

HUSBAND CRIDDLE, John (Farmer)

Birth 16 April 1860

Place Kaysville, Davis Co. Utah

Chr.

Married 15 Feb. 1883

Place Endowment House, Salt Lake City, Utah

Death 1 Nov. 1913

Burial 4 Nov. 1913

Father CRIDDLE, John

Mother* TAYLOR, Elizabeth Ann

Other Wives
(if any)



WIFE BENNETT, Sarah Ellen

Birth 26 June 1862

Place Toquerville, Washington Co. Utah

Chr.

Death 26 March 1937

Burial 30 March 1937

Father BENNETT, George

Mother* TAYLOR, Nancy Melvina

Other Hus.
(if any)

Where was information obtained? From family records.

*List complete maiden name for all females.



1st Child CRIDDLE, Nora Azelia

Birth 30 Dec 1883

Place Syracuse, Davis Co. Utah

Died 18 Mar 1887

Married

Place



6th Child CRIDDLE, Sadie Elizabeth

Birth 2 Nov 1893

Place Syracuse, Davis Co. Utah

Married to TRIPP, Guy Ernest

Married 2 Nov 1911

Place Logan Temple, Cache Co. Logan, Utah



2nd Child CRIDDLE, Lonetta

Birth 17 Sep 1885

Place Syracuse, Davis Co. Utah

Married to HANCOCK, Alvin Cyrus

Married 11 Oct 1905

Place Salt Lake Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah



7th Child CRIDDLE, Ervin George

Birth 8 Nov 1895

Place Downey, Bannock Co. Idaho

Died 15 Apr 1903

Married

Place



3rd Child CRIDDLE, Eva Nancy

Birth 19 Jul 1887

Place Syracuse, Davis Co. Utah

Married to CLEGG, Byrd

Married 7 April 1910

Place Salt Lake Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah



8th Child CRIDDLE, Lillie Orissa

Birth 11 Nov 1897

Place Downey, Bannock Co. Idaho

Married to SALVESEN, Seviren LeRoy

Married 2 April 1919

Place Salt Lake Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah



4th Child CRIDDLE, Lorin

Birth 28 Sept 1889

Place Syracuse, Davis Co. Utah

Married to VANLEUVEN, Mable

Married 10 Dec 1913

Place Salt Lake Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah



9th Child CRIDDLE, James Alvin

Birth 1 March 1900

Place Downey, Bannock Co. Idaho

Married to SALVESEN, Vesta LaVon

Married 5 Dec 1923

Place Salt Lake Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah



5th Child CRIDDLE, John Edwin

Birth 8 Jan 1892

Place Syracuse, Davis Co. Utah

Married to GUNTER, Cloah

Married 2 Dec 1914

Place Salt Lake Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah



10th Child CRIDDLE, Vinnie Arvilla

Birth 11 Feb 1903

Place Downey, Bannock Co. Idaho

Married to BARNES, Eli

Married 26 March 1925

Place Logan Temple, Cache Co. Utah

HUSBAND CRIDDLE, John
Birth 16 April 1860
Place Kaysville, Davis Co. Utah
Chr. _____
Married 15 Feb 1883
Place Endowment House, Salt Lake City, Utah
Death 1 Nov. 1913
Burial 4 Nov. 1913
Father CRIDDLE, John
Mother* TAYLOR, Elizabeth Ann
Other Wives
(if any) _____



WIFE BENNETT, Sarah Ellen
Birth 26 June 1862
Place Toquerville, Washington Co. Utah
Chr. _____
Death 26 March 1937
Burial 30 March 1937
Father BENNETT, George
Mother* TAYLOR, Nancy Melvina
Other Hus.
(if any) _____
Where was information obtained? _____
***List complete maiden name for all females.**



4th Child CRIDDLE, Lorin
Birth 28 Sept 1889
Place Syracuse, Davis Co. Utah
Married to FENSLER, Maxine
Married 10 Aug 1948
Place Pocatello, Bannock Co. Idaho



6th Child CRIDDLE, Sadie Elizabeth
Birth 2 Nov 1893
Place Syracuse, Davis Co. Utah
Married to SHELTON, Charles C.
Married 8 Aug 1931
Place _____



