

CHAPTER 7

REMEMBERING MY MOTHER, MATILDA MANN FARLEY

By Eva Clayton Farley



Standing: Leslie, Lydia Pearl, Adleen, Carroll (Carl), Louie. Seated: Theodore Sr., Miriam (Min), Theodore (Dick), Eva, Milton and Matilda Mann Farley about 1910

Father bought a farm next to Matilda's father's home on Provo Bench (now Orem) and built another log house. Life was not easy for the first few years, but with Matilda's efficient help the sagebrush farm developed into a beautiful orchard of prize-winning fruit. A larger house was built of rocks gathered from the farm, then plastered and painted white. The thick walls made it warm in winter and cool in summer. A well was dug, the first successful well on Provo Bench, but the water had to be carried some distance to the house. A huge lawn was planted in front of the house, and large Box Elder trees furnished plenty of shade. Flowers of all kinds surrounded the house and grew on either side of the path that led to the well. Near the kitchen door was an arbor of beautiful climbing roses that bloomed all summer. Later another well was dug near the house with a room built over it which served as a wash room and a refrigerator for the milk and butter. Matilda would churn and mold butter during the week and store it in buckets that hung down the well which kept it icy cold until she could deliver it to her customers on Saturday. When electricity was finally brought to Provo Bench, an electric washer replaced the old hand-washer, and the separator also ran with electricity, but Matilda never did own an electric stove.

Matilda loved her home, it was her heaven. She not only helped with the fruit in the fields, but she churned from 15 to 25 lbs. of butter each week and delivered it to her customers in Provo on Saturdays. She could make that butter money go farther than most people can make a month's salary go today. With that and the money she received from selling fruit to peddlers on the side, she always had a little money tucked away in a baking powder can for emergencies. One night she brought out her baking powder can for her husband to help count the money, and to their surprise she had saved \$500.00. Instead of buying something nice for her home that she would have liked, she turned it over on a debt that was owing on the farm.

In the long winter evenings she would sit for hours and sew carpet rags for a new carpet, or braid rags into rugs. She also knit the stockings and mittens for her children. Her house was immaculately clean, and she could prepare a wonderful dinner out of little or nothing. She always found time to work in the Relief Society of the ward and to help her neighbors, often taking food to a sick person.

Two more children were born, Pembroke who died when less than a year old, and Miriam Adell, a little girl so frail they called her "Minnie" to describe her size. About this time Matilda's health began to fail. Another son, Milton, was born and her life was saved seemingly by a miracle. Then two years later one more baby was born, a girl named Eva.

Leslie, when 21 years of age, was growing steadily weaker with his heart condition. He was seldom out of his mother's sight. It was a great heartache for her to see his life gradually slipping away, and to see him suffer so much. Then one day when they were alone he suddenly became worse and died in her arms. Her own health was broken and from then on her great desire was to see all her children married and settled down, living happy lives. Several of the older children were already married and she had a brood of grandchildren.



Leslie Farley

Tired of the rocky soil of the farm, Theodore sold it against Matilda's wishes and bought a 60 acre farm in Roosevelt, Duchene County. She hated so much to give up her home that held so many happy memories and move so far from her friends and married children. But as always, she stood by her husband and cooperated with him in everything he undertook. The move, however, proved to be a big mistake for Theodore found he was not as young as he thought and could not keep up such a big place, also Matilda's health became gradually worse.

Louie married and died a year later in childbirth which was a terrible blow to her mother. Then Miriam married and Milton joined the army. So, Theodore sold the farm and home in town and bought four acres of land south of Provo where the Provo Golf Course now is. It was a pretty little farm with a nice red brick house, the first brick house they ever owned. The place was beautifully landscaped with lawns and flowers, and there was a big front porch where Matilda practically lived in the summertime, waiting and watching for some of the children or grandchildren to come and visit her.

One day she expressed a desire to visit each one of her children, so the visits were arranged but she never got to all of them. She was with Dick and his family when she was stricken and three days later died, March 9, 1929. Before she passed away she asked the brothers and sisters never to forget Milton. She wanted so much for him to be one of the family. There was never a more noble and courageous woman than Matilda Mann Farley.

I was the last one of the family, the 11th, so I remember my mother as a mature woman in her forties. People those days were all much older for their years than they are today. Mother always wore her dark brown hair with a big bob on the top of her head. Often she would fluff a natural wave in front, and always wore side combs. I can never remember seeing her come out of her room without having her hair neatly combed. That was the first thing she would do the minute she was dressed.

