

Mary Eliza Godfrey

13 April 1898 - 20 September 1920



Once upon a magical time, there was an enchanted land. The land was rich and fertile and surrounded by majestic mountains. In this land there lived a very handsome and dashing young man who was very much in love with a charming and beautiful young maiden. And she loved him. In this land there was a beautiful castle on the hill across the valley. This was a special castle, the castle of a King with very special powers. This lovely young couple went to the castle to be married by the King's servants, because the King gave his servants the power to bind their love in marriage forever.

They returned from the castle to their cottage in the enchanted land to begin their lives together and they were so happy. It wasn't long before something wonderful happened. This beautiful young wife learned that she was going to have a little baby! Her family was so happy and excited because this baby would be the very first grandchild. So in the enchanted land, a beautiful baby girl was born and she was given her mother's name. This is the story of that baby girl. Her life in the enchanted land was almost like a fairytale, except this story really happened.

Mary Eliza Godfrey was born April 13, 1898 in Clarkston, Cache County, Utah. She was the first child of Joseph Maurice and Mary Eliza (Liza) Barson Godfrey . Her father's parents were George and Emily Gover Godfrey and her mother's parents were Peter Sheffield and Mary Ellen Scott Barson. Her grandmother was Mary Pugh Scott. It was a tradition in the Pugh family to name one daughter in each generation Mary. Mary was the sixth such Mary in the family line. Mary was blessed by her grandfather, Peter S. Barson



Mary Eliza Barson and Joseph Maurice Godfrey

on June 5, 1898. She was the first grandchild in the Barson family and easily became the favorite, especially to Grandmother Mary Ellen.

When she was two years and one month old, her brother Ervin was born but he only lived nineteen months. So, once again Mary became the center of all the attention. She had her picture taken when she was a baby with here mother, grandmother, and great grandmother.

Mary was such a pretty baby with expressive brown eyes and brown hair and usually wore bangs. Mary was so pleasant and cheerful that everyone in the family loved her. She was baptized on May 8, 1906 by Joseph V. Smith and confirmed a member of the Church the same day by Thomas Morgan.

Mary was very pretty and quite small in size. Her hair was the most beautiful brown and she could do



Four generations of Marys; Mary Ellen Scott, Mary Eliza Godfrey (the baby), Mary Eliza Barson(standing), and Mary Pugh



Mary and with two of her mothers sisters, about 1900; Mattie Barson, Mary, and Bessie Barson.

anything she wanted with it. She had the merriest laugh and was always giggling over everything. Just hearing her made everyone else laugh. When she was five years and eight months old, her sister Emily was born. Emily was named after her father's mother, Emily Gover. Emily was another cheerful, laughing girl. One never thought of either Mary or Emily without remembering their laughing dispositions.

Mary loved to ride horses and was very good at it. She had a pony named Teddy. One day she was in a horse race with a boy in Clarkston. When one of the towns people tattled to her father because it was not proper for a young lady to be racing horses. Joe raised



The Godfrey home about 1908; The little girl with the doll is Emily, Liza, Ervil on Joe's knee, and Mary on Teddy. Notice that she is sitting side saddle, the proper way for a lady to ride a horse.

his fist and said, "She had better win!" She lost. Mary also enjoyed ice-skating and was good at it too.



Mary's Cousin, Ann Godfrey and Mary about 1910

The family lived in the southeast corner of Clarkston in a comfortable red brick home. Her father was a farmer and loved horses and enjoyed caring for and driving them. Her Grandfather and Grandmother Barson lived one mile out of town on a big farm. Joe was always hitching up a team to the buggy (or a sleigh in the winter) and taking his family down to see Ma and Pa. Never Mother or Mom, Father or Dad, just plain Ma and Pa.

In 1907, her brother, Ervil, was born and four and a half years later Alf was born in 1911. This happy family really enjoyed life. There home always had pretty flowers around it.



The Barson women in 1907: Back row: Liza, Bessie, Mattie, and Nell. Middle row ; Ann, Grandma Barson, and Vie (The babies are not identified). Seated on the floor: Ann Godfrey, Emily Godfrey, Mary (in the center), Sylvia Barson, and LaRee Barson.

Large trees grew on the ditch banks. A good orchard stood behind the house and a nice lawn in front. Geraniums bloomed in the window and Liza always had a splendid garden. The feat of the year was to have the first radishes in town and new potatoes and peas for Fourth of July. Liza always planted pepper grass for a tasty addition to salads. Another contest held in town was to have a line cloths whipping in the breeze. It was whispered around that some determined ladies actually wet down clean sheets and raced to the line to pin the first Monday wash each week.

There weren't very many homes with trees in those days and housewives easily kept track of their neighbors. The children spent many happy hours

playing on the lawn while their parents visited.

Mary had many good friends and was a leader among them. Her closest friends, Felicia Heggie and Lucy Griffin, lived a block east of Mary so the three of them of them walked to school together. Mary was an A student in school and graduated from the eight grade, which in that day was an admirable accomplishment. She loved to help everyone, never asking for a job but did her best when asked to help. She loved working in the church too. Mary was the kind of daughter any parent would be proud to have.

One Sunday, Mary and her friends where walking through the timberculture (a large grove of trees that her father had planted) to a picnic and stopped at Aunt Effie's for a cool drink of water. To Mary's horror, she found busy Aunt Effie mopping her floor. Imagine! On Sunday! Mary went home and told her mother that Aunt Effie did this every Sunday and caused an awful uproar. After that, Mary wasn't Aunt Effie's favorite niece any more.