9th Child CRIDDLE, James Alvin
Birth 1 March 1900
Place Downey, Bannock Co. Idaho
Married to JENSEN, Bessie
Married 1 June 1937
Place Salt Lake Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah



9th Child CRIDDLE, James Alvin
Birth 1 March 1900
Place Downey, Bannock Co. Idaho
Married to HANSON, Alda
Married 14 June 1963
Place Logan Temple, Cache Co. Logan, Utah

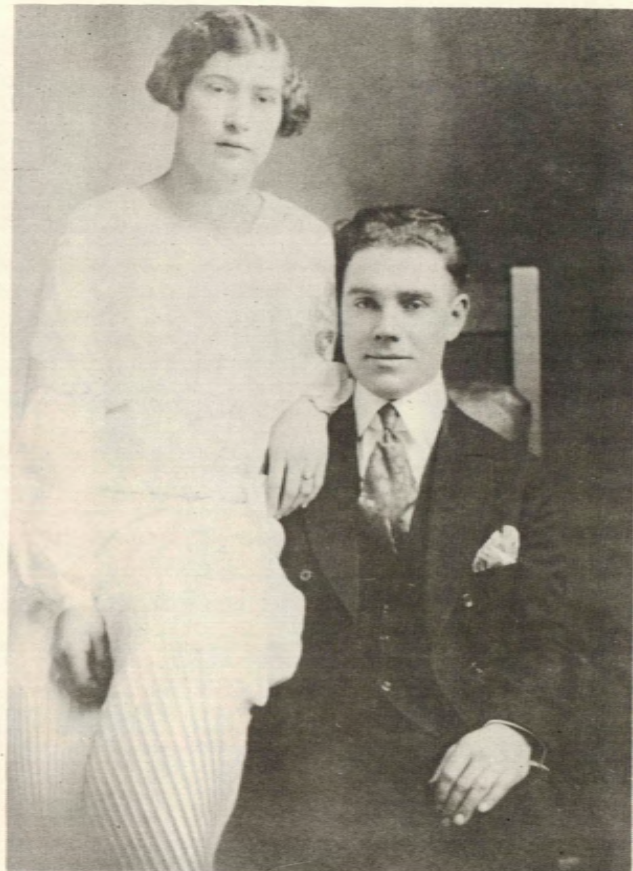
5th Child _____
Birth _____
Place _____
Married to _____
Married _____
Place _____

6th Child _____
Birth _____
Place _____
Married to _____
Married _____
Place _____

7th Child _____
Birth _____
Place _____
Married to _____
Married _____
Place _____



John Criddle and Sarah Ellen Bennett Home
at Downey, Bannock Co. Idaho



James Alvin Criddle
Vesta Lavon Salvesen
Marriage solemnized in
Salt Lake Temple
5 Dec. 1923



James Alvin Criddle
Bessie Jensen
Marriage solemnized in
Salt Lake Temple
1 June 1937



James Alvin Criddle
Alda Linnea Hanson (Andersen)
Married civilly in
Logan Temple
14 June 1963

THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF JAMES ALVIN CRIDDLE

Today being the twenty eighth day of January, 1980, I begin my personal record. In less than five weeks, March 1, 1980, I will be 80 years of age. With the passing of years, memory fades. Joseph Smith tells us that we really never forget anything. When our minds are touched by that divine spark, it can refresh our memory and bring all things to remembrance. In writing this record, I need that divine spark, if this record is to benefit the reader. I write with the hope that you may appreciate your blessing and be better able to meet the problems and challenges of life. I am reminded of the words of Patrick Henry as he came near the end of the journey of life. "I have now disposed of all my property to my children. There is one thing more that I wish I could give them, and that is the Christian religion. If I could give them that, they would be rich. Without that, though they have the wealth of the world, they would still be poor."

I know I cannot give you a testimony of the truths of Mormonism. You must gain that yourself. But I want you to know that by the experience of life and that still small voice, I do know that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God, that Mormonism is true. He did see the Father and Son. He did all the things that he said he did as he organized the Kingdom of God here upon the earth, under Divine direction. I know of nothing that has been a greater influence in my life than the Church with it's Gospel teachings.