When I was small I used to love to sit on the floor and lay my head in her comfortable lap, and she would stroke my hair and rub my ears. I think I was her constant shadow for I remember following her wherever she went. Often we would walk through the fields together to spend an evening with her aged parents who lived not far from us. She always took me to town with her to deliver her butter and usually bought me something while we were in town, perhaps a new hair ribbon, a pair of shoes or enough gingham for a new dress.

It seemed that mother was always at home, but when I would come home from school and find her gone I can still remember the awful fear that clutched my heart. I just could never imagine her ever leaving us and I always had a secret fear that she might be taken away. I can't say that she never became angry with us sometimes, and goodness knows she had plenty of cause. We had plenty of spankings from her, but if anything ever went wrong, or if we wanted anything, it was always mother we ran to. She was always quick to forgive and forget.

Mother was happiest when all her children and grandchildren were around her. I can

remember the big Thanksgiving dinners she prepared for the whole family until the grandchildren became so numerous there was not room for everyone in the old home. There was always stuffed baked duck and baked ham that she had cured herself, and the most delicious pumpkin pies piled high with real whipped cream, and the best mincemeat pies I have ever eaten, made from her own mincemeat. We never had turkey for we never raised them on the farm, but we had just about everything else to make a banquet fit for a king. Our place used to be a gathering place for the whole family after church on Sunday in the summertime. Mother always had a big six-quart freezer of the most delicious homemade ice cream, made from real cream, and a couple of big cakes (the one I remember most was her silver nut cake). We would all sit around on the big lawn under the shade trees and eat until we nearly burst. Those were such happy days.

Mother's life was never an easy one, but she never complained because she couldn't have the nice furniture or some of the modern conveniences the neighbors had, nor was she ever envious of others. She always saw the good in people and was willing to do anything she could to help those in need. She never turned anyone away from her door hungry. There was not much money to buy gifts with, so if she could not do any better, she would give some of her good bottled fruit, a set of quilt blocks she had pieced, or a piece of crochet work that she had made. I remember a very happy Christmas one year when she had knit 13 pair of little mittens for the grandchildren and little stockings for the babies. Her fingers were black for weeks after from bruises of the knitting needles.



Matilda Mann Farley

Always on Sunday the whole family dressed in their best clothes and went to Sunday School, all except mother. It was taken for granted that she would stay home and have a nice Sunday dinner ready to sit down to when we came home. But she always went to sacrament meeting in the afternoon, and to Relief Society meeting during the week. Mother was deeply religious too and always had so much faith in prayer. Whenever there was any sickness in the home she called the elders in immediately. Many times when she was troubled about something or didn't feel well herself, she would ask me to walk with her through the fields to grandpa's house and have him administer to her.

I don't believe mother ever had a ready-made dress in her life. Father would sometimes surprise her with some dress material when he came home from town, or sometimes she would buy herself some material with her butter money when she needed something new. In later years the children would buy her some material for a birthday or Christmas present and expected her to make her own dress. Sometimes Adleen would help her as well as Lou. They were all three good seamstresses. One of the biggest regrets of my life now is that I was not more thoughtful of her after I was able to earn my own money. How I wish now that I could take her up town and let her choose a ready-made dress or a new hat. As I look back I think of so many little things I could have done to make her life better. She was always so appreciative of any little thing anyone did for her. Her family was her whole life, and she worried so much about us all, especially Milton for we didn't hear from him very often. But after our own families began growing up, we came to appreciate mother's feelings for her children, and have worried as much as she did.

As I look back over the years I can see where mother was the real strength in our family. Father recognized it too before he passed away a few years after her death. He too was remorseful for not telling her how much he loved her while she was here. He made the comment several times that she was the best wife a man ever had. I never expect to get to the same degree of glory that I'm sure my mother has reached, but I sincerely hope I will be able to be close enough that I can do some of the things for her that I failed to do here on earth, and to tell her verbally that I love her."

Adleen Farley Knight writes,

The first winter [on Provo Bench] was a very hard one. Snow lay upon the ground for months. Sometimes it came to the top of the window sills. It was melted over the cook stove to supply the drinking as well as culinary water. Sage brush was used for fuel. Coyotes barked at night and raided the chicken coops to satisfy their appetites. To earn a little cash, Father hauled cedar posts from the west mountain, crossing Utah Lake on ice, and sold them for ten cents each. Often he arrived home with wet gunnysacks frozen to his legs.

