

MEMORIES AND TRIBUTE

by Connie

Security, safety, peace, joy, happiness, and a little awe is what I have felt about being the daughter of James A. Criddle. With Daddy as head of our family I felt complete trust and I knew life would be alright if we just endured and put forth our faith and effort to make it so. I have watched him meet some of life's cruellest trials and through his faith and prayers turn them into blessings. He has taught me by his example the meaning of a father's love. Because of him I know and understand our Heavenly Father better. I have come to know in my heart that Daddy always has my best interest at heart. I have never once seen Daddy compromise on a principle of righteousness. After many prayers I have seen him stand alone to carry out God's will. Daddy is a leader and how grateful I am to be one of his family. I can never remember of being anything but proud of my father. Whenever it became known that I was the daughter of James A. Criddle, I knew that the best was expected of me. I will be eternally grateful for a father who led the way and in whose footsteps I can safely and happily follow.

I knew the security of being born into a family where my mother and father loved each other. I have come to understand that at a very early age, I realized I wanted to have a husband who would love me and treat me with as much respect as my daddy had for my mother. As Daddy's oldest daughter I knew that he loved me and I was special to him. I knew this because I felt it and he also told me. When I was little he called me his little "Sweetheart". I can't remember sitting on his knee and his singing songs to me, but I saw him do it with my younger brothers and sisters. From my daddy, I got the idea that be-

ing a girl was very very special.

As a little girl, the highlight of my day was to have daddy come home. He would let us have his lunch bucket and inside would usually be a treat that he had saved. Usually it was the frosting from his cake. Sometimes in the summer when Daddy was working in the fields Momma would pack us a lunch and we would go to the combine or tractor and have a picnic. These were always happy and special times. On some of our land there would be a creek or a creek bed and we would play in the water and shade. I can remember Daddy bringing Momma buttercups (wildflowers) in the spring when he came from the farm. Daddy had a big umbrella straw hat and as a little girl, I thought it was a very funny hat because it was so big. However, he needed it to keep the burning sun off and offer a little shade. When he took off his hat his forehead and hair would be clean and he would be very dusty from there down. I can remember Momma sweeping him off with a broom before he came into the house. I can remember a few times at dinner (12 noon) time when he would lay on the floor so he would not get anything dirty to have a little nap. I used to wonder why he worked so hard. Time has helped me to realize that he did it for us - his family.

As a little girl I would go with Daddy to milk the cows and as I grew up I would occasionally go help Daddy milk. The third year Reid and I were married and going to school we had worked in Fort Worth, Texas at Convair for the summer. The previous summers we had farmed and had sufficient funds to go to school but that year we did not. However, Reid and I paid our tithing and registered

for school. Daddy gave us a cow and Reid's dad milked it and sent us the money. This paid for our food and rent that year. We will be eternally grateful to our fathers for helping us at this time of need.

Daddy loved horses and I too get a thrill when I see a beautiful horse. He also gave us two horses when we moved to Loveland, Colorado. As a girl, some of the happiest times I spent were riding Daddy's horses.

When I was 8 years old, Daddy baptized me. The baptismal font in the Downey Ward Chapel was like a big bathtub. You put your leg over the side and slide to the other side and went down the stairs on the inside to get to the bottom. When I was baptized, I put my leg over the side to get in and my foot hit daddy in the face and his glasses fell off and broke. I can remember to this day how terrible I felt. However, Daddy did not get angry (But I do remember the look he gave me). I never remember a time when Daddy lost his temper or swore.

I can remember the day Daddy was put in as President of the Portneuf Stake which position he held for about 20 years. Before that he was a counselor in the Stake Presidency for five years. I was always grateful to have a father who was active in the church. I can honestly say I never felt like a church orphan. Serving in the Church for our family was always a privilege and a blessing. I knew he believed in prayer and he prayed like Heavenly Father was listening. As a child I felt some prayers were a little lengthy but then I was more interested in eating supper than communicating with our Heavenly Father. I knew he had a testimony of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and

that the Priesthood had been restored to the earth. I remember more, the feelings I had when he bore his testimony than the actual words he used. I realize now that the Holy Ghost bore witness to me that what he said was true. I have seen him study and ponder the scriptures and knew he loves the words of ancient and modern prophets.

