A THINKER AND SEEKER

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MY JOURNEY TO BE A BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST

ROBERT A. FLOYD, PHD

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A Thinker and Seeker:
My Journey to be a Biomedical Scientist

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DEDICATION

I do realize as did Shakespeare that I have spent my time on the stage of biomedical science full of sound and fury but at nature's behest in a very humble way. Hopefully, my time on the stage will have helped mitigate suffering and early death due to brain cancer and possibly decreasing noise-induced hearing loss. The story told in this book is my life's story of trying to accomplish these goals as well as possibly others in the future.

I would like to dedicate this book to my family, those past, present and those that come later. My Mom's family considered it important to pass on and understand the historical aspect of our activities in relation to the time they occurred. I would also like to dedicate this book to my teachers, friends and colleagues that have helped me see more of my life in a comparative sense with their lives' journeys and wisdom.

My life's journey was enabled by several schools and institutions made possible by monies, by counties and states. I learned so much in my early Mt. Olive 2 room grades school and then matured more at Middleburg High School and the University of Kentucky undergraduate and graduate school, and then my Ph.D. training at Purdue University, my postdoctoral studies at the University of California (Davis) and then at the University of Pennsylvania, and Washington University in St. Louis prepared me to do the basic research that I and my post doctorate and research technicians at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation did make possible by the monies obtained in National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants and in part by the gracious donors to the OMRF.

My desire to put my life's story in print was triggered by the early ancestral research of the Floyds done by Margery Dodd Floyd and then the more in depth ancestral research done by Damon Floyd. It was also triggered by my continuous reading from a young age of historical biographies of persons I admired. One very important one was a small biography of the life of Benjamin Franklin, the first really original excellent scientist in the New World. It turns out he started an academy that became the University of Pennsylvania.

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INTRODUCTION

From whence did we come and why are we here? These are questions that are with us all our lives. Perhaps subconsciously when we are very young and yet it seems more dominantly as we get older and with more prevalence perhaps for those with a more inquiring mind. And thus in our most reflective moments and especially as we get older we begin to look at the scope of our life and our life's work and clearly realize that we have participated in the course of events for a short time in human history. Then it feels as if you owe it to yourself and to those that follow that we need to put into words our experience such that it may be valuable to someone later on, hopefully our children or their children or their children's children or even possibly enquiring strangers, when they as I, as we all do, ponder our existence and questions arise.

I have contemplated writing about the ancestral roots of my family for many years. When I was a kid growing up in the Mt Olive area of Casey County I remember various mentions of the earlier Floyds by my Grandfather Floyd but my questions to find out more about them were never really answered in any way that my young mind could make much sense. My Mom seemed to know quite a bit about the earlier Floyds but I could not really appreciate what she told me then and my Dad seemed not to have much interest in it. I think possibly the goal of writing on the earlier Floyds was set in motion by Marlene and I being driven by Siler Floyd, my grandfather's older brother, to see the grave of my great, great, great grandfather, Reverend Matthew Floyd, near Nancy KY. This trip is imprinted in my brain simply by the fact that not only was it when I first

realized that the grave of my ancestors who lived so long ago was really known about in any depth and also because riding with Siler was like having a history lesson given in rapid fire while he herded his car, that must have had worn-out tie-rod ends, down the gravel roads dodging mud-holes and basically claiming the whole road in a somewhat scary but exciting trip. That trip was taken probably in the spring or summer time in the late 1960's when I was doing my doctoral studies at Purdue University.

Another event which sticks in my memory which enhanced my in our heritage occurred when doing interim post doctorate studies in 1969 at the University of California at Davis California. After nine months of research we traveled to Washington State University at Pullman Washington to present the research study results. During the meeting we had a conference dinner where the conference participants as well as their spouses or guests present at the meeting were invited. During the dinner conversation I had with one of the participant's guest, who was an expert in Ethnology (study of the origin of words), he confidently stated that the Floyd name was of Welsh origin. This was of interest to me and a lengthy dinner conversation then followed.

Then about 10 years later more interest in my ancestors was sparked again by becoming aware of the fact that Katherine Floyd, a Center College educated librarian, who married a Floyd (Loren E. usually called LE), came to my parents' home when we happened to be visiting sometime after I had progressed deeper into my career as a biomedical research scientist and living in Oklahoma City. This would have been about the mid 1970's. Katherine and LE had spent many years during their summer breaks, she as a school librarian living in Harrison OH, driving their VW minibus thousands of miles tracking down documents on our earlier Floyds all over this country and even getting copies of the signature of the first of our Floyds in this country from official English documents.