My great grandfather, William Taylor, was the first convert in the state of Missouri. He and his family knew and experienced the

cruel mobbings and he died as a result thereof. Before he died, he called the members of his family together with this council. "No matter what happens, stay close to the Church and follow the leaders." All of my ancestors joined the Church in those early days, so mine is a royal heritage. I never saw any of my grandparents save one grandfather, George Bennett. I recall seeing him but twice, but never really got to know him.

Have you ever wondered "Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going when I leave here?" Although I can trace my ancestry back few generations, I know from whence I came as recorded in my patriarchial blessing. I am the seed of Joseph through the lineage of Ephraim; Joseph was the son of Jacob, Jacob was the son of Isaac, Isaac was a son of Abraham, and on through the fathers to Melchizedek, also known as Shem, then Noah, Methuselah, Enoch, and on to Seth and Adam. Thus from Jacob to Adam, I am of the same lineage as our Savior, Jesus Christ. He taught us that God is our Father, Father of the spirits of all men. Paul taught, "as we have Fathers of our flesh, so also we have Fathers of our spirits." It is said that so long ago that we cannot comprehend the time, we were born into the spirit world. As to what we were like before that time, we do not know, but the distinction was great enough to separate us one from another. As intelligences, we are coeternal with God and always existed. We were given spirit bodies by our Heavenly Father and Mother. How long we were in the presence

of our Heavenly Father and Mother, we do not know. We had our free agency and progressed in knowledge and understanding. Some rose to positions of power and leadership, the foremost being our Savior, Jesus Christ. Another was Lucifer, known as Son of the Morning, whose influence and leadership were such that one third of the hosts of heaven followed him in rebellion, and were cast out of heaven with only spiritual bodies, and are known to us as Satan and his hosts. We, who kept our first estate, being spiritual, were present at the counsel of the Gods when the plan for earth life was made, and shouted for joy as sons of God when the plan for earth life was presented. Some sang songs of praise. God our Father, knowing His spirit children, their faithfulness and leadership, at that time chose His rulers, as recorded in Abraham 3:22 and 28. Our time to come to earth and the location were appointed, as recorded in Acts 17:26. Those to be of the house of Israel were numbered at that time. They were a "chosen people" says Deut.7:6. The Prophet, Joseph Smith tells us that we received our appointments in the premortal life and when called to an office in this Church, it is to fill that appointment. This information is given not to boast of my heritage, as it is the heritage of all the house of Israel. If it be by birth or adoption, it is the same.

As to why we are here, or the purpose of life, we could never find that out of ourself; but the God of Heaven and Earth and all things therein, has revealed this knowledge to us. It is that we might obtain a body of flesh and bones, having the experience of earth life, prove ourselves by the challenges of life, and if we would prove faithful (by the atonement of Jesus Christ) we might come back into the presence of God the Eternal Father, and become exalted beings, and thus become like our

Father, even Gods. The plan to bring this about is known as the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the story of the Gods, or how to become Gods - the plan of exaltation.

Like you, I have no recollection of leaving the spirit world. Neither do I have a recollection of my birth, so I can only go by what I have been told. According to the information given to me, I was born on the first day of March, 1900. 1900 was not a leap year! (The 29th of February is dropped at the first of the century to keep the calendar correct.) Had it not been for this fact, I would have been born on the 29th of February, and up to this time, I would have only had 20 birthdays, although being 80 years of age. I am informed that at the time that I was born, there was a great thaw on, water was running. The members of the family at home went and stayed with a neighbor while mother gave birth to me.

My grandfather, John Criddle, Sr., was born in England, December 25, 1826. He was the only one of a family of eight to join the Church. He came to America in 1853. He spent that winter in the home of Jedediah M. Grant, a counselor to President Brigham Young. In the spring of 1854, he sought counsel of President Young as to what he should do. He was told, "there is a widow in Kaysville with a family of small children. Go help her."

My father, John Criddle, was born April 16, 1860, the ninth child in a family of 6 girls and 5 boys. His mother was Elizabeth Ann Taylor Driggs, the widow of Samuel Driggs, who was the father of her first six children. She married John

Criddle, Sr. in June, 1954. (She was sealed to Samuel Driggs, so perhaps I'll be a Driggs in the next world). The original Driggs home was on the mountain road, directly east of Kaysville, approximately one and one-half miles, and consisted of an adobe one room house with a dirt roof. When John Criddle, my grandfather, was married, he went to the mountains, got logs, hewed them, and built a room onto the adobe house by Samuel Driggs. Such were pioneer conditions at the time father grew up.