A few years ago Mark E. Peterson was visiting our Stake. I had occasion to tell him who my father was. He said, "Oh, he was one of our great Stake Presidents."

There is scripture that says "Faith without works is dead." Daddy had faith and he was not afraid of hard work. Daddy was a dry farmer and anyone who does that for a living has to have a great deal of faith that moisture will come when it is needed. Every year Daddy carefully watched the wheat and the weather conditions. There were some hard years but the Lord has truly blessed the labors of Daddy's hands. However, Daddy has lost a lot of his hearing from riding the noisy farm machinery.

Daddy only had the opportunity to go to the 8th grade. However, he was a self-educated man. He was always figuring. I was always afraid he would sell the farm and move. He did not though, and our roots are pretty deep in Downey, Idaho.

I mentioned how dusty Daddy was when he worked on the farm, but let me tell you when he dressed up on Sunday, he looked sharp! He had curly red hair and as a little girl, I would study the rows of waves in his hair. His hair is now snow white and he has sparkling blue eyes. He often told me you can tell a lot about a person's character by the shine on his shoes when he is dressed up,

and let me tell you, Daddy always had a bright shoe shine. Daddy had an apron and on Sundays he would wear it to keep his white shirt clean, but during the week, he would sometimes put it on to help in the kitchen. I think he did it more for the companionship of his wife than for any joy in cooking. Daddy loved good food. Many times he told Mother that all she had to do was put her finger in something and she made it delicious. He was easy to please and many times enjoyed bread and milk.

Holidays were happy times in our family. Daddy and Momma just being there made them special. Daddy has told me that the saddest Christmas he ever spent was the Christmas after Vesta died.

I never knew my Criddle grandparents as they had passed away before I was born. I know they were a special family and very close because I felt the love of Daddy and his brothers and sisters. I can see Uncle John E. and Daddy leaning on a fence talking with a piece of grass in their mouth. Daddy cared about his sisters and their welfare because I felt it. Occasionally, we would go visit our aunts and uncles and this was always an interesting experience.

When I left my mother's bedside for the last time before she died and the Holy Ghost had prompted me that this was the last time I would see her alive, I did not know how I could ever leave her. Daddy was in the hall talking to President and Sister Willis Brim. He left them and came to me to help me. After Mother's death, he set the example in acceptance of the Lord's will and how to go on living in a meaningful way. He said that the Lord never asks of anything of us but there is a blessing in return. We have grown to love and appreciate Alda and will be eternally grateful for her

sweet spirit.

When Mother was alive, she regularly wrote to me. However, since her death 17 years ago Daddy has written to me almost every week. I am so grateful for this act of kindness to me.

Daddy has often said he thought when his children married he would quit worrying about them, however, time proved otherwise and he knows he will always pray for and love his children. I know his prayers are answered. When Jay was on his mission to England, Reid and I did not know how we would support him for the last year of his mission. We made it a matter of fasting and prayer. We told the Lord we needed \$2400. for the last year of Jay's mission. We had never once mentioned our financial concern to Reid's mother or my father. However, a few days later a check came from Reid's mother for \$400. A few days later, Daddy called me one morning and said something like this, "I have a question to ask you which is none of my business and if you say so, I will ask you no more about it. I have been laying here in bed this morning and I wonder if you need money? I have \$2000. that I can invest, or I will send it to you if you need it." I told him I would talk to Reid and call him back. Reid and I knelt in prayer and asked the Lord if this was the answer to our fasting and prayer. Reid said, "We should recognize the Lord's answer which has come." We called back and accepted the money. So, Jay's grandparents supported him for the last year of his mission. Within ten days, we had the exact amount that we had fasted and prayed for. What a testimony builder this was for us to know that our Heavenly Father heard and answered our prayers and that it was our own parents who heard the promptings of

the Holy Ghost and responded in our time of need.

Several years ago our family went to the Hill Cumorah Pageant. There was a scene in the play where King Benjamin from the Book of Mormon was giving counsel to his family and members of the church. There was such a familiar sound to the words that I knew that King Benjamin and James A. Criddle were the same caliber of men.

Daddy has always been a man who I could look up to, who led the way and set the example. I have come to realize that because of Daddy's influence I wanted the same good characteristics in my husband (and he has them) as my father had. I can say to my sons, "Look at Grandpa Criddle, he is the kind of man I want you to be!"