The following spring my father and brothers worked for Carry Brothers, who had a large fruit farm at the mouth of Provo Canyon. Their wage was \$1.00 per day, and they took young fruit trees for part pay. After clearing the sage brush, these were planted on the farm. Each year great improvements were made to the humble home and outbuildings. A well was dug, the first successful one on Provo Bench. It was forty feet deep with a large stream of water that remained the same for many years.

As years rolled by the pioneer home blossomed from the desert to a beautiful fruit farm. Many were the prizes won by its owner for the largest, most delicious fruits of all kinds. The white stucco house, the barn, coops, granary, well-house walks and gate posts were made of the rocks gathered off this farm by the family. The home stands today, almost as strong as when first built. It was love and the cooperation of husband, wife, and a large family of boys and girls

that made this home one that holds the most cherished memories. A heap of livin' made it home. Four more children were added to the family circle in that home. Pleasures, sickness, courtships, weddings and death each had their turn. The four children born on Provo Bench were Earl Pembroke, Miram Adell (Min), Milton and Eva. Earl Pembroke only lived about a year, and Lesley, died at twenty years of age.

While living on Provo Bench, Father helped with the digging of the Big Bench Canal. He was Secretary and Treasurer of the company. He helped construct the power flume of the Utah Power & Light Company. He was a member of the School Board, also secretary and treasurer, Assessor, Chairman of the Building Commission, and worked in all church auxiliaries. He was Superintendent of the Sunday School several years. He was first counselor to Bishop Otis L. Terry for fourteen years. He was Sunday School Superintendent for several years, and was then chosen as first counselor to Bishop O. L. Terry, which position he held for 14 years. He also managed Jessie Knight's Garden City Cannery in Provo for several years. While he held this position, mother managed the farm with the help of a hired man. Two of my brothers had died and the two older ones had married and had homes of their own.

As the years rolled by, the home blossomed from a desert to a beautiful fruit farm. Many were the prizes won by the owners at State and County Fairs for the largest, most delicious fruit, and also for jams, jellies, and bottled fruit of all kinds. The log house had been replaced with a much larger one built of rocks gathered from the farm, then plastered and painted a creamy white with black and white trim. The walls were about two feet thick, as I remember, which made the house warm in winter and very cool in summer. The big barn, coops, granary, and gate posts were also made of rocks from the farm, gathered by the family.

The well near the house was covered with a lumber room where the milk was run through a separator. The well served as a refrigerator by hanging buckets of milk, cream and butter down the well. The little room also served as a wash room. After electricity came to the bench, the separator and washer were run by an electric motor. Now life was becoming so much easier, and mother was so appreciative and thrilled with every little improvement. It was love and cooperation of husband and wife and a large family of boys and girls that made this home possible, one that holds so many cherished memories. Five more children were added to the family circle, making 11 in all. Pleasures, sickness, courtships, weddings and death each had its turn.

I would like to give a little personal description of my father. He was medium size man, quite slender and very straight. He had coal-black hair that curled at the forehead, and dark brown eyes with a mischievous twinkle in them. He also wore a curly black beard with a mustache that curled over his upper lip, and he would brush and comb it as carefully as he did his hair. In his later life he shaved the beard, but always kept the neat little curly mustache. He always had a rather aristocrat air about him. He had a keen sense of pride and beauty in personal appearance as well as the home. I don't think he ever owned a colored shirt. Because

he was so dark he thought colored shirts were unbecoming to him. No matter what kind of work he was doing, he always wore a white shirt and black bow tie. I don't believe many wives would pamper their husband in that respect as my mother did. I remember seeing her iron seven or eight shirts a week with stiff collars and cuffs that shined like a mirror when she got through ironing them with her old-fashioned irons that she heated on the coal range. Nor do we remember ever seeing father in a pair of overalls or a sloppy straw hat. He always wore some kind of slacks and vest with a black Duffy hat which in later years was replaced with a felt hat.



Theodore Farley far left with his fruit crop and others

Father was a very stern man, yet very kind. He was king in our home and his word was law. We never thought of disobeying or contradicting him. None of us ever heard him say a profane or vulgar word. He had a strong sense of dependability and honesty all his life. If he ever made a commitment of any kind, he kept it to the letter. He was always so honest himself, and put too much trust in others. As a result, he was often taken advantage of, but he would

never retaliate for any wrong. It seemed if he ever made a deal with anyone, it was always father who came out on the short end. Whenever he sold any fruit you could depend on it that there was never any spoiled fruit or a wormy apple in the box. There were never any spoiled or green berries in the cups which were always filled to the brim. He gave his berry pickers strict instructions in this respect. Merchants were always glad to do business with him because they could depend on getting the very best. I think one of the reasons father was never a wealthy man materially was because he always put the other fellow first. He always had something to give to someone less fortunate than he no matter how much he might need it himself. I'm sure no one was ever more wealthy than he in things that really count. He truly "laid up treasures in Heaven" and followed the admonition, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God."

