

MEMORIES AND TRIBUTE ,

By Jean

The scriptures say "Honor thy Father and Mother." That is not difficult when one is blessed with parents who live honorable lives. I shall ever be grateful for the good and loving example of my father, James A. Criddle.

My first memories of my father stir feelings of love, comfort, protection. Probably the first isolated incident I can recall was when I was about 5 years old and Daddy went to the store while I was playing, not yet dressed. When he returned he and Mom seemed very happy and they told me to get dressed for I had a surprise. To my delight I found (after dressing of course) the little bike Jay Larson had originally purchased for his son Steve who had since outgrown the bike. In my day, little bikes like that were rather uncommon and I felt so proud to have such a lovely thing. It took some time to learn to ride the thing, but I knew from its purchase how much Daddy loved me.

Growing up has taught me how blessed I was to have a father who was so honest, kind, and did his best to live the Gospel teachings. I recall one time when Daddy needed to borrow money and he went to the bank to ask for a loan. How proud he was to return to say that not only did he obtain the loan, but he didn't need to give any collateral. His word was sufficient for the loan. I doubt many men in the valley would have such trust shown them by a bank. Daddy's honest living had earned him a reputation.

Daddy carried the Spirit of the Lord with him. I didn't notice it as much as perhaps others. Kind of like "can't see the trees for the forest." Once during my high school years a group of us met at

home to work on a debating project. Wayne Morris commented later that while we were working my father had occasion to walk through the room. He said nothing to us. He did his errand and left. Yet, Wayne said as Daddy walked through the room, he could feel the Spirit of the Lord with him. I consider that a terrific compliment.

I've always been impressed with the ease Daddy had handling introductions. Whether a General Authority or a person seeking a temple recommend, Daddy was never flustered or tongue tied. Just cordial and precise the introductions were made and names were even remembered.

Once a man came for a temple recommend. I had just finished scrubbing the floor for my Saturday assignment and in my "I hate this job so I'll so a poor job" way, I had left puddles of water on the floor. Unfortunately, the man for the interview was a farmer with the type of shoes farmers sometimes wear - dirt clung to the cracks and crevices. Putting shoes like that on a wet puddley floor and you get mud puddles all over the floor. The poor man wanted to hang his feet from the ceiling. Afterward, Daddy came to me and instead of belittling me or scolding me for the lousy job I had done, he merely pointed out the discomfort of the man and it wasn't his fault. I had aroused in me a feeling of empathy and I tried not to do that type of floor job again. (But I still don't like to scrub floors.)

I am sure every child will comment on the exemplary way Daddy treated his wives. His love was evident continually in his actions. I am grateful to him for this fine example.

I recall support and encouragement in all my "before the public" responsibilities. Whether speaking, singing, playing, whatever, wherever possible, Daddy was there giving support.

I know the Lord must be pleased with the good life Daddy lives and I am most grateful for the privilege of having him as my father.

REMEMBERING BY JAMES ALVIN CRIDDLE FOR HIS DAUGHTER JEAN ON OCT. 21, 1979

John Criddle and wife, Sarah Ellen Bennett Criddle, homesteaded in Downey, Idaho just east of the town when they had five children. They first lived in a cabin which later became a shed when the two room house was built. Ten children in all came to bless the family. James Alvin Criddle, my father, was the 9th child. He never knew the first child, Nora Azelia, who died before she turned four. She had been hurt during birth and never grew right. Dad remembers little bitty shoes that would hardly fit a baby and Nora wore them when she died. The 7th child, Ervin George, died before his 8th birthday. The rest grew to maturity. Their names in order of birth: Nora Azelia, Lonetta, Eva Nancy, Lorin, John Edwin, Sadie Elizabeth, Ervin George, Liller Orissa, James Alvin, and Vinnie Arvilla.

I asked Daddy where everyone slept in the two room home. He said he doesn't remember. He knows there were two beds in the small back room. He remembers at times being scrunched at the feet of his parents in a cramped space. Johnny said they put the little ones to bed, and when they went to sleep, they stood them against the wall, and the next lot went to bed. So, they always went to sleep laying down, but woke stacked against the wall. (One needs to know Uncle Johnny to appreciate his stories. He always has one ready to tell.)

After all the children were born, father John built two more rooms to the north. The home is still occupied by Uncle Johnny at this writing, January, 1980.

Dad does remember the straw ticks he filled so fluffy and full in the fall, that were thrown on the floor at night. Come spring, the tick was flat. Daddy loved sleeping on the comfortable fluffy straw tick.

I asked Daddy if his mother was cross with him. He smiled and said whenever his mother spanked him, he just laughed, and that made her angry. Yet, he was tender of heart and if she just talked and reasoned with him he frequently ended up bawling. The quiet voice was more powerful than the stinging hand.

When asked how they all stood it in such a small area, he replied, "We worked so much we didn't notice it."

