

September 21, 2005

Good morning Ellen Claire,

I was in California this summer visiting my sister Lauryl and she lent me the book on Franklin Weaver. I have been reading it over again for the last few days and wanted to express my gratitude to you for all the hard work you've done putting this book together. I just felt so lucky to be able to read all these wonderful things about my great grandfather! I am taking some of the stories and putting them into a storybook for my grandchildren. We are building a family library of storybooks about family members for the grandchildren to read and get to know their family "Heroes" as we call them. My daughter-in-law's company is called Heritage Makers and they publish hardbound 8x8 storybooks. If you go to Sidmay.com you can check out the website.

Sidnie [Weaver] May

Sept. 22

When I read your e-mail and saw the pictures it was like winning the lottery! I never knew that pictures of my grandfather existed. I'm thrilled to have them. They will make a great addition to the book. My dad's second wife didn't like us and she would not give us any of our dad's possessions after he passed away, so I'm not sure where all his papers etc. are. The letter from your dad is at my daughter's house in Lethbridge and I will get a copy to you as soon as I get back home...

I have a letter that your dad wrote to me when I was about 9 or 10 yrs old. He was sick and had been to visit us in Lethbridge some time before. I always felt a bond with him because of the art. I was taking art lessons at the time from Sister Ursenbach. Your dad painted a picture for me but I think it was lost in the fire we had years later. The letter has water stains on it. Must close for now....just felt that I needed to express my gratitude to you for the book.

Love,

Sidnie [Weaver] May

July 12, 2006

Dear Ellen Claire,

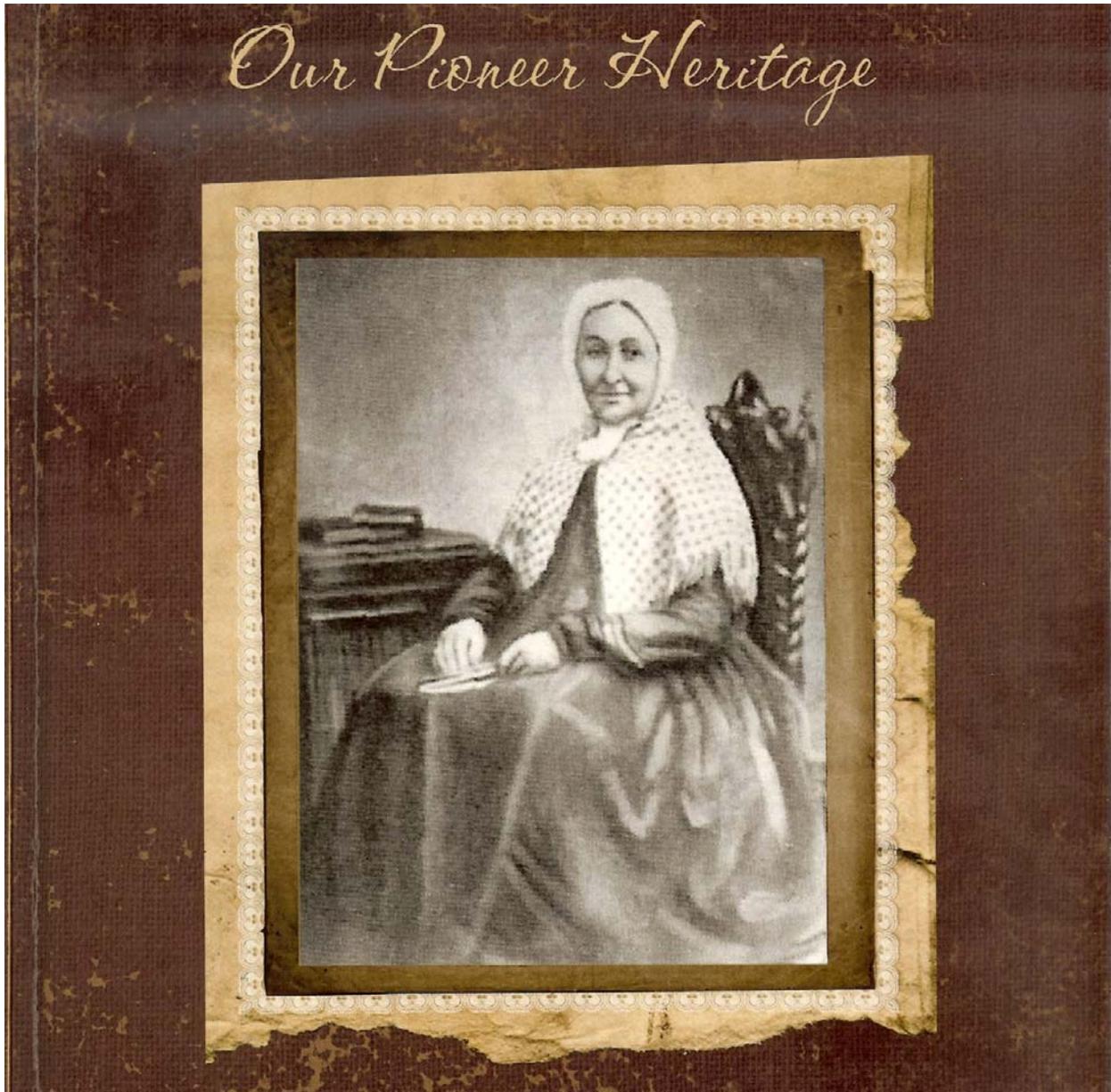
I apologize for taking so long to get this letter to you. I had forgotten how fragile the envelope had become. We had a fire in our home in the late '50s, that is why it is stained. I don't know why I've kept this letter all these years—maybe because I always felt a connection to your dad because of the art. I have scanned the letter into my computer so that I have a copy but thought you might have the original for your posterity...