Later, probably the next year after seeing Katherine and LE in Casey County, they visited us in Oklahoma City when they were in pursuit of more information. They had evening dinner with us and she went into much detail about their efforts and travels, which was after she had already put together a book-document detailing our Floyd family tree. I think also that she had found a bound document published by Marjory Dowd detailing

the Floyd family tree starting with the first Floyd in this country, Matthew Floyd, who was a Colonel in the British army during the Revolutionary War. I think this was the start of a more serious effort to learn more about the roots of the Floyd family.

I have spent many hours searching on the internet and reading extensively in what can only be likened to detective work to find strong clues which excite me to dig deeper. It was during the internet search that I ran across an excellent website put together by Damon Floyd, a retired US Navy Lieutenant, who also traced his ancestors back to Colonel Matthew Floyd. Actually his family roots diverged from mine at the third generation in this country. His great, great, great grandfather was a brother of my great, great, great grandfather Reverend Matthew Floyd, the third generation Floyd in this country. Damon was born Dec 1, 1932 in Muncie Indiana and after military service lived in Bloomington Indiana. I had phone conversations with him and exchanged many emails to get clarification of my many questions. He had put together the most extensive set of documents on our ancestry roots than anyone thus far. He had traveled extensively to collect new facts. His website no longer exists freely on the internet because he died on Feb. 23, 2005 and is buried at Matthews Cemetery in Matthews Indiana. I did download in print form much of the information on his website up to the 5th generation of our Floyds and only specific parts of the 6th, 7th and 8th generation that are of specific pertinence to my immediate family. I think all the Floyd family genealogy research he did is stored in the Monroe County Public Library in Bloomington Indiana. It could also be available on the Ancestry.com website. Since Abraham Floyd, son of Colonel Matthew Floyd, moved to Indiana after first coming to Kentucky after the Revolutionary War was over and also since many other direct decedents of Colonel Matthew Floyd also came to Indiana it is highly likely that extensive Floyd ancestry information is present in the documents that Damon assembled.

In addition to being a Floyd I am also one-half Williams so it is also important to know more about Mom's side of the family. On the subject of the Williams ancestry, I am so blessed to have my Mom's younger twin brothers Ronald and Donald who have extensive knowledge of the Williams family ancestry. I have absorbed all I can from their knowledge

and Ronald's extensive writings on this fascinating family history. It is permanently imprinted in Donald's brain. I have pestered Ronald to write a book on his extensive knowledge of the Williams family history but so far no book. However he has shared many written reflective summaries of various aspects of his family's history with me and all his younger relatives and has put together a 2.5 inch thick 3-hole binder book on the Williams' family history and ancestry. One trip that Ronald took us on was extremely important. In the summer of 2008 we drove to Big Hill, south of Richmond, where he showed us the area where the first Williams relatives came into Kentucky. It was on that trip too where he pointed out the place where two brothers of his ancestors rode their horses to be conscripted into the First Kentucky Calvary. This unit, which was formed by Colonel Wolford and had many Casey County boys, was famous in the Civil War battles fought. This trip galvanized my determination to understand more of my Williams ancestry and the Civil war in Kentucky.

I began to seriously think about writing of my ancestral roots and about my growing up, education and my career when I formally retired from the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation June 30, 2012. Retirement came after nearly 38 years of full time work at a great institution at which I was so fortunate to work for so long and at which I had the opportunity to conduct research on whatever I considered important in biomedical relevance and in which I was competitive. I am still amazed that I had the opportunity to do something in life that I truly loved and that was challenging enough to keep me engaged fully. In order to conduct successful competitive basic research in the biomedical research arena required continuous reading of scientific articles and writing grant applications and manuscripts and conducting intensive laboratory research. But writing about my life and about my ancestral roots and about how I have spent my life is not the same as writing science articles or grant applications. This endeavor requires new-type thinking and dealing with some self-imposed barriers. A major question kept coming up; why are you doing this? Is it ego-driven? So I finally put these questions to rest because I rationalized it would be educational not only for me but hopefully helpful to my children and possibly others that might read it. After all we pass on our knowledge and wisdom in one form or another and I find I have not done this very

well with my children thus far. So this endeavor is somewhat legacy driven as well a learning experience for me and in fact I find that I am really very much driven to do it.

