A number of the nieces and nephews added their bit and the family letter concluded with a note from Melba:

> *Hi folks, had me quite a time getting this written but I finally got them all to write a little note, knowing how you all would appreciate the 'get well' thoughts. Have enjoyed having the Mitchells and keep thinking of your little stay here last summer. Got to get well, Duncan, to come again soon. Lucille came out with your letter, Margaret. Myron read it and told us its contents. Surely hope by now, Duncan, you are feeling better and the pain subsided. You certainly have our thoughts and good wishes and if there is anything we can do don't be afraid to let us know. The Mitchells are going from here to Pullman to see Betty, then Seattle to see Shirley. Richard and his new wife along too, in their car. Ellen over to breakfast along with the others were at Virginia's last night. Surely wish you all had been there too. Love and lots of it, Melba.*

Each day Duncan grew worse. Ellen Claire was constantly at his side in administering injections of the pain medication Demerol and encouraging him to eat whatever he could. She hid from the truth of the inevitable in the false hope that he would recover. But Duncan knew different. Much later, when Janie wrote her autobiography as an assignment for an English class she said:

> *My father knew he was going to die, although, because of the instructions of the doctors, no one had told him. He never said a word of complaint and was never anything but cheerful, although the weight that fell off rapidly from him was replaced by an unbearable and constantly increasing pain that no drugs could stop. I watched his very close friend, Stake President Edmunds, enter his room to administer to him and come out again weeping because he knew that my father would not recover.*[12]

Duncan's mother came from Canada to be with him and the family. She was a great comfort to the entire family and added to the feeling of stability during a very stressful time. His sister Lucille wrote to him November 14th 1955 just three weeks before his death:

> *Dear Duncan,*
>
> *This is a busy old world we live in, not that I get so much done at home because I've always been puttery, but the boys have the radio on and etc., so the only time I can write is late at night, then I'm sleepy or early in the morning, then I'm sleepy, so I'm writing this on Government time.*
>
> *It's a cold, snowy November day not quite so cold, but still below zero. Has been to minus thirty degrees night before last, hope we soon see the good old Chinook... in the sky and feel the soft warm touch of our good old S. S. W. Wind.*
>
> *It must be nice to have Mother with you. Have you traveled far down the land of years? Have you been back to the homestead days? I remember the heat waves dancing on the eastern horizon in the hot days and the flicker of the prairie fires, a fearful sight to childish eyes. In the night I remember the cool good taste of the water brought up from the spring in the barrels on the go-devil. I can well remember the smell of supper cooking inside the house and the smell of the smoke of buffalo chips filling the evening air outside.*
>
> *Do you remember the box of dried prunes with the paper lace over the top, the picture you drew for me to fill the center and the picture we hung on the wall, our combined efforts–it looked nice over the tar paper lining.*
>
> *One event of homestead days I'll never forget is the hail storm that pounded our good crop into nasty green pulp. The loud noise of the huge stones on the roof, the flash of lightning and the loud thunder, then when it was all over, Mother and I gathered hail stones and Mother made ice cream and we froze it in buckets. The cool sweet taste took away some of the shock and horror of the storm and left a better memory.*

---

[12] Jane Weaver Toronto, *My Story*.

*My mind often travels back to school days in Stirling. The long spring days when it was so hard to stay in school, the family prayers in the morning, when I was sure I would be late, Father's "Our Father in Heaven" and the eight-thirty school bell tolling away, my eyes shut so tight I saw yellow edged with purple afterward.*

*Do you remember when you joined the navy and I wrote and asked if O. S. Meant "Old Salt?" How was I to know you could possibly an Ordinary Seaman?*

*Yes, it's fun to travel back down the lane of years. Sometimes it was shadowed by the cacti of bad luck and poverty, but always we had the sunshine of love and understanding.*

*I'm sure when you receive this you will be feeling much better, and will soon be back to good health and will be your own wonderful self again. Wherever you have been you have been most outstanding and I've been proud to say Duncan Weaver is my brother.*

*...give my love to our mother and tell her I will write soon. We are all well at Raymond, and Lyle says they are fine at Magrath. Remember I love you, big brother, and know you'll soon be well again.*

*Lucille*

Two of Duncan's brothers, Allen and Frank, arrived by plane for a brief visit the first week in December. They came to say goodbye, and stayed to bury their brother.

