

MEMORIES OF JAMES A. CRIDDLE

By Melvin

As a youngster I can remember Father playing baseball with me. I remember the time he made me a bat for my birthday out of a cedar post. When I asked him what he was doing, he said he was making a club to use on one of the horses.

I remember when, in order to make some money to feed his family, he fed Al Morrison's cattle. He got up in the middle of the night one time to go feed them because the storm blew all day long.

I remember going to church in a sled and I think back on the times we spent breaking horses. Haying was always a long time and we had to work from morning till night, and then milk cows. Father taught me how to work later on when I became older and wanted to sleep in when there wasn't any work to do, or it was storming, he would call me to get up and "loaf right".

I remember he always kept a garden for us boys to work in and keep busy. I asked him why he did it when I was older, and he said, "To teach me the value of work." He had a herd of cows to milk and used to be able to call them from the pasture and they would come.

When I was younger, in the winter times, we would play games - Chinese checkers or chess. He would whistle or hum when he was concentrating on a move and you could look out for what he was going to do.

Father was always active in the Church and I always was able to look up to him as he was seated in the Bishopric or in a Stake Position. I remember him as a Counselor in the Bishopric, then in the High Council, as a Counselor in the Stake Presidency, and finally as the Stake President. He was always to church on time, in fact he

made a point of being there before hand so he could be ready, and still does. When he went in as Stake President, the people had been used to meetings starting late, so were in no hurry to be in their places. Father started the meeting and they found out that if he said meeting time was at 7:00 P.M., that's when it started, not 7:05 or 7:10.

I remember the day Father was sustained as Stake President. I had been expecting him to be it. He had been in a meeting with the General Authority and when he came into where I was, I could tell by the look on his face and how he acted that it was him. He then sent me home to get Mother so she could be interviewed before he was sustained. I also remember the day he was released and how he said that a great burden of responsibility had been lifted from off his shoulders.

When I went into the service, Father told me many things that would be good for me and gave me much counsel and advice. I remember he told me that I should learn to talk to my Heavenly Father, that He would listen to all my problems and questions and be a source of strength to me. Father made a special trip out to Washington to see me and how thrilled I was to see him. It helped me to know he thought that much of me. In fact, he's the best friend I have in the world. Whenever I've wanted to talk or get some advice, he's always taken the time, regardless of what he had to do, or what time it was, to listen and help me.

Father came and visited me when I was on my mission and for the first time in my life that I can remember, he helped me in the



blessing of the Sacrament.

When I got married, Father gave me much counsel. He told me that marriage was not a 50/50 proposition, but that I would have to go a lot more than that to make a success of it. As my children have grown and given me concern, I could talk with him about them and he would help me to know what my actions should be. Whenever they have been called on missions, he's been there to see them off at their farewells and to welcome them home when they gave their homecoming talks. His love and concern for me has not stopped from the day I was born regardless of what I have done.

Father has always had a great love for the Scriptures and has a vast knowledge of the principles of the Gospel. He has been able to impart of this in his talks and lessons he has given to me and my family. When Mother died, Father was concerned that he find a help-mate who would help him raise three boys in the way they should be. How happy he was when he found Bessie, and what great love they had. He taught us that we should love our wives and tell them so and not be afraid to help them in their work. When Bessie died, something went out of his life and how lonely he was. The letter I got when he had found Alda will always be a memory to me. How grateful I am that he found her and what a wonderful life they have had together. It's not everyone that gets to see his father court a woman and choose a wife, but I've had that experience twice in my life.