Now a word about past memory; which you really must utilize extensively in writing your life story. You are unique. I am unique. The fact of the matter is that there is no one else like you and you must rely on your memory of yourself and the circumstances you have found yourself involved in at a specific time-frame. You must do the best you can to check the accuracy of your memory but that process in not 100% certain and the fact of the matter is you perceive the experience with your own perception filtering processes influenced by past experiences. In trying to remember experiences I had when I was say age 5 to 10 is like taking a flashlight into a dark attic and rummaging around for thoughts, perceptions, feelings and items I had when I was that age. Our knowledge of the past is clouded in darkness because it is imperfect. So I find by describing a past events requires using the modifier "it seems" frequently. But the effort of trying to remember unlocks some memory boxes as well as brings forth questions of what other events that may have happened at that time also as well as bringing up questions of why did this happen anyway. So looking at photographs taken at that time as well as asking penetrating questions to people around at the same time may help unlock other memory boxes and bring more clarity. So it is a learning process and to some extent the journey into the past is the discovery of you in a new light. It is the recrystallization of your perception of yourself with the benefit of more experience at living. And that is thrilling and rewarding at least to my way of thinking.

The background research and writing I have done in the last 2 years comes in spurts of time has been confined to at most 3 to 4 hours or so each week. This is because the biotech projects I'm involved with have consumed most of my time. But I have written about some of the time periods of my early life and grade school experiences. I have attempted to put them into an historical context by providing as an opening an account of the Floyd's move from the Nancy KY area to the eastern side of Casey County.

CHAPTER 1

REVEREND MATTHEW FLOYD

His Tombstone-A Gateway to Understanding Our Floyd Ancestry

Rev. Matthew Floyd's tombstone is a concrete symbol that links me to my past Floyd ancestors. I first saw this tombstone about 50 years ago when my grandfather Floyd's older brother, Siler, showed up on a Sunday afternoon. We were visiting my Floyd grandparents just after I had started graduate school at Purdue University. Uncle Siler Floyd drove Marlene and me over to see the tombstone and give us a history lesson. Before that time I had no idea that it existed but the fact that it did exist and that it did, in part, proclaim his history was an important discovery for me. I have been back to see it many times over the years and its presence kept reminding me of just how little I knew about him and his ancestors. I exist because my ancestors existed and I, in part, am who I am because of whom they were. Therefore, it is logical that I would want to know more about those who came before me so I would know more about myself. So in the intervening time I have spent much time digging into our Floyd line ancestors. So for myself and for others who may want to know, I have put down a brief, and as accurate as possible, history of our Floyd line ancestors in the first three chapters.

His grave is in the Henderson-Floyd Cemetery. This is an old cemetery located about 1 mile west of the intersection of KY 196 with US 80 in

Nancy KY. The cemetery is about 250 yards south of KY 196 and located on the west side of Sievers road which is a side road that intersects with KY 196 and only runs south of the cemetery itself is about 50 yards wide and about 120 yards long with most of the graves being on the farthest (western end) of the graveyard. Rev. Matthew Floyd's grave is located at the most western end and located near the center part width-wise. There are several very large and more recent new large tombstones mostly near the center of the western one-third of the graveyard. These Graves are designated as representing the Henderson family. The farthest western end of the graveyard has mostly very old graves designated by unmarked field stones. The exception is a newer large tombstone located on the northern side of the most western end that has been placed as a re-marking of an old grave for a man (Riley Henderson, born in1826 and died 1890) and his wife (Lucinda Floyd, born 1831 and died 1890). There is another large but clearly older gravestone for Rev. Matthew Floyd.

When I was first shown the grave of Rev. Matthew Floyd by my great uncle Siler Floyd in the mid-to-late-1960s the headstone was clearly readable. In the last few years, the headstone has become so covered with moss that not a letter can be discerned.