The children (of necessity) learned to share what they had under crowded and humble circumstances. Luxuries as we know them today were nonexistent. The parents were desirous that their children should have as good an education as possible. Father attended school in Kaysville, Utah, going as far as the Fifth Reader, and Ray's Arithmetic. Hardly 13 years had passed since the pioneers had first arrived in Utah, so we do not have to stretch the imagination far to visualize the conditions that must have existed at that time. His parents had arrived in the valley less than ten years before, rich in faith and hope, but in poverty as regards to earthly goods. His earthly life must have been frugal, a trait of character which remained with him throughout his life. Most of his schooling came from the school of hard knocks; and if we are to judge his youth by his industry of latter years, he must have been a hard worker all of his life.

My mother, Sarah Ellen Bennett, was born June 26, 1862. She was the first of eleven children born to George Bennett, and Nancy Melvina Taylor Bennett. George was a son of James Bennett, and Nancy, the daughter of Alan Taylor. The Church authorities called

this newly wedded couple to help settle Dixie in Southern Utah. While on the way to their new home in New Harmony, this side (north) of St. George, Sarah Ellen, (my mother) was born in a covered wagon at Black Ridge, now known as Toquerville. We can dimly visualize the conditions and trials in settling this desert country; but here she received her schooling which went only to the third grade. Although small of stature (she weighed only 90 pounds at the time of her marriage) she was doing the family washing on a wash board. The heavy lifting injured her back from which she suffered the rest of her life. When 14 years of age, the family moved back to Kaysville, Utah. Here she met John Criddle, whom she married February 15, 1883, in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City.

After a short time of living in Kaysville, my parents settled on a small farm in West Syracuse, about two miles east of the Great Salt Lake. In this small log home, six children were born. Nora Azella, the eldest, died at three years of age. The others, Lonetta, Eva, Lorin, John, and Sadie, all grew to maturity and had families of their own. Because of much alkali, the farm would produce but little. In 1894, John and Sarah sought to better their lot by moving to Idaho, not knowing just where they would settle. John went as far north as McCammon, Idaho, intending to look at the Camas Prairie country, but was impressed to return to Downey and exercise his homestead rights on 160 acres of ground northeast of Downey, where the sage grew higher than one could reach. Logs were brought from the canyon and a one room log cabin was built. The family came in the spring

of 1895 to occupy the home which had a dirt roof, and for a time, a dirt floor. This one room was the home of eight people, being the kitchen, bedroom, and living room for the next two years. The first summer, water was hauled from a neighbor's well one quarter mile to the west. Part of the summer, John would return to Utah to work to help support the young and growing family ranging in age from nine to one. A new baby joined the family in November, 1895, named Irvin George. He died in April, 1903. In November, 1847, my sister Orissa was born. On March 1, 1900, James Alvin was born, and on Feb. 11, 1903, Vinnie was born.

What must have been the trials and heartaches of my mother, with from 8 to 10 cows to milk, butter to churn, (which was sold for 8 to 10 cents a pound) pigs and chickens to feed, and clothing to make, including underwear and knitted socks for each member of the family! What a tiring job it must have been to grub and chop the sage, and then to plow the ground with a hand plow after the sage had been burned. I still remember the burning of the sage at night after a hard day when one would have been happy to have been in bed. As a child, I thought the fires were beautiful on a dark night. My brother, John, tells me that the first crop harvested consisted of 12 bushels of wheat and 44 bushels of rye.

In the spring and summer of 1897, father built a frame house. It consisted of one large room with the lean on the east, which was used as a bedroom and pantry. Today it is my brother John's front room and kitchen. I still wonder how we lived in that space; nine children, mother and father making eleven in all. In 1905, rooms were added on the north of the home, the addition consisting of two

bedrooms, a large closet, and a parlor into which we went only on special occasions, because it was a very special room. We never played or slept in the parlor, and the door was kept closed. I remember it became extra special when father traded for an organ. I remember father got quite good playing "Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater", and "The Old Grey Goose is Dead!" I don't remember mother playing. The girls spent time at the organ, some even learning to read music.

