

CHAPTER II

THE EARLY YEARS 1940-1950

Margaret, our mother, kept a baby book for each of her three children. From Jane's book we have taken a number of items:

A baby shower, called a "Stork Shower" was given by Davetta Green and Jasmine Edmunds, on September 11, 1940. The invitation (in longhand) read:

*In winter birds vacation south -
But an exception we have found.
Mr. Stork you see, is different.
He works the whole year 'round.
And now he's getting ready -
This very wise old bird -
To visit the Duncan Weavers,
At least that's what we've heard!
So before he drops his bundle,
Let's help feather baby's nest
So he can start his world career
Well equipped and dressed!*



The following poem, along with a gift were presented at the shower:

*The Weavers are building a beautiful home, with walls and everything new.
Now Duncan was the architect, but Margaret contributed, too.
New bricks and lumber and plaster help to make the home complete.
But they knew it needed an addition: the patter of little feet.
So they planned and planned and planned some more, for this had to be just right.
My, what a lot of "fuss" they made planning for this little "mite."
Now everything is in readiness, both home and baby will be new.
But don't forget, Duncan is the architect, although Margaret is helping, too.
So here's a blanket - let me contribute, too! Reeta Turner*

Cards in the baby book indicate that there were over two dozen gifts for the new baby, as well as flowers from several friends.

October 22, 1940: Margaret Jane Weaver is born at Ravenswood Hospital, Chicago at 47 minutes after midnight on the 22nd. She was 7 lbs. 1 oz. and was 20.4" long, and was attended by Dr. Ariel

L. Williams, the family physician and personal friend as well as bishop of the Logan Square Ward, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. From the baby book that Mother kept we learn that her labor lasted three hours concluding with a normal delivery. The baby's first day was quiet and she nursed well and eagerly.

Receipt from Ravenswood Hospital: \$60.00 (on Oct. 21). It appears that they had to pay first!

Letter from Grandmother Holmes:

Raymond, Alberta, Canada

October 24, 1940

Dear Margaret,

Your letter came tonight... I was glad to hear you were over the worst part and do hope and pray you will continue to be all right. I do feel bad to think I couldn't be there to look after the children a bit. I can't help it—have tried my best to get everything fixed up so I could be there.

It's about eleven o'clock so won't write much this time as I wrote a day or two ago. Anyway my thoughts are with you a lot right now and I am glad it's a girl. When you are old you will be glad, too, as a son doesn't care much when he gets a wife and family of his own, but a daughter never forgets her mother. I have found that out in my own life. Margaret is a lovely name to me. You can't find any better, but leave the Jane out. That is all right for some. That was my grandmother's name and she was an extra fine smart woman. I'll go to bed and hope you are asleep and fine, while I write this with bushels of love to you and all the family.

Mother Holmes

November, 1940:

Logan Square Sunday School News: "A recent arrival - To be christened next Fast Sunday is "Margaret Jane," the latest arrival at the home of H. Duncan and Margaret Weaver, 6612 W. Melrose."



Also in the baby book was a copy of the blessing given to Jane by her father, H. Duncan Weaver:

Logan Square Ward, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Chicago
December 1, 1940

RIGHTEOUS AND ETERNAL FATHER,

In the name of Jesus Christ and in and through the power of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood which we bear, we take this infant in our arms and present her to Thee for the purpose of giving her a name and a father's blessing.

The name we give unto her is Margaret Jane Weaver, by which she shall be known among men as she sojourns here upon the earth. The blessing we give unto her is a father's blessing and a blessing of the Priesthood, and we pray Thee, our Heavenly Father, that our prayers in her behalf may be heard and our blessing unto her may be pleasing unto Thee. We therefore petition Thee in her behalf and bless her with the gift of health. May she be protected from all things contrary to the laws of growth and

development. May her mind be bright, her body strong, and may her days be long that she may give honor and Glory unto Thee. And we pray Thee, our Heavenly Father, that all influences detrimental to the fulfillment of her natural and normal growth may be removed from her pathway.

We bless her with the gift of courage that she may face the realities of this world with fortitude and always be calm in mind and action. We bless her with faith that she may come to know Thee and Thy Gospel and always walk uprightly before Thee. May she have hope that the darkness of despair and sorrow may never engulf her when she meets the adversities of life. We bless her with the gift of beauty that she may discern Thy handiwork in all creation, that she may grow gracefully and beautifully before Thee and become possessed of all the womanly virtues that characterizes a true daughter of Israel.