"On the night of December 4th 1955 Daddy suffered from heart failure several times, each time revived by my brother," wrote Jane:

*When at last he seemed to rest a little better ... my mother sent my sister and me to bed. With a start I woke up in what seemed like the middle of the night, and after several unsuccessful attempts to sleep I crept downstairs to find my sister weeping and my mother holding my father's head in her arms, the tears streaming down her face and her eyes looking out the window toward the first rays of the sun. He had died in her arms.*

*My brother took it very hard... but the next day he ... said he had a dream to tell us about. Daddy had come to him and told him not to grieve and to comfort the family, for he had been needed in the Lord's work and had been taken for the purpose of teaching the spirits in paradise. He showed my brother the work he was doing and the myriads of people waiting for the gospel to be brought to them and for their genealogy work to be done. He recited to him the names of many people who needed to have their work done, and he then left him with a testimony of the importance of genealogy work for the dead and spreading the gospel to the living.*

*Mt father was buried on December 8th 1955 in Chapel Hills Gardens, Westchester, Illinois.* [13]

[13] Jane Weaver Toronto, *My Story*.

The family was stunned with grief and sadness, but were never bitter. Margaret made the painful adjustment, seemingly taking widowhood in stride, and keeping the children closer.

The ten years after Duncan's death were filled with work, responsibility and difficult assignments for Margaret. She had to finish educating her children and plan for her own retirement. She often said that she never fully appreciated the load that Duncan carried until she had to shoulder it all by herself.

Ellen Claire returned to Brigham Young University in January 1956. In February she met Marty, Earl Martin Shaeffer, Jr. They were married eighteen months later in the Los Angeles, California temple.

Gary and Nana were living in Oceanside, California while Gary was serving as a Navy dentist. Marty and E. C. enjoyed a California Route One honeymoon, then returned to BYU where Marty finished his senior year and E.C. began teaching fourth grade at Wasatch Elementary School.

Jane graduated from Leyden High School and attended BYU. After her graduation she taught school in Utah, then California. She also worked one summer in Reno, Nevada as a change girl in a casino before she decided to become a missionary. She was called to the South American Chilean mission.

During this time Margaret carried on with her duties as Chicago Stake Relief Society President, which meant a good deal of traveling, as well as her full-time teaching at Franklin Park. In a letter to E.C. she wrote: "Tomorrow night right after school I pick up V. Wolley way up in Northbrook and we go to West Allis Ward in South Milwaukee–so that's a long trip up and back about midnight or 1 a.m."

She also voiced concern over her material well-being. The letter continued:

> *Tonight we got the new salary schedule–the board presented it. (They about ignored our request.) But it isn't bad–but penalizes the 10 or 15 on the greater years of teaching it seems. Now as to my financial standing. I have given considerable thought to my condition–that I have only 3 more earning years–being 62 this July... I surely want to be independent ... I am surely thankful to be working and more thankful for my good health. Daddy's pension and mine will not keep me. We lived and saved in those years when money was hard to come by and get returns when it means little–and until I'm 65 I have to pay tax on that!*[14]

Gary had set up his first dental clinic in Granger, Utah, and Margaret had sufficient resources to build a modest house in Granger to be near Gary and his family during her retirement. But Margaret's time to enjoy that lovely home was cut short.

Breast cancer was discovered in 1963. This was a tremendous blow to someone who had hardly ever experienced a sick day in her life. She was given the best of medical care by experts in Chicago, Granger, Tucson and Clovis, New Mexico. But when she was no longer able to do battle with the world and its ills in her typical style of "Pepper and Vinegar" she became a docile angel of sweetness and

[14] Letter about 1960.

composure. Jane interrupted her mission in Chile to come and care for her mother during her last weeks at her home in Granger.