In those days, we did not know what a mattress was. All slept on straw ticks which consisted of a large cloth bag made something like a mattress and filled with straw. The straw was emptied and refilled once or twice a year, the chaff being shaken out and only the long straw used. How I enjoyed sleeping on a new tick! It would be about 18 inches deep and each day as the bed was made, the straw was shaken to make it fluffy. As the straw broke down, the bed became more flat until it would be 6 or 7 inches deep. It was then time for a refill. I never slept on a mattress in my home until I returned from my mission. Mother and dad had a feather mattress on which they slept, but I always preferred the straw. However, the feathers sure kept one warm!

When father and mother came to Marsh Valley in 1895, there was no community at Downey. No Church, no school, and only a small store and post office located one block south of what is now the center of Downey - directly south of the Hyde Building. William A. Hyde and his brother George A. Hyde had opened a small store and post office the year before. Cambridge, two and one-half miles north of Downey, was the community center. A Ward had been

RIGHT - The home in which I was born March 1, 1900. The home was built in 1897, and the picture was in 1898. The families of John Criddle, George Bennett, Alvin Bennett, John Bennett, and R. H. Christensen are in the foreground.

LOWER RIGHT - The same home with porch and left part of the house added in 1905, the picture taken about 1910.

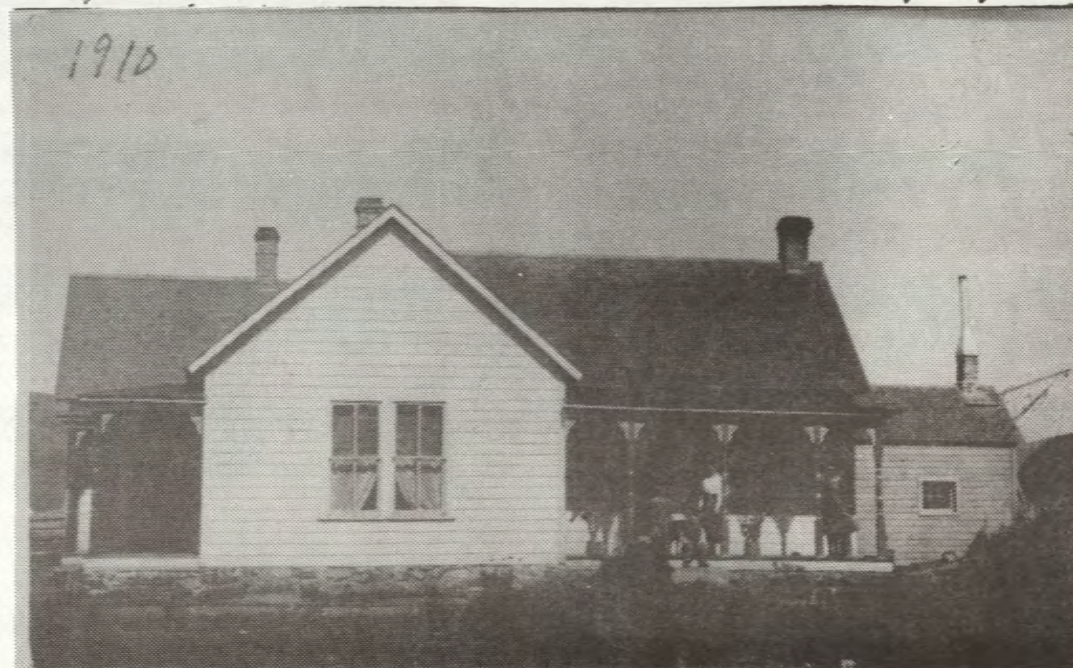
BELOW - Sadie, Orissa, James A. and Vinnie about 1904



Home built in 1897. Added on to in 1906



Sarah & John Criddle & children 1898 Home in which I was born



organized there in 1891. It was there the children attended school until 1906 when a school was established in Downey with one teacher. I recall as a child attending church in Cambridge, and I can still in memory recall the ride to Cambridge. We always went in a wagon in the summer, and in a bob sleigh in the winter. I never attended school in Cambridge, and not until 1907 did I enter school. The first school building which was built in Downey was built on the lot west of the present grade school; it being on Center and Third East on the southeast corner of the lot.