I asked Daddy what he did as a young boy. Every Saturday a little water was poured on the ground to make a mud puddle, and Dad knelt with the cast iron silverware and rubbed and stabbed the mud to take the tarnish off.

He also remembers turning the handle of the butter churn and Oooh how he liked to unplug the cork in the bottom when the butter was hard and drink the buttermilk. Someone told him if you wash your face in the buttermilk, the freckles will go away. Being the typical redheaded boy with numerous freckles, Daddy remembers washing his face in buttermilk more than once. No!! The Freckles are still there.

Oh, how he hated every morning to take the quart of cream wrapped in a cloth sack down to the Oxford Hotel kitchen. He had to run like the dickens to school before the bell rang. Then after school he had to go back down and pick up the jar to take home for the next days delivery. The Negro couple who cooked there discovered his dislike for the delivering, so they tried to make it more pleasant by giving him a piece of pie or cake or something when he delivered. That made the chore a little more bearable. The cream sold for 25¢ a quart.

Daddy gets a distant look in his eye and one can tell he sees again the mud on the road going to Cambridge Church. The horses pulled the wagon through the six inch brown stuff and the magnetic effect the mud had on the wheel rolling through it captured Daddy's attention in a most interesting way.

He remembers the first ice cream cone he tasted. Someone spread the word, I believe at church, of the store in town selling ice cream cones, and his father took the wagon to town on the way home so all could be treated to a "boughten ice cream cone".

He remembers the first whole orange to eat all by himself. He had tasted oranges, especially at Christmas, when his mother would take an orange and peel it to share the sections with everyone. But one year his father pulled the wagon to Brigham (I think) for fruit among which was a box of oranges. That was the first time to eat a whole orange by himself.

He remembers the first buggy his father bought. It was a lovely thing with two seats and a canvas top with rolled up canvas to let down in case of inclement weather. When his dad bought it his mother cried and through her tears said, "Why did you buy a buggy when I've never even had a coat?" All those years with all those babies and the only thing mother Sarah Ellen had to ward off the cold was a shawl her mother-in-law had given her. That fall, Eva had to go to Ogden and father John gave her money to buy mother Sarah Ellen a coat. I don't suppose mother Sarah Ellen complained that she never got to pick it out herself.

I asked how she could live in the cold winters without a coat. Dad said he himself had no overcoat until he went to the mission field.

They kept warm by wrapping up in quilts and putting hot irons in the sleigh. He did recall that women dressed to keep warm as they wore numerous petticoats and knitted stockings with high top boots. "Why I never saw a woman's knee until I was married." That's pretty virtuous considering he was nearly 24 years old when he married.

He remembers how hard his mother worked, even when she sat down. Click, click, click, would go the knitting needles. When company came, she knitted and never seemed to need to watch her work.

She was a tiny woman, only weighing 110 pounds at the time of her wedding. Lifting water, and doing the heavy work required of her gave her a bad back. Yet, she could still outwork all her daughters until shortly before her death.

Daddy remembers his mother as a pleasant woman. She had unbelievable influence for good in his life. We have a bumper pool game. I encouraged Daddy to play it when he came to visit one time. He refused telling us why. As a young man he came home from being out with friends and saw his mother crying. Inquiring as to why she was crying, she answered she feared he had gone in the pool hall to play with his friends, and in that environment she feared he would start to drink. Dad hadn't been there and informed her so, but that if it would make her feel any better, he would promise her he would never play pool in his life. So, with the bumper pool table out of the beer hall and in our home, he would not break a promise made to his mother many years ago even though she has been dead many years. To my knowledge, Daddy has never touched liquor

either, so may we surmise that the promise worked?

Once Daddy hid a watermelon in the grain bin with the intent to eat it later by himself. He then forgot about it. Weeks later when he remembered it he was just sick. He pictured a stinking rotten watermelon turning good grain to stinking rotten wheat. He felt a rush to retrieve it, at the same time he didn't want to discover the mess. But much to his surprise, the melon had kept perfectly. Rather than spoiling, the melon had been insulated by the grain in kind of a cold storage. He carried it to the house and his surprised mother wanted to know where he got that watermelon at that time of year with the season passed. She got a knife and cut it for all and it was one of the sweetest melons dad had ever tasted. He didn't get to eat it by himself, but neither did he get scolded so I guess it all worked out in the end.

I asked Daddy if his family was wealthy or poor; where would they have been on a social scale? He replied that George Hyde had told Dad that if his father had not had poor health, he would have been one of the more wealthy men in the valley. As it was, he was like everybody else economically. Asked what was wrong with his father's health brought forth a whole list of ailments; among them kidney trouble, dropsey, and Bright's disease. Daddy remembers his fathers legs swelling up and Dad could press his finger on the leg and the indentation would stay a long time.