It became a sweet time for them to be together and to cement the bonds of peace, love and affection. But the decision for Jane to come home was reached only after a good deal of consideration. In a letter New Year's Eve of 1964 Ellen Claire wrote from Clovis, New Mexico to Jane in Santiago, Chile:

> *Janie dearest, So sorry not to send you a better "report card." I'm down (hepatitis) and the kids need tonsillectomies and Mother is not doing well. She has certainly gone down hill since she has been here. She wants you home–to care for her in Salt Lake. She is tired... and the strain of living with a young family is hard. We (Weaver and us) have been discouraging her asking you to come home because we thought it wouldn't work. But I told Mama if she wanted to ask you to come home I wouldn't oppose her anymore. But you also must decide. It would not be easy, but then it would not be too long, if what the doctor indicates is so–a matter of months. So Jane, you'll have to pray about it, discuss it with your president, then do what you think is best.*

Included with E.C.'s letter was one from Margaret to Jane explaining the seriousness of the situation and added: ... "So you know I need help desperately and I am asking you–could you be with me a few months? ... I'd see that you could finish your mission... please send a note soon. Gary and E.C. are not favorable but the doctor says I should decide. I am ready now to go and I surely hate to distress you, but all is OK. We'll keep notes coming." From Ellen Claire's journal we read:

> *Saturday, January 2, 1965–Mother is here and has been here about a month. She is ill and has gone down hill since she arrived. She is in pain and is very blue and I'm not much good to her being ill myself. It is so sad to see her in such a condition. Now that she is free from her teaching and has some money to spend traveling, etc., it can't be spent with pleasure. My only hope is that the Lord will remember her and spare her suffering. We were grieved recently when Gary and Naomi lost their fifth child, stillborn on December 19th... they were so disappointed... life at times seems rather difficult–but then, whatever made us think it would be easy?*
>
> *Thursday, January 7, 1965–We spoke to Jane long distance in Santiago, Chile. Mother wants her to come home, and care for her, go back later and finish the mission. The conversation was disappointing because it was so hard to hear. "You sound like you are gargling," she said.*
>
> *Saturday, January 9, 1965–Mother goes regularly to Dr. Messer for hormone shots to slow the action of the cancer and to Dr. Goodwin for x-ray therapy on her painful spots, mostly ribs.*

While E. C. was confined to bed with hepatitis and little Mart, age 5, had a tonsillectomy, Jo Ellen, age three, went to the Shaeffers' in Palisade, Colorado, for three weeks. This seemed to relieve some of the household stress, but the family was lonesome for their precious little girl.

*Monday, January 11, 1965–Mother is feeling somewhat better. She is a help to me. I cannot do any work at all and she helps with meals and dishes. We are fortunate enough to have ... Mrs. Parsons come in three times a week to clean. Mart began eating today, still has a sore throat but is making good progress.*

Jane did return from Chile to care for Margaret in Granger, though her mission president did not concur with her plan. However, Jane often said it was the right decision because she felt like it was one of the best things she had ever done in her life–to be there to care for her mother in her last weeks. Margaret passed away quietly on Mothers Day, May 9th 1965 at her home in Granger, Utah.

* * *

# Afterword

To abbreviate the happenings in the lives of Gary, Ellen Claire and Jane Weaver in this narrative is not to minimize their importance, but to focus on the main characters of this story–Margaret and Duncan. Briefly: Gary served a call to the Texas-Louisiana Mission, followed by his marriage to Naomi Bangerter of Salt Lake City. He then went to dental school at the University of Illinois, while Nana (Naomi) taught school with Margaret at Franklin Park. This was followed by a tour of duty in the U. S. Navy, after which he set up his dental practice in Granger, Utah, and later in Tucson, Arizona. The Weaver children are Kathryn, David, Claudia, Michelle, William Duncan, John, Robert and Mark. Gary passed away in Phoenix, Arizona December 15th 2004, age 74. Additional family data is found in the Appendix.

Ellen Claire married Earl Martin Shaeffer, Jr., after completing her bachelors degree in education at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. To this marriage were born Earl Martin Shaeffer III, Jo Ellen, John Duncan and Daniel Weaver Shaeffer. The family resided in Clovis, New Mexico for over 40 years. After all the children left home Marty and E.C. moved to Las Cruces, New Mexico where they currently reside (2010).