In the fall of 1895, having been in the valley but a few months, father was sustained as a counselor to Bishop W.A. Hyde of the Cambridge Ward, Oneida Stake. In 1898, W.A. Hyde was chosen to be the first President of the Pocatello Stake when it was organized. In 1898, George T. Hyde became Bishop of the Cambridge Ward, and father served as a counselor to him. In June, 1907, the Cambridge Ward was divided, and the Downey Ward was organized. George T. Hyde was the first Bishop, father served as his first counselor, and John Gardner was second counselor. I still remember Brother Gardner's dark curly hair. His wife, a beautiful blonde, was my first Sunday School teacher in the Downey Ward. It must have been an inspiration directing father to settle in Downey, as he served all his life, save a few months, as a counselor in the Bishopric of the Cambridge and Downey Wards.

Father did not enjoy good health the latter years of his life, no doubt hard work being a factor. He passed away November 1, 1913, being a little over 53 years of age, still a member of the Bishopric. For more than 23 years, Sarah Ellen, my mother, was to walk alone as

she gave counsel and directed the steps of her family. She never knew the comforts of hot and cold running water, a round tub served to wash clothes and as her bath tub. In her life, modern plumbing never replaced the outside toilet. She had great endurance and strength. She was never found idle, and she taught industry and thrift to her children. She kept the family close to the church through prayer, counsel, and example. The loneliness and heartache of those 23 years can only be known by those who have walked the same path. In peaceful slumber, she went to greet those who had gone before on March 26, 1937, just three months short of her 75th birthday. We, the members of her family, give thanks for our heritage, and hold in sacred memory, our associations together.

As I look back over my life, I have so much to give thanks for. I was born of goodly parents. We were taught to love one another, and to make the most of our opportunities. I used to say they taught me to work, but I never learned to love it. However, with the wisdom of passing years, I guess they must have taught me to love work also. Now that I am retired, I never miss an opportunity to go to the farm and help where I can. I have found the hardest thing in life to do is nothing.

In memory, I am in the summer. I have milked a number of cows before the sun comes up, separated milk, calves and pigs fed, horses grained, and after a hearty breakfast, ready to go to the field to follow a hand plow. It was not hard to lay on the floor and go to sleep during the noon hour while the horses ate and rested. Then go to the field again for four or five



Downata Hot Springs

Sept. 13, 1908

Hot Springs as it was when I was Baptized

ABOVE * Downata Hot Springs as it was when I was baptized September 15, 1908.

TOP RIGHT - Brothers and sisters, Vinnie, James, Orissa, John, Lorin, Eva, Lonetta. March 1, 1960

LOWER LEFT - Father, Mother, and Nora who died at 3 years of age. 1884

LOWER RIGHT * Family group about 1910.
Front - Orissa and James.
Middle - Father John, Sadie, Vinnie,
Mother Sarah E.
Back - Lonetta, Lorin, Eva, John.



Mar 1960



John, Nora, Sarah E.



John Father

Sarah E. Mother

hours, and chores to do again at night having plowed about $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres. In those days, I never had any trouble sleeping the night through (which always was too short). Walking in the dust and sweating, I would often gall 'til I could hardly walk. My rear end would feel like it was on fire. It would help to take a cow cabbage leaf and place it between my rear cheeks, a trick taught me by dad and my brothers.

Never has there been such changes in the history of this world as have taken place during my life. With the restoration of the Gospel and the Priesthood, a new era dawned. The Lord poured out his spirit upon all men. With the passing of the candle came the coal oil lamp. What a job every few days to refill, trim the wick, and wash the soot from the chimney. But what an improvement! Next came the carbide light. Oh, what a beautiful white light. No one dreamed the time would come when all one must do would be to touch a button and we could have the brightness of day in our home, or the streets of our cities lit up, making such a beautiful sight as viewed from a distance; or stadiums large enough to seat over 100,000 people gathered to watch games played far into the night, yet all able to see. With electricity came motors to run great factories, and small motors for home appliances.