Because of spring frosts which often froze the fruit, and the fact that the soil was so difficult to till, father sold the old home and purchased a 60 acre farm in Roosevelt, Uintah County. He also bought a city lot and built another home. He was now in his 60's and he didn't realize that he was growing older and that his strength was failing him. The big farm was too much for him and mother's health was breaking, so he sold his home again and returned to Provo where he purchased four acres of land just south of the city limits and west of the old golf course. There was a pretty little red brick bungalow on the land, surrounded with lawn, lovely flowers and shrubs. Father raised sugar beets and the finest strawberries and raspberries in the valley. A few short years found him unable to take care of the little farm, so it was traded for a brick bungalow at 250 West 5th South in Provo. My sister Miriam (Min) and her husband who made him welcome and gave their best. He passed away at their home in Provo on July 18, 1946, at the age of 88. Following are names of my brothers and sisters, all of whom have passed away except my sister, Min:

Theodore, Jr. (Dick) Feb. 2, 1880 – June 16, 1958
Lydia Pearl Wentz – Jan. 19, 1882 – May 8, 1961
Carroll (Carl) April 28, 1884 – Jan. 20, 1951
Adleen (Mrs. Leo J. Knight) May 22, 1888 – Sept. 16, 1961
Leslie - June 26, 1890 – November 26, 1910
Louie (Mrs. Frank Johnson) – Nov.27, 1894 – April 11, 1918
Earl Pembroke – June 13, 1897 – Sept. 9, 1898
Miriam Adell (Mrs. Reginald Johnson) April 17, 1899
Milton – August 2, 1901 – September 9, 1979 – Sept. 9, 1979
Eva Farley Clayton – October 6, 1903

As I Remember My Father

Father was in his late forties when I was born. A man of that age in those days was considered quite old, so I remember him as a rather mature man with a touch of gray in his hair. He was a medium size man, quite slender and very straight. He had coal-black hair which curled at the forehead, and dark brown eyes with a mischievous twinkle in them. He also wore a curly black beard with a mustache that curled over his upper lip, and he would brush and comb it as carefully as he did his hair.



I never saw my father without his beard until I was about 12 years old. I shall never forget the night he came home from a visit in Ogden after his barber brother persuaded him to let him trim his beautiful beard a more fashionable style, the Van Dyke. When he opened the door we thought some strange man was forcing his way into our house, and then when we discovered it was father, we all broke down and cried. I think mother was the most shocked of all. Well that was the end of the beautiful beard for it never grew back quite the same, so little by little he got up the courage to shave it off completely, leaving just the neat little mustache.

Father was a very stern man, yet very kind. He was king in our home and his word was law. We never thought of disobeying or contradicting him. He had such a strong sense of honesty and dependability all his life. I don't believe he ever turned his back on a responsibility. If he ever made any kind of commitment, he kept it to the letter. I must admit that father did not have what you would call a business head. He was always so honest himself in all his dealings, and he put too much trust in others; as a result, many people took advantage of him. It seemed if he ever made a deal with anyone, it was always father who came out on the short end.

Whenever he sold any fruit you could depend upon it that there was never a wormy apple or any spoiled fruit in the box. There were never any spoiled or green berries and the cups were filled to the brim. He gave his berry pickers strict instructions in the respect. Merchants were always glad to do business with him because they could depend on getting the best. I think one of the main reasons father was never a wealthy man materially was because he always put the other fellow first. He always had something to give to someone less fortunate than he no matter how much he might need it himself. But I'm sure no one was ever more wealthy than he in things that really count. He truly "laid up treasures in Heaven" and followed the admonition, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God."

Father always had a rather aristocratic air about him. He had a keen sense of pride and beauty in personal appearance as well as the home. I don't think he ever owned a colored shirt, at least none of the children ever remember seeing him wear one. Because he was so dark he thought colored shirts were unbecoming to him, so no matter what kind of work he was doing he always wore a white shirt and black bow tie. I don't believe many wives would pamper their husband in that respect as my mother did. I remember seeing her iron seven and eight white shirts for him each week, with stiff collars and cuffs that shined like a mirror when she got through ironing them with her old fashioned irons that she heated on a coal range. Nor do I remember seeing father in a pair of overalls or a sloppy straw hat. He always wore some kind of slacks with a black Duffy hat which in later years was replaced with a nice felt hat.