Jane returned to Chile to resume her missionary duties after Margaret's death in 1965. She was not under any obligation to do so, but she felt strongly inclined to return to Chile. It was only after her return to Chile that she became acquainted with Allen S. Toronto who was also serving in the Chilean mission. After their return to the U. S. they joined forces in a wedding on June 28th 1968 in the Salt Lake temple. They became the parents of Carolyn, Amy, Cynthia and William Duncan Toronto. Jane completed her degree in Education at Brigham Young University prior to her mission. She later earned her master's degree and taught at the university level during the time they spent in Texas. Jane's untimely death at age 46 was on January 25th 1987 in Midway, Utah.[1]

If there are distortions in reporting stories about someone else's life, they have been unintentional. We have viewed the lives of Margaret and Duncan Weaver through the eyes of love. Perhaps if they were writing their own story, there would be other things that Margaret or Duncan would emphasize–other points to make–other stories and experiences to recall. But these are the things that Gary and Ellen Claire and Jane have remembered and cherished. We want to share them with you–our children and our grandchildren.

When reflecting upon the lifestyle of Margaret and Duncan–the lifestyle in which the three of us children grew up–it seems quite different from the way in which

[1] For Jane's full biography see *The Jane Book*, Dec. 2010 < www.OurFamilyBiographies.com >

our own children have been reared in many obvious ways. But consider how different from the previous generation were the lives of Margaret and Duncan. From the wagon trails of 1900 to the Chicago subway rails of the mid-twentieth century the vast differences in their way of life have been noted. A myriad of changes of other kinds took place during their lifetimes as well.

But the essential ingredients for a happy and successful life never change. Margaret and Duncan possessed the traits of their forebears that made life worth living no matter what the circumstances–the strength and intelligence to adapt to new times and new challenges–the integrity trained and developed and modeled by parents–the incorporation of Christian ethics into everyday life–a powerful loyalty to God, Church and country–the incredible strength of family bonds–and a desire to reach for the finer, the uplifting, the beautiful things of this life.

Margaret and Duncan worked hard, very hard. Work was a major coping skill in dealing with life's circumstances. Whatever they achieved, whatever they acquired materially came through the sheer determination of hard work and frugality. Duncan had a pair of black sponge rubber knee pads for scrubbing the floor to help Margaret with the housework. They both taught school and they both shared in the household chores, an idea that was actually much ahead of its time. They worked in the Church together, too. Equality of the sexes was never an issue with them. It was a given.

From the Roland Kaiser eulogy: "If one were to categorize the lives of Margaret and Duncan, you could do it quite accurately by a three-fold statement:

1. They were both artists. 2. They were both dedicated educators. 3. They were both devout members of the Church."

They each had a strong testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for their lives witnessed it. And they loved their children intensely and unconditionally. Margaret often said that she was willing to "turn over heaven and earth" for her kids.

Margaret and Duncan were affectionate with each other and with their children. In spite of an occasional angry outburst, there were always plenty of hugs and kisses to go around. And their warmth reached beyond the inner family circle to others. Again from the Roland Kaiser eulogy:

> *My family has experienced and enjoyed more than twenty years of close friendship with the Weaver family–a friendship which was closely tied to both of our homes and our Church; it was a friendship which was close and warm. We knew of their ideals, their hopes and something of their problems–and every family has some of these. We knew of their talents; we witnessed real strength of character in this family; they were firm in their convictions. Their home radiated their love and devotion for each other. To me, they were the personification of that famous saying, "They were the salt of the earth," and because of these things, their friendship greatly enriched our lives.*

Though Margaret sometimes "stewed" over a decision, she never wavered on her fundamental values. She acted boldly unless in an unfamiliar social situation, and she counseled each of her children: "put your best foot forward." It was said of her,

"In raising her children she had many talents which boil down to just plain wisdom."[2] Though Margaret's feelings of shyness or inadequacy were sometimes evident, she had the self-confidence to deal with almost anything. And she had the amazing ability to laugh at herself. One time she had to call Duncan to come down to the police station and bail her out of trouble. She had been caught speeding, again, and then had the audaciousness to talk back to the police officer. After the fiasco was all over, she could laugh about it, even though Duncan was sincerely irritated with her.

Duncan did, however, have a great sense of humor. He loved a good joke, and took great delight in making puns. He was a deep thinker and a prolific reader. He wrestled with ideas and issues. He loved a good discussion on a controversial topic. And he taught his children how to question things and how to look at life from a variety of viewpoints.