This happy world crashed down around them in May of 1912 When Mary's father became ill with spotted fever. He smoked quite heavily and his lungs where too weak to overcome the fever. Liza's uncle, Dr John Barson from Joplin, Missouri was in town visiting his brother. He used all of his skill to try to save Joe. Liza wore herself out caring for him so her brothers and their wives took turns helping her. By the 24th of May his condition seemed

so much better that Dr. Barson decided to climb the mountains west of town to the top of Gunsight.

Effie and Hyrum Barson (Liza's brother) were taking care of Joe when he quietly passed away at the young age of thirty-eight. Mary was fourteen at the time of his death and Alf was only eight months old. The entire family was so sad. In those days there were no mortuaries so kind neighbors prepared the body for burial. It was considered to be an honor to sit all night with the deceased person and a coal oil lamp. The newest white top buggy in town had the backseat removed for use as a hearse.

Dr. Barson and Aunt Fanny were very impressed with the beautiful way the Mormons laid their loved ones to rest in their white cloths and temple robes. Not being members of the church, they thought the services were impressive and comforting.

There were many debts as Joe had built a new barn and granary. The determined young widow with plenty of backbone and grit wanted no charity. She and the children managed the best they could. Joe's brother Harry lived a block to the south and always looked after them.

Liza's brothers did all they could to help also, such as leaving a big bag of flour or a load of coal. On Sunday, after church, many of the family would stop by. In 1909 her parents had built a new house two blocks east of Joe and Liza. Her father walked over to check on the young family every day.

Mary was attractive and very popular. She was attracted to handsome Gover Buttars, the son of a wealthy farmer. He was so pleasant and well liked, a very fine catch for any girl in town. Mary was only seventeen when she and Gover where married on November 15, 1915 in Preston, Franklin County, Idaho. At their wedding supper, which was held in the home of her Aunt Martha Goody, Gover's father was heard to say, "Isn't Mary lovely."



Dr. John Barson, unidentified child, and Grandpa Peter S. Barson



Mary's 8th grade graduation

They were actually cousins. Gover's mother and Mary's grandmother were sisters. At the time it was against the law in Utah for anyone so closely related to marry. Their Bishop told them that if they went over into Idaho and got married he would give them a recommend to be sealed in the temple. Three months later on February 23, 1916 they went to the Logan Temple where they were sealed for time and eternity.

Mary and Gover moved into a two room, frame home on the northeast side of Clarkston. Mary was very artistic and a good homemaker. She kept a very lovely and attractive home that she was very proud of. She and her mother made a pact that they would see each other every day. Unless something unusual happened, Mary would walk the six long (Utah) blocks up home, or Liza would walk to Mary's. Gover was always a pleasant and considerate son-in-law and was always good to Liza.

Before her first child was born, Mary said, "I want to buy the best cloth for my babies clothes because I want to have ten children." Ervin Daniel was born on October 8, 1916. He was the first great grandchild to Peter and Mary Ellen Barson. The entire family was thrilled. Mary was their first grandchild and Ervin was first great grandchild, some record!

On July 1, 1918 Gordon Gover came to join the family. It was truly a pleasure for Mary to care for her little boys. She and Gover each had a rocking chair. Every night they took Ervin and Gordon in their arms to rock them to sleep.

That fall, the terrible Asian Flu epidemic swept the country. Mary, Gover, and Ervin and the cute baby were all flat in bed with terribly high fevers. Liza went down to take care of the stricken little family. Everyone wore gauze masks. Despite this precaution, Liza was soon as sick as the rest of them.

Church and school was canceled from October 1918 until January 5, 1919 due to the flu. Mary's cousin, LaRee Barson (Aunt Effie's daughter) who was seventeen at the time, was asked to help take care of the very sick family. Will Shepard, the husband of one of Joe's cousins, called on them each morning to see what supplies were needed. She did her best tending the cute baby and taking temperatures and soon became sick herself. Very few people in town escaped the



Mary's sister, Emily

epidemic, some even died. The funerals were held out in the open and everyone wore gauze masks. A few young men in town went from door to door doing the milking and other chores. Eventually Clarkston lived through the epidemic.

Sometime later, Dr. Barson was again in town visiting the Barson Family. Mary wasn't well and he gave her a complete physical examination. He told her that she must not have any more children, because if she did she would lose her life. Happy, laughing Mary said that she intended to have another baby even if it meant the end. She wanted ten children.



Mary's little boys, Gordon and Ervin - about 1919

Milton Ruder arrived on September 25, 1920. Soon after Milton was born, Mary hemorrhaged and the bleeding could not be stopped. Again the whole family was saddened as this beautiful young mother passed away. She was laid to rest in the Clarkston Cemetery. Kind Grandma Emma Buttars took the young family into her home and took such good care of them.

After putting their grief behind them, those who were left went on with their lives. Gover met another Mary and she later became his wife. Mary Harriett Bowles, an outsider from Lewiston, was readily accepted and became a valuable member of the ward and was accepted by the Barson Clan. They were married on June 28, 1922 and she established a lovely home with Gover and his sons. Milton lived with his Grandmother Buttars until he was eight.

Gover became a successful, energetic farmer who wanted to improve his future. In 1929 he moved his family to Burley, Idaho. The entire family missed them so much and everyone was very fond of "Mary's little boys" as they were called.

Mary's short life was happy and well lived, almost like a fairy tale. She was loved by the entire family and community. Forty-six years later in December 1966, Gover was laid to rest by her side.

The majority of the Story of Mary Eliza Godfrey comes from a life sketch written by her Cousin, LaRee Barson McCauley. Other pieces are remembrances from her brother Alf, sister Emily, Aunt Mattie (Martha Jane Barson Goody), and cousin Tellma Goody Barson. The fairy tale beginning did not come from any of these sources.