May she minister to those about her in love and humility, and may her name be blessed to all who come to know her, that Thy precious gift of love may be reflected in her charity toward her fellow men, and her obedience unto Thee. May Thy gifts unto her be recognized in her life that she may magnify each talent she possesses to the glory of Thy name. Take her into Thy care and bless her with the bounty of Thy benevolence that her life may be rich and full and beautiful.

We pray for her parents that they may find favor before Thee in the manner of their responsibilities to her. May they be ever found teaching and leading her to walk in Thy paths. We pray for her brother and sister that they may also be influences in her life for great good. May her teachers be men and women of God, that her personality may develop in an environment of Thy Holy Spirit.

We join our voices together to petition Thee in her behalf, that our blessing of this little child may be fulfilled in accordance with Thy Will. We thank thee for all Thy blessings unto us, especially the gift of little children. Forgive us of our sins, and be ever with us. These things we pray for, not in our name, but in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

Blessed by H. D. Weaver

Brethren attending: Pres. John K. Edmunds, Bishopric, Leslie R. Matheson, High Councilman
Richard G. Andrews, Stake S.S. Supt., Glenn L. Turner

A number of further baby book entries were kept by her mother:

1941, January: The baby was weaned from the breast at three months of age. Bottle feeding was continued. The formula was Dextergen and water. At four months the baby was changed to cows milk because of eczema.

1941, July: Margaret wrote, "Jane said whole sentences, also single words like a parrot, after hearing me, especially when in her buggy out in the yard her first summer." At age 4 she wanted to, and could, tell all the bedtime stories by herself: The Three Bears, Red Riding Hood, Little Red Hen, Gingerbread Boy, Night Before Christmas and Stevenson's poems.

1941, October 22: "We celebrated Jane's first birthday with a family chicken dinner and a birthday cake with one little yellow candle."

1941, (no other date): "The baby cut her first tooth the day after I had my pocket picked in Sears. She was in my arms and Ellen Claire at my side."

1941, December 7: The Japanese attack the United States at Pearl Harbor. Jane would have had no recollections of December 7, 1941, when Pearl Harbor was attacked. E.C. said,

For that matter, neither did I. Our parents were careful to keep us insulated from the worst of life's realities. But gradually, as we were exposed to more and more through various sources, we began to comprehend that there was a war going on. The background of war during Janie's earliest years did not create in her or any of us a culture of fear. The war was "over there." Later on we did our part to assist with the war effort by polishing parts for airplanes. They were square blocks of solid aluminum, about 2" x 2" x 3", and Daddy would bring them home for us to work on. In the evenings the whole family would sit around the kitchen table and with sandpaper and steel wool we would buff off the rough edges of those blocks. I can't imagine what or how they would have been used. No one I have ever spoken to about them could guess, but nevertheless, that is how our family contributed to the war effort. Daddy told us kids not to talk about it, and I don't know if it was because we were earning money for it or for some other reason, but I felt like we had a secret mission!

Back to the baby book:

1942, January: At 15 months Jane was still not walking alone. She never crawled, she just scooted along on her bottom and kept it up. But at 18 months she was climbing stairs and at 21 months she could walk forward and backwards as well.

1942, August: The Weaver family toured Yellowstone Park en route to Canada. E.C. vividly remembered the bear that hopped up on the running board of the Plymouth. Mother kept passing cookies out the window to him, as Daddy sped up so the bear would hop down. Mother was very frightened, but E.C. didn't understand why. She thought the bear was cute!



1942, September: Jane had about a 40-word vocabulary at 22 months. "She could say the blessing on the food alone at three years, and could, with help, say her own prayers and at times take the lead in family prayers."

1943, October 22: Mother described Jane, age three, as happy, affectionate, sociable, generous, imaginative but disorderly. "She carries a tune perfectly singing with someone. [She had] a sweet voice at 3, better at 4." Her favorite songs: "Babes in the Woods," "I love My Rooster," "The B-I-B-L-E," "Where are You Going Pretty Bird."

1944, August: Jane, Ellen Claire and their mother left Chicago on the train called "The Empire Builder" for Shelby, Montana, and then went on to Raymond, Alberta, Canada, having been met at Shelby by family members. They spent three weeks there with Grandmother Holmes and had a fine visit. Margaret remembered long talks with her mother and sisters Ellen and Ethel, and a trip to Waterton Lakes. She noted the trip home was on one fare.

1944, October 21: Jane's 4-year-old birthday party with 8 little guests from the neighborhood. Janie is on the far left in the photo below.