The sweet, the sad, the funny and the tragic–these are the things that fill us with a great sense of gratitude for our heritage. True joy is but an expression of gratitude. "Ingratitude is a crime more despicable than revenge, which is only returning evil for evil, while ingratitude returns evil for good."[3]

It has been two hundred years since the United States Constitutional convention met and wrote the document which has provided the most comprehensive support system for freedom that the world has ever known. Some of our ancestors were already here in the U.S., and played a part in securing those rights and privileges which we take for granted today. Others of our forebears came seeking the liberty which held such hope and promise and the freedom from religious persecution.[4]

The restoration of the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ could have survived only in an environment where liberty would be protected. Our ancestors were drawn to this "Zion" in America, and suffered for both their political and their religious persuasions.

In 1980 Ellen Claire and Naomi Weaver took five of their youngsters (J. Duncan and Daniel Shaeffer; John, Robert and Mark Weaver) on a U.S. history, Church history, family history tour of the country. They visited sites in Utah, New Mexico, Colorado, Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, New York, Vermont, Rhode Island and Virginia where their ancestors had been a part of the advance of their nation and the restoration of their Church. It was a remarkable journey and an opportunity to see firsthand the historical sites that made our nation, our church and our family what it is today.

In their 1980 trip east which included Chicago, Naomi and Ellen Claire went to visit the widowed Veldron Matheson, close friend of Margaret and Duncan. Veldron recalled the following: "I remember how kind your parents were to Princess Yogadi, their friend from India. They were so gracious. Your father [Duncan] was also an advocate that students should perform musically in sacrament meeting. Your

---

[2] Roland G. Kaiser, *Margaret Holmes Weaver*, eulogy.

[3] William Jordan, *The Power of Truth*, p. 25

[4] See biographies of a number of our ancestors at (Dec. 2009) <www.OurFamilyBiographies.com >

mother was a good cook. One time I tasted one of her cookies. 'Wow,' I said, 'these are as good as store bought.' Margaret quipped, 'Well, they're supposed to be better!'"[5]

In reviewing this biography of two people that we knew very well, we realize that we didn't know them well enough. Life stories have certain limitations when the subjects we are writing about are not there to be interviewed, to impart information and to answer questions. Nevertheless, with the resources available we have attempted to share what has been most significant in our upbringing–to acknowledge what has been the inspiration for a great love of life–and to unite the hearts of our family. It has been difficult if not impossible to recapture the past fully. If only a glimpse of it has been able to shine through, then this humble effort will have been worthwhile.

To conclude this history is to say that the story of Margaret and Duncan will never be completed as long as their posterity continues on the earth. Their influence will be exerted, recognized or not, throughout the generations of time to come.

It was said of the pioneers, but Margaret and Duncan Weaver can be included among those whose contributions have made an eternal difference:

*They cut desire into short lengths*
*And fed it to the hungry fires of courage.*
*Long after, when the flames had died*
*Molten gold gleamed in the ashes.*
*They gathered it into bruised palms*
*And handed it to their children*
*And their children's children*
*Forever.*[6]

* * * * * * * * * * *

[5] Ellen Claire Weaver Shaeffer, *Letters file*.

[6] Vilate C. Raile, poem, *The Improvement Era*, Sept. 1979.

# Source Materials Used or Consulted


Allison, Garry, "*Godfrey Holmes Ag-Expo Brings Back Memories of Big Victory*,"undated newsclipping from the Lethbridge Herald, about 1986.

Anderson, Lois Lindsey, *A Sketch of the Life of Joseph Godfrey*, Family History Library 929.273 G543.

*Autobiography of Ellen Anderson.pdf ; See:* < www.OurFamilyBiographies.com >

Barwick, JoAnn, editorial, House Beautiful Magazine, Nov. 1986.

Carter, Kate B., *Treasuresof Pioneer History*, Salt Lake City, Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1952-57.

College Archives: Brief History; Dec. 2009 < http://www.lib.colum.edu/archives/briefhistory.php >

Conference Reports of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Oct. 1987, L. Tom Perry.

