

My Middle Name

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I have never cared for my middle name, Floriman. It has no lilt to it, carries no evocative image. *Florimania* means “a passion for flowers,” which I do not have. But there is a family story that brings meaning to Floriman.

Our files contain a typed, undated document entitled “Genealogical Record of Lloyd W. Taylor and Lewis R. Taylor,” with annotations in the hand of my father Lloyd William Taylor. The following excerpt lists the “issue” of Father’s parents.

QUOTE

Carrie Elnora Meeteer (b 1866), m 1885, Levi William TAYLOR (b 1858)

Issue:

I- Floriman Earl (1886-87)

II-Merle Vinton (b and d 1891)

III-Lloyd William (b 1893)

IV-Louis Rufus (b 1894; m Carrie Fuller)

UNQUOTE

Mother told me that before Father’s birth his parents had two boys; both died because they could not get enough breast milk and were unable to digest milk supplements then available. As a newborn, Lloyd William was headed for the same fate as Floriman Earl and Merle Vinton, until the family doctor brought them a can of Carnation evaporated milk, which had just come on the market. “Why don’t you try this?” he said. Lloyd William Taylor survived.

Mother said that I too was weaned on canned Carnation evaporated milk; I still love Carnation’s thick, sweet taste.

I remember my paternal grandparents---my Father’s parents---so they were alive when I was born. Clearly my middle name Floriman carried between generations a message of sympathy and love.