Thanks again for the book, I really enjoy reading it.

Love,

Sidnie [Weaver] May

This is the cover of the book Sidnie Weaver May wrote in 2008 for her grandchildren:
A copy can be obtained at Heritage Makers 1837 S. East Bay Blvd., Suite 201, Provo, UT
84606-5583 or www.bookmyheritage.com



This is the only known photo of Martha Raymer Weaver.

HENRY D. WEAVER
10836 W. GRAND AVE.
MELROSE PARK, ILL.

Miss Sidney Weaver
909 7th Ave S.

Kethbridge
Alberta
Canada

FRANKLIN
OCT 18
1955
PM
ILL.

|||||

Oct 18, 1955

Dear Sidney,

Its midnight and your poor old uncle cannot sleep. Too much pain in my "turning"! Now thats something isnt it! I'm trying my best not to be a belly acher, but I just cant help it. The doctor tells me that it will get better sometime soon.

Your grandmother is here with me. I am her oldest child - and she is such a great comfort to me. We all love her very very much because she is so understanding. She has been telling me about the time you visited her this summer in all the rainy weather. In

sure you must like to go down to visit her. All grandmothers should be visited and loved. They are so very precious. I got to see both of my grandmothers, but I lost one when I was 10 years old. I think you remember Grandma Collet who lived with Grandpa Bryan and your grandmother Meldrum. Well she was my grandmother also. Not very many people get to see their great grandmother and almost never their great grandfather. Grandfathers don't last as well as grandmothers!

We are having our fall weather down here now - beautiful colored trees and green grass everywhere after our long summer dry spell.

Everybody tells me I'm like a baby. I have my days and nights mixed up. The only difference is that I can

walk the floor with myself!
and I don't cry quite as loudly!

What pictures have you been
drawing lately? I have just
finished a fall landscape.
Some large oaks in the
forest preserve. Everywhere
around Chicago there are
forests, like Henderson Lake only
larger and more beautiful. I'm
sure you would like it if you
were here. You must plan to
visit us someday. Chicago has
the greatest art school in all the
world. The Art Institute!

Tell your family that all of
the rest of us are doing fine.
We keep busy. Give our love
to your mother and father and
all the brothers and sisters.

Dary, Bruce, the baby, and
who else? -

Such a dummy for an uncle
but he sends his love

Duncan

P.S. Please write soon.

EC:

My reaction when I received this letter was to sit down and just cry and cry. It felt like I could hear Daddy's voice as I read the words. Oh, how I would love to just talk with him right now. After 50 years he is still in my mind and in my heart. Here is what I wrote to Sidnie, my cousin:

Dear Sidnie,

I cannot tell you how grateful I am with the letter you sent. It felt like a bolt out of the blue. I just sat weeping as I read it. How wonderful to have this precious letter. Thank you, thank you. It came yesterday and I can't wait to share it with all the family. I felt like I could just hear his voice speaking to me. Yes, Daddy was very sick at the time. In fact he wrote you less than six weeks prior to his death. In those days the doctors advised the family not to discuss the realities of Dad's impending death, so there was this awful wall of silence surrounding his illness and surgery. He was shortly sent home, and I was his chief nurse, staying home from what would have started my second year at BYU to be his daytime caregiver so Mother could continue teaching. We needed the income. I see his letter to you as an expression of his suffering that he was unable to share with his family. It just breaks my heart. So much to say and not able to say it. But we were certainly not unique. That philosophy of dealing with terminal illness was the accepted norm throughout our whole culture and it has taken decades to make inroads into a more humane approach, a more hospice-like approach, which I feel is so much more satisfying not only to the patient, but to the family as well.

Again, Sidnie, thank you so much for the letter. I will treasure it always. Write me back when you get a minute and update me on your grandson's health.

With love and gratitude,

EC

Kipp & Christian, PC
City Centre I #330
175 E. 400 South
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

June 2, 1994

Dear E. C.,

Received your book From Wagon Trails to Subway Rails and have read it. What a first class job! Extremely interesting and informative. I either know, or know of, most of the people referred to in Alberta.

In the history of my grandparents called The Winds of Valhalla I relate the story of the death of Alenne Tollestrup who was killed by Buckskin Blackhorse, the Indian. You have shown that it was your dad who pulled her charred body from the ashes of the straw stack. That was new to me and ...that change will be noted in the book.

My uncle, Paul Christian, was the young boyfriend of Alenne Tollestrup at the time of her murder.

The memorial you have left to your parents in the form of that book will be more lasting than one of granite, steel or wood. For the information will be written in the memory of your children and your children's children.

And even though you entered it as a memorial to the life and memory of your father and mother, which it surely is, it is more than that...a monument to you. A monument of your love, and concern, appreciation and devotion to the most important people in your life.

Thank you for sharing it with me.

D. Gary Christian

April 8, 2010 reflections by Gary Christian, via email:

It seems to me the reason I included the Winnie Tollestrup episode in that book is because my uncle, Paul Christian, was dating her at the time of her murder. She and Paul were, reportedly, quite serious with each other at the time.

The event became even more interesting when I learned from you that it was your father, in company with several of his students, who was the one who pulled her charred and smoking body from the still smoldering straw stack that Buckskin Blackhorse had used as her funeral pyre about a mile northwest of town. And if that isn't poignant enough, she also was one of Duncan's students.

Note:

Gary Christian has written a number of family history books, as well as some excellent poetry. As of 2010 he resides in Santa Clara, Utah.