None of us ever heard our father say a profane word or anything vulgar in our lives. He was a deeply religious man with a strong testimony of the gospel. He attended his various church meetings regularly and expected and demanded that his family do likewise. Sometimes it seemed he was a little bit too strict, but I am thankful now for the wonderful example he set for us. We were taught to work and share responsibilities at an early age, and to be honest and dependable. In times of sickness he was very gentle and always by our side. Whenever any of the family was in trouble he was there ready to help in any way he could. He was never demonstrative in his affections for his family, but we all knew he loved us dearly and would give his life for us if necessary. When he became more prosperous he enjoyed buying nice little gifts for the family as a surprise. The biggest surprise was when the old organ was turned in on a beautiful new piano.

In his younger days, father was quite a clown and practical joker. Once on New Year when my niece, Myrl Wentz, stayed with us all night, we got up early to find Santa, as usual, had left a few things that he had left over from Christmas. There were tiny little bisque dolls with hair (we used to buy them at the neighborhood store for a penny) scattered every little way from the Christmas tree, through the kitchen and outside in the snowy path all the way to the front gate. We were told that Santa had a hole in his bag and dropped them on the way as he left our place. We had quite a collection when we got through picking them up.

Then I remember the funny stories father would tell us in Swedish dialect as we gathered around his chair in the evenings, stories that he invented as he went along, and we laughed until the tears rolled down our cheeks. There were also stories about the Indians in Arizona, and of the frightening experiences our parents had with them while living there. It was Geronimo and his band who gave the white settlers so much trouble. It seemed the Indians were always on the warpath, plundering, stealing and killing. They massacred a whole regiment of U. S. Soldiers and brutally mutilated their bodies.

I don't believe a day ever passed without family prayers in our home. At night before going to bed we knelt by our chair and father would offer the prayer. Sometimes he would ask mother to pray. Even if we had guests in the home, they knelt with us. In the morning before we were allowed to eat, we all knelt by our chair at the breakfast table and had prayer. We all sat down to the table together at meal time, much the same as the Walton Family on their TV

show. Father would never tolerate any quarreling or complaints at the table.

How well I remember the visits each summer of father's sisters from Ogden. Sometimes they would bring their husbands or some of their children, and of course, they always brought Grandma (Lydia Pons) Farley whom we adored. It was a big event for us kids to entertain our city relatives in all their finery. They always drove down in a big fancy automobile filled to the brim. It always worried mother to pieces for we did not have the conveniences in our home that they had, but oh the meals she would put out for them. I'm sure they never ate better than they did at our place. They always came during fruit season to get their fill of fresh fruit.

They must have enjoyed it for they always stayed for two weeks, and how they praised mother's fried chicken, ham and eggs with buttermilk biscuits and homemade jam. I can see them yet inspecting our outside cement cellar with amazement, the rows and rows of every kind of bottled fruit, jams and jellies, bags of dried fruit and corn and home-cured hams and bacon hanging overhead, also crocks of pickles and preserves. That was our super-market. We had more than our year's food supply and thought nothing of it.

The years rolled by and one by one of the children married and left home to start a life of their own. A year after mother passed away, father came to live with Quinn and me in the Clarendon Apartments on Third East between South Temple and First South in Salt Lake so he could work in the temple. He was never any trouble and never interfered in our affairs. He was always so appreciative of every little thing we did for him.

Then came the great depression and Quinn [Eva's husband] lost his job. I had already given up my job so I could stay home and be a good housewife. Jobs were hard to find so we decided to go to Los Angeles to look for work. I'll always regret that move for we gained nothing from it, and we left father to live alone in a little apartment to take care of himself while continuing his temple work. His health began to fail fast because he didn't get the proper food. We came back to Salt Lake a year later and had to move in with Quinn's parents until he could find permanent work. In the meantime, father went to live with different ones of the family. Most of the time he lived with Min and Reg, and they were truly good to him. It was there he spent his last days.

In his later years, father became more mellow and very gentle. One day as he sat in deep thought he said to Min, remorsefully, "I had an angel of a wife and I never told her." But I'm sure mother understood. His last days were spent in reading the scriptures. One seldom saw him without his Book of Mormon or Bible on his knee. He always had a sunny smile and kind word for everyone who passed the house where he sat in his chair on the porch. He was "grandpa" to all the children in the neighborhood.

I shall always cherish the memory of my wonderful father. By Eva Farley Clayton