Daddy said his father's health broke after the following incident witnessed by Loren: Father John was working rock ground behind two colts when they were spooked by something and ran. The reins were wrapped around father John's waist and he was dragged over the rocky

ground for some distance before he could break loose. He was never the same after that. Daddy got a catch in his throat as he said that was the only time he ever knew of his father crying. Loren said, "Father hurt so bad he cried." Those words told the family how Father John suffered. Daddy was only 13 when his father died.

Once, when he was very young his father asked him to get on old Brownie to bring up the horses. Brownie was a mare with vast herding experience. "She knew more than I did about herding!" I got on Brownie and we went down to get the horses. When we got up to the gate, rather than turning in, the horses kept going. Brownie knew what to do, I didn't. Brownie ran straight ahead to get in front of the horses, then quickly swerved to turn them back to the gate. But, as Brownie whirled to turn the herd, I fell off. I grabbed her mane, swung my heel to her back, caught the backbone with my heel and inched myself up on her back. Off we went after the herd again. I could hang on going straight, but I just couldn't take the quick turns. Daddy doesn't remember how many times he fell off before Johnny came to his rescue.

Johnny rescued Daddy on another occasion too. Once when the circus came to town, all the children received money to go. Daddy bought something at a side show and the man shortchanged him. There was a little boy without enough money to see the circus, too afraid to confront the man who had shortchanged him; but it wouldn't have done good anyway, and he knew his mother had no more money to give him. So, the only thing to do was to make up his mind that he didn't want to see the circus anyway. Johnny came by and said, "Aren't you going to the circus?" "No." "How come?" "I don't

want to see it." Johnny pondered a minute, guessed what had happened, and said, "Come on, I'll give you more money to go to the circus". My heart expresses gratitude to Uncle Johnny and his generosity so a special little boy could go to the circus.

But, as in all families, things weren't always "hunky dorey" among the siblings. Working in sweet smelling hay always made Daddy vomit. Johnny said he was just lazy and got sick so he wouldn't have to work in the hay. So, Daddy was determined not to get sick whenever Johnny was around. However, even today the smell of fresh hay turns his stomach.

Daddy described in detail the change in farm equipment from horse to hundred thousand dollar combines, but my kitchen mind could not picture, nor understand, the machines described.

Their home had no indoor plumbing and they had to draw the water from the well by hand until they got a Newfoundland dog and fixed up a harness contraption whereby the dog walked around a wheel and some how water was pumped up. The mechanical mind understands it, mine doesn't.

Naturally they had the infamous outhouse. His father had built it and the boards not being tight fitting allowed the snow and storm to blow through the cracks. Daddy said it wasn't much fun sitting down on the ice that froze during the night. He was grateful for the CCC camps which built solid tight outhouses. All through the country, people had the Franklin D. Roosevelt outhouses which kept the storm outside where it belonged.

Daddy hated bathing in the dirty water someone else had bathed in on Saturday night. The wash tub was brought in and filled. Each time another person bathed, his mother added a little hot water from the

tea kettle. He remembers a blanket thrown over the backs of two chairs underneath which the bather sat in the tub. That gave them privacy? It must have worked - remember, Daddy never saw a woman's knee until he was married. He smiles and says, "Everyone had a bath on Saturday night whether he needed it or not!!"

As a young man he could pick up 120 pounds of grain, balance the bag on his back, then toss it to the top of the stack. Approaching 80, he says he can just about knock that size bag over now.

He used to belt wrestle. Two boys would kneel on all fours. A belt would be placed around their necks. Then each would brace himself and try to pull the other person over. Daddy had a strong, thick neck and did well with the game.

They made their own amusement. For Valentines Day they cut from magazines the pictures and flowers and such for their own personal handmade valentines.

People then were totally self sustaining with their cows, pigs, gardens and grains. They asked not "What would I like," but rather "Can I do without it." If the answer was yes, they did indeed do without it.

With an education only to the 8th grade, Daddy is a self educated man. I have told him he learned more in his eight years of schooling than most people do in twice that time. His speaking ability and vocabulary reveal a very intelligent man.

Daddy loves to "just figure". Often he takes paper and pencil and figures problems that would distress many math students. Frequently in my geometry and algebra assignments, although he had

studied neither, Daddy could figure the answers with his analytic mind.

He remembers when the telephone first came to Downey. The wire was the top line of the barbed wire fence marking the people's property line adjacent to the road. Whenever the phone line needed to cross the road, a tall pole was placed on either side of the road, then the phone line ran from the barbed wire to the top of the pole across the road to the other tall pole and back down to the barbed wire fence line. Everybody with a phone had the same line and each household had an identifying ring. Example: 2 shorts, 1 short with 1 long, 2 long, etc.. Daddy said it was true people would eavesdrop on other people's conversations. He didn't explain how he knew that, I guess someone told him.