Farm life has changed with the times. At one time in my life it was all hand power. With the passing of the gleaner came the header, and then the horse powered thresher. Then came the big steam engines to run the thresher, then the horse-drawn combine. The first one in the valley was purchased by the Criddles. It had no motor, but was pulled by horses, and as the machine was pulled

forward, a drive wheel was to operate the combine. This machine was not a success as on the side hills the drive wheel would slip and machine motion could not be maintained. With the coming of the gas motor, the combine pulled by horses, the header and thresher became a thing of the past. Now a large diesel engine propels these combines with air conditioned cabs, all adjustments are made from inside the cab. Large trucks haul the grain to the bin where it is elevated into the bin, never touched by hand. I recall the first thresher. Four or six teams went round and round a platform which was geared to turn a steel rod running to the thresher to give it motion. The threshed grain entered a bin, by which a man stood and with a one-half bushel bucket dumped the grain into the sacks. The buckets were counted to keep track of the number of bushels threshed.

I have seen all farming methods change. From the hand plow came the riding plow, first a one bottom, then two bottom, then a three bottom pulled by eight head of horses. With a good day and good plowing, I was able to plow 10 acres a day. Never did I dream the day would come when I would sit in an air conditioned cab on a powerful tractor and plow over a hundred acres in a day.

Haying was such hard work, but now it is all done by machinery. I must have been six years old before I ever rode in anything but a wagon or bob sleigh in the winter. What fun it was when in my teens as a group of boys and girls, we would go sleigh riding sometimes far into the night. The ringing of the sleigh bells adding to the enjoyment of song and laughter. The event usually ended with refreshments of some kind. Such joyous times and beautiful memories!



The way I threshed grain until I got my first combine about 1934.



Making progress - I can ride.



The way I learned to plow.



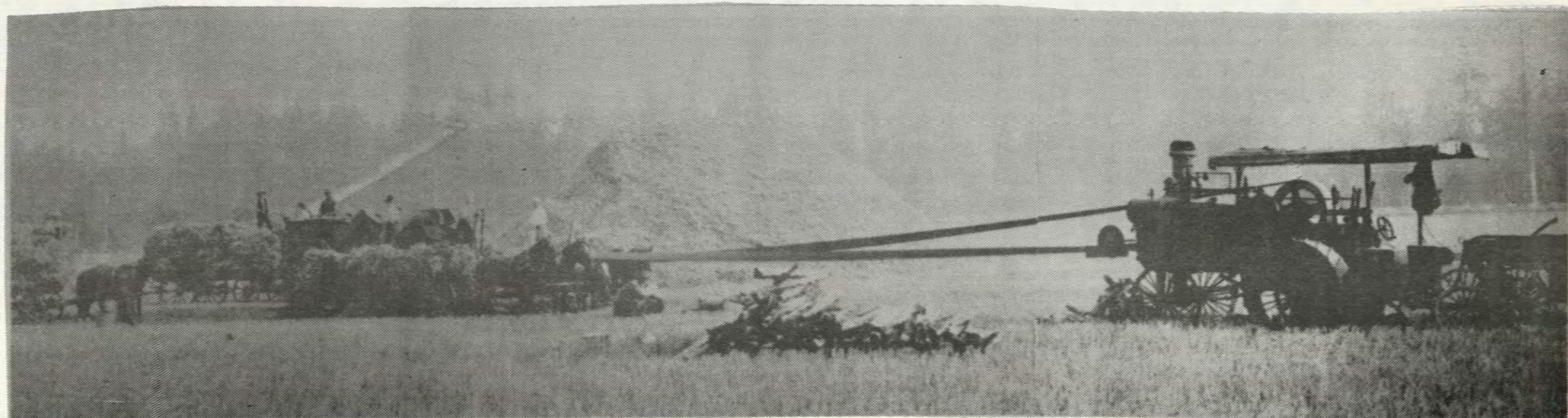
The harvest crew in 1941



With the cream separator, cream was always plentiful on the farm and sold for about 60 cents a gallon.



Six men formed a heading crew - the header man, three driving header boxes, a loader, and a stacker.



From 10 to 15 men formed a threshing crew. Headings were pitched into the thresher with pitch forks, grain was bagged and hauled in a wagon, and straw was used as feed.

I remember the first telephones in the valley. All were on the same line with different rings for each home, and each home rang the number of rings for the party wanted. I remember the first phonograph. When a family got one, neighbors would come to listen. The radio and TV, I still can't understand, but I have seen man go to the moon, a man walk on the moon, and have heard his voice from that distant planet. I can sit in my home and see events as they happen anywhere in the world, and hear the voice as clear