In order to get the correct informational lettering on the headstone I have gone through various sources that have been written about the history of our Floyd line. One source that I am familiar with and the one which has done the most thorough extensive first-hand search and confirmation of the original information available, is that of retired US Navy Lieutenant Damon Floyd. He maintained his own website on our Floyd line when he was alive and published it all on his website. I am not sure if the information was uploaded on Ancestry.com but I do think it is deposited in a library in Bloomington, IN. I have spoken to him on the phone several times and downloaded much of this information, especially all of the generations 1–5 and only selected parts of generations 5–8 into pdf format before he died. Damon Floyd states that the printed information on Rev. Matthew Floyd's headstone is as such: ***In Memory of Elder Matthew Floyd; Born in SC Oct. 2nd 1778; began preaching in 1811; continued fruitful and successful Baptist preacher until his death; Died August 19th, 1863.***

For a headstone which was likely made during the Civil War when he died, or possibly soon thereafter, it must have been a very expensive stone at that time. It is most likely that the headstone was commissioned to be made by the White Oak Baptist Church. This was a prominent church that he helped found and was instrumental in its commission in 1811. He also was its senior pastor for most of the 52 years that he was a preacher. It should be noted that there are actually two headstones for Rev. Matthew Floyd. In addition to the one headstone we cleaned there is another large slab headstone with large letters **M. F.** cut into this stone. This headstone is propped up near the fancier headstone. It is highly likely that the simpler headstone is the original one made when he died, and that the fancier stone was commissioned by the church and erected at a later date.

Jack Henderson, caretaker of the cemetery also told us that the original site of the White Oak Baptist Church was in the front part (eastern end) of the Henderson-Floyd Cemetery. So the present day Henderson-Floyd Cemetery was once the grave yard for the original White Oak Church. He said that the old church building was present in the cemetery for several years after the new church building was built and being used.

Rev. Matthew Floyd became a very prominent Baptist preacher and leader in the development of new churches in several counties in the Cumberland Valley area of Kentucky. His pastoral and leadership service for the Baptist faith has been summarized in the Kentucky Baptist History (A History of Kentucky Baptists, Volume II 1886 (pp. 554–556) by J. H. Spencer and reprinted 1984-formatted by Jim Duvall).

Spencer summarizes Rev. Matthew Floyd's ministry as such; "Matthew Floyd was by far the most influential and effective preacher in the South Concord Association, and became the leader of the missionary party, in the new organization, exerting the measure of his influence in favor of missions." Spencer further states that "Matthew Floyd was one of the most popular, beloved and efficient preachers in Kentucky, in his generation. White Oak Church was the fruits of his first labors in the gospel. He was called to the pastoral charge of this organization about the time of its constitution, and served it with great acceptance, about 51 years. He also served with equal acceptance the churches at Monticello, New Salem, Big Springs and Beaver Creek all in Wayne County." Spencer notes that "Mr. Floyds charges

with seven other churches, entered into the constitution of the South Concord Association. Mr. Floyd had now become the leading minister in the Cumberland Valley. His great popularity was evinced in his being elected moderator of the new association, seventeen years in succession." Mr. Spencer continues Besides his pastoral labors Mr. Floyd preached abundantly among the destitute in Wayne, Pulaski and Russell Counties, during his entire ministry of 52 years.

Rev. Matthew Floyd's Conversion to Baptist and Comments on his Father

It is important to quote Spencer regarding the important events in Matthew Floyd's conversion to a Baptist. Spencer's statements are as such; Matthew Floyd was the son of Captain Abraham Floyd and was born in South Carolina in the year of 1778. In 1796, he migrated with his parents to Kentucky. He was brought up in the Episcopal Church, of which his parents were devout members. He received a common English education, probably under the tuition of his father, and in early life, joined the Methodist Society as a seeker. Subsequently, he professed conversion, and united with a Baptist Church near the residence of his parents. Coming home from the baptizing without having changed his garments, his father was so angry with him for having joined the Baptist's that he drove him from his house, with his wet clothes on. However, Matthew continued firm in his new faith and became a very well know preacher in central Kentucky and founded many new churches in that area.

Rev. Matthew Floyd.

Benjamin Julian Floyd and his family.

Rev. Matthew Floyd Tombstone– after some cleaning.

My brothers, Carroll and Gene begin cleaning Reverend Matthew Floyd's gravestone.

Reverend Matthew Floyd's headstone as it appeared in the 1960s.

Reverend Matthew Floyd's Family

For this section I will rely exclusively on the information provided by Damon Floyd who did extensive first-hand research and confirmation of the information. He actually provided more details than I will give here. My purpose here is to give a summary only of the correct essential information.

Rev. Matthew Floyd's First Marriage and Their Children

Rev. Matthew Floyd first married Susannah Warren on 11 July 1804 at Lincoln County, Kentucky. Matthew would have been nearly 26 years old when he married. Damon did not provide any specific background information about Susannah Warren however Damon did record that one of his father's sister (Matthew's Aunt), namely Catherine "Caty" Floyd, married Charles Warren, Sr on 1 Feb. 1796 at Lincoln Co. KY. So it is possible that Susannah Warren was the younger sister of Charles Warren, Sr. However, this statement remains to be proven.