Cummings, Mrs. F. C., *Weaver Family History* (a poem) Logan, Utah, June 20, 1912.

Garner Family mss., in possession of DaCosta Clark, Provo, Utah 1957.

Gibson, John W., *Sketch of the Life of Joseph Godfrey* .

Godfrey, Martha Ann, *My Father Joseph Godfrey* (poem).

Godfrey, Sarah Ann Price autobiography, transcribed by Josephine Swensen, 1928.

Godfrey, Sarah Jane, handwritten autobiographical manuscript.

Godfrey, Sarah Jane, *Story of the Life of Joseph Godfrey.*

Grossman, Ronald P., *Guide: To Chicago Neighborhoods*, 1981.

Hicken, Reed & Evans, *Raymond Roundup*, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada 1967.

Holmes, Henry, 1837-1876, A Collection of Sources and in Particular, the Journals 1856-1871 of Henry Holmes, Compiled and Edited by Ellen Claire Weaver Shaeffer, 2006.

Holmes, Henry John, farm journals.

Holmes, Sarah Jane *Diary of 1933.*

Hulse, Sarah W. Madsen, *Franklin and Miles Weaver*, adaptation of compiled materials.

Hymns of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "Come, Come Ye Saints," Deseret Book Co., Salt Lake City, Utah 1985.

Journals 1856-1871 of Henry Holmes(1837-1876), Transcribed from Pitman Shorthand and typed by Thelma Hill, Salt Lake City and Ogden, Utah, 1966.

Kaiser, Roland G., *Margaret Holmes Weaver*, eulogy.

Larson, Lucille Weaver, personal letters.

Mickelson, Sarah Harris, *Life Sketch of Franklin Weaver*, mss.

Mickelson, Sarah Harris, *Life Sketch of Sarah Clark Weaver*, mss.

Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, England: 1986 photos by E. C. Shaeffer.

Mitchell, Martha Holmes, Interview 1982.

Nilsson, Donald, *The Letters of Donald Nilsson*, edited by E. C. Shaeffer, 1991.

Norton, D. W., "Colonists..." Deseret News Church News Oct. 20, 1985.

Perry, L. Tom, *Conference Addresses*, October 1897.

Raile, Vilate C., poem, Improvement Era Magazine, Sept. 1979.

Shaeffer, E. C., "Women As Missionaries," Roswell Stake News, February 1981.

Shaeffer, E. C., *Franklin Weaver, a Timeline 1828-1884*, Clovis, NM, 1996.

Shaeffer, E. C., *The Jane Book, The History and Genealogy of Margaret Jane Weaver Toronto 1940-1987.*

Shaeffer, E. C., *The Life of Moroni Duncan* 1850-1894.

Toronto, Jane Weaver, *My Story* mss.

Toronto, Jane Weaver, *The Weavers*, scrapbook .

Tucker, G. M., *Royal Naval Service of Canada*, King's printer, Ottawa, 1952.

Weaver, Gary H., Audiotape recollections, transcribed by E. C. Shaeffer.

Weaver, Lucius E., *History and Genealogy of a Branch of the Weaver Family*, Rochester, NY, 1928 Reprint: University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI.

Weaver, Mary D. & Weaver, Barbara, *Horace and Adelaide Wright Weaver 1st Annual Family Reunion,* 1958, Vol. 1.

Weaver, Henry Duncan, "*From the Pulpit*," transcription of audio tape of various sermons, weddings, etc.

Weaver, Henry Duncan, *Letters*.

Weaver, Henry Duncan, *Scrapbook*.

Weaver, Margaret Holmes, *Autobiography* from her Book of Remembrance.

Weaver, Margaret Holmes, *Missionary Journal 1922-1924*.

Weaver, Margaret Holmes and Winkler, Ellen Holmes, *Just Jane, the Biography of Sarah Jane Godfrey Evans Holmes*, Family History Library film 1968; re-edit by E. C. Shaeffer, 2007; see Dec. 2009 < www.OurFamilyBiographies.com >

Weaver, Margaret Holmes, *Two Experiences of My Life*, mss.

WPA, American Guide Series, *Provo, Pioneer Mormon City*, Binfords & Mort, Pub. GS979.223/pIH2W.

* * *