1945, February: When Jane contracted scarlet fever our family was quarantined 17 days. Mother wrote, "She received two shots, Ellen Claire and Gary received one. She was broken out some, slight fever. Was kept isolated 4 days. Everything cleared up quick with no apparent after effects. Dr. Ariel Williams attended. Duncan stayed in a hotel so he could continue with work. Jane also had eczema almost from birth. It cleared up completely each summer and returned in winter on wrists and inside of elbows. Cod-liver oil was given to all the children daily during the winter months."



Starting in September of 1945 Margaret would have fewer opportunities to keep baby books or other journals, for that matter. She started teaching school. Gary and E.C. attended Bridge Elementary School in the neighborhood up through the 8th and 4th grade, respectively, but when Janie was ready to start kindergarten, Mother decided to start teaching because there was a big demand for teachers, and she wanted to contribute a second income to our family. She obtained a position in a suburban school district, Franklin Park, teaching third grade. She took Janie and E.C. with her, driving the five miles to school. An art teacher, Daddy transferred from Wells High to Steinmetz, the high school closest to our house. Gary, and later E.C. went to Steinmetz High. Margaret kept programs and clippings that were added to Jane's baby book:

1946, May: Spoke her part at the Kindergarten program at Franklin Park Elementary School. On the program Mother wrote: "Spoke clearly & expressively - the best."

1947, Oct. 22: Jane's 7-year-old birthday party. From the Schorsch Village News: "Janie Weaver entertained her little friends with a party on her birthday."



1947, Dec. 21: Sunday School Christmas Program: Sacramento Gem: Jane Weaver.

1950, Apr. 30: Jane said the closing prayer at the Primary Program Sunday evening service at Logan Square Ward.

Jane was a sleepwalker in her early years. E.C. would often awake in a bedroom where the lights had been turned on as Jane was sleepwalking. One evening all of us

but Jane were talking, seated around the kitchen table. Jane, who had been in bed about an hour or so, came walking in, put her head down on the table and said, "I'm so tired!" We all just laughed as Mother guided her back to her bed.

On another, less humorous occasion, E.C. had a waking nightmare that Jane was hanging on the bedroom door. It was the most frightening experience she ever had as a child. When she was able to summon her mother, she was reassured that everything was quite OK. Nevertheless, the incident brought with it a certain fear and added protectiveness for her younger sister.



Duncan Weaver became the bishop of the Logan Square Ward (meetinghouse pictured, left) when Janie was about seven years old. Since family life actually revolved around the church and church activities, things weren't much different than before, except that more was expected of all the family. (See chapter "Logan Square" in the book From Wagon Trails to Subway Rails, by E. C. Shaeffer: the biography of Margaret and Duncan Weaver.)

During the summer of 1950, Gary brought home a lovely girl by the name of Naomi Bangerter to meet the family. He had met her at Brigham Young University and the two of them had fallen in love. Our whole family fell in

love, as well, with the shy young beauty from Salt Lake City. One evening they came to the table, and Gary had a touch of telltale lipstick on his cheek. Janie announced with glee, "I bet I know what you two have been doing!" Daddy tried to silence her by giving her a tap with his foot under the table. She didn't take the hint. She just asked, "Daddy, what'cha kicking me for?" Gary never let her forget that incident!

We all wanted to show Naomi, "Nana," around the city of Chicago. There was much to see and do. Chicago was a great city in the 1940's and 1950's. The population was about 4 million in the 40's and after the war it grew rapidly. The suburbs were expanding and as people earned more, they chose to leave the decaying neighborhoods of the inner city and move to the suburbs. By the late 50's the metropolitan area and surrounding suburbs held a population of over 6 million people. Of course, a large city offered many wonderful things to see and do. Some things we did on a regular basis. Others we did only when we had out of town guests to entertain.



Things we liked to do and places we liked to go were: Maxwell Street, the great urban outdoor bazaar, whose gritty charm was a unique part of Chicago's history; Oak Park to see the house built by the famous architect, Frank Lloyd Wright; the Field Museum of Natural History; the Art Institute of Chicago, housing world treasures of art and the institution where Duncan Weaver earned his Bachelors and his Master's Degree; the Adler Planetarium; the Shedd Aquarium; the "Loop," Chicago's famous downtown shopping district; Marshall Fields department store; the exclusive shopping on Michigan Ave.; the beaches; the elegant North Shore—gawking at all the mansions and wondering how the "other half" lived.

Then there was (and still is) the annual Mum show at the Lincoln Park Conservatory; Brookfield Zoo; Lincoln Park Zoo; the Morton Arboretum; the various Forest Preserves (Chicago

had numerous preserved wild areas); Indiana Sand Dunes State Park; Olson Rug Company gardens; Shabbona Park; Whalen pool; Humbolt Park for the church picnic every 4th of July —the best day of the year; the Logan Square Ward meetinghouse (our home away from home); Trianon and Aragon Ballrooms (how romantic!); The Civic Opera; Orchestra Hall; Grant Park's Buckingham Fountain and outdoor band shell; Soldier Field, the outdoor stadium; Riverview, an amusement park; many movie theaters which were art deco and rococo architectural masterpieces; watching the bridges rise over the Chicago River; the Ravinia outdoor concert venue; many other activities as well, particularly the endless shopping with Mother. (It is interesting that Jane became an inveterate shopper, while E.C. still hates shopping.)



Jane in the red snowsuit made by her mother.



(L-R) Rear: Uncle Snow Mitchell, Mother, Aunt Martha Mitchell, Daddy, Cousin Betty Mitchell, Front: Grandmother Holmes, Cousin Jane Mitchell, Janie Weaver, E.C. Weaver (notice Janie's arm in a wrap)

Photo about 1947

1949 & 1950: Jane often wrote letters to Grandma Holmes. Two replies were kept in the baby book:

Raymond, Feb. 9, 1949

Dear Jane,

I received your letter and was glad to get it and know you thought enough of me to write. You know I have such a lot of fine granddaughters and some of them write quite often and I am so proud of most of them in fact all of them. You and Jane Mitchell are the only small ones and how I wish you both were a little nearer to me. I have one grandson that comes real often and it is always about the time I am having my breakfast, so he has a little toast or fruit and maybe a little candy if I happen to have some. His name is David Holmes and I love him a lot for coming. David's daddy comes about every three mornings to clean up my ashes and do other things for me and that is when David comes. Wish it was so you and Jane Mitchell could do like that. Wouldn't that be grand? It's awfully cold here and I must make up my fires so will close with love to you and all the rest of you Weavers.

Love to all,

Grandma Holmes

Raymond, Oct. 24, 1950

Dear Janey,

Your letter came a few days ago and I was very glad to get it and know you are all well and happy and I'll bet you are all busy as bees. I think it was a month between your mother's letters. Guess you do miss that Gary. [He was on his mission at that time.] He is working in a good cause. So that makes up for your missing him. I was sorry you couldn't get up here in the summer. We would all like to had you here. It has been a long summer for me. I miss going to Ethel's every few weeks or when the Winklers went down through Taber. I haven't seen any of the Halls since Rae was here the day before she left for Provo and she hasn't written either. They are all very busy down there working in the sugar factory and the canning house. We had quite a snow storm last week about three or four inches. Is all gone now. Clear today and all the men digging beets. They are mostly up.

Uncle Albert has his all up and is feeding sheep-- a big bunch of them. Myron and Godfrey have stock. Myron has over a hundred head. That is a lot of stomachs to fill every day or three times a day. They all have the new electric lights in their homes and have to change all their things - lights, refrigerators, washers and other things, but they are all well. [It] came over the radio last night Julia Bullock died yesterday morning, a tiny frail woman. Saw her at Ethel's funeral.

It's the ward Mutual tonight so I think Aunt Ellen will be in while Mary and Carl go to it. Margaret, the Canadian dollar is the same as the U. S. dollar. Thought I'd tell you, but you may have known it before this and thanks for telling me I could come out there. Would liked to have [gone] to Martha's but [there are] too many. Ken and family are there. That's enough without me and am thinking of

Ellen's but not a very handy place [she had no indoor plumbing]. I haven't been very good for a month now, and my eyes are terrible. Can't read much any more. Makes the evenings so long.

Love to you, Janey, and write again. Aunt Ellen will read them for me. Hope you can read this. It's terrible writing. Remember me to Beryl.

Grandmother Holmes died December 23, 1950, just about two months after she wrote this letter. She was 88 years of age. Margaret went to Canada for the funeral, and the family had Christmas at home without her. It was a sad time for all. One of Jane's Christmas gifts that year was a little brown faux-leather five-year diary. E.C. had received one a couple of years before, so Janie had wanted one too. She wrote faithfully in that diary for three years, and sporadically thereafter. The following chapter consists of excerpts from that diary.

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