The Children of Matthew and Susannah are listed below along with only the most pertinent information about them that was deemed the most important.

1. (??) Floyd, born circa 1805 unidentified male which was on the 1810 Pulaski Co. KY census.

2. Nancy Floyd, born circa 1806 at KY, married William Jarvis 17 Sept. 1830 at Pulaski Co KY.
3. Abraham J. Floyd, born 1807 at Pulaski Co, KY; married Sarasha Tarter.
4. Reuben W. Floyd, born 1808 at KY: married Annie Shipley, then Dely Taylor, then Mary E. Eastham.
5. Patsy Floyd, born 1810 at KY- no other information given, perhaps she died at birth?
6. John W. Floyd, born circa 1812 at Wayne Co. KY, married Malvina S. Muse.
7. Jordan Floyd, born 1815 at KY; married Talitha Trimble.
8. Sarah Floyd, born 1817 at Pulaski Co. KY; married Nathaniel Burton.
9. Mary Ann "Poly" Floyd, born 1817 at KY; married John C. McDaniel.

Susannah must have died sometime after 1817 (perhaps when the twins (assumed) Sarah and Mary Ann were born) but there is nothing recorded as such. But we know she was buried in the Henderson-Floyd cemetery from what Jack Henderson said. She certainly must have died before 18 July 1822 because Matthew married Lucinda Shipley on that date.

Rev. Matthew Floyd's Second Marriage and Their Children

Rev. Matthew Floyd's second wife was Lucinda Shipley. Damon Floyd states that she was born in 1801 in Tennessee. As stated earlier Lucinda and Matthew were married on 18 July 1822 at Wayne Co. KY by Lewis C. Stinson and Damon records that her father Benjamin Shipley signed a consent for the marriage and he also records that there was a bondsman and a bond but it is not know the exact nature or details of the bond. Damon records that Lucinda's father died 19 August 1862 at Nancy, Pulaski Co. KY and that he was buried in the Henderson/Floyd cemetery and also provides the location of the cemetery (same as today). So the Shipley's must have moved from Tennessee to Nancy KY and since Matthew had begun preaching in 1811 in the White Oak Church, which was located on the grounds of the Henderson/Floyd cemetery, it is possible that the Shipley's were members of the church.

The children of Rev. Matthew Floyd and Lucinda Shipley are listed below as provided by Damon Floyd.

1. Stephen C. Floyd, born 18 October 1822 at Pulaski Co. KY, married Patsy Jane Burton.
2. Amanda Jane Floyd, born 1823 at KY, married Franklin Thorton Gaines.
3. John L. Floyd, born 20 August 1825 at Pulaski Co. KY, married Margaret A. Bryant.
4. Benjamin Julian Floyd, born 1826 at Pulaski Co. KY, married Elizabeth F. Caughron. Note Benjamin Julian Floyd is my great, great, grandfather. The family tree and the linage forward to my generation is provided elsewhere. It should be noted Abraham Floyd (Benjamin Julian Floyd's Grandfather) married Eve Julian; so it is likely that Matthew and Lucinda when naming Benjamin were paying tribute to Matthew's mother's family.
5. Lucinda Jane Floyd, born 1829 at Wayne Co. KY, married Riley Henderson, as was also noted earlier.
6. Francis Marion Floyd, born 1831 at Pulaski Co. KY, married Amanda Jane Eastman, married Minerva Easom.
7. Raney Floyd, born 9 Sept 1833 at Mill Springs, Wayne Co. KY, married Joicy Tarter.
8. Martha A. Floyd, born 22 Nov. 1835 at Wayne Co. KY, married John Jefferson Crittendon Harris.
9. Zachariah T. Floyd, born circa 1839 at Wayne Co. KY, married Margaret Elizabeth Burge.
10. Rhoda S. Floyd, born circa 1842 at Pulaski Co. KY, married William James Branscom 22 Nov. 1865 at Pulaski Co. KY.

Rhoda was the last recorded child of Rev. Matthew and Lucinda. At that time Matthew would have been about 64 years old and Lucinda about 41 years old. Matthew would have still been very active in his ministry and would live another 20 years dying at nearly 85 years old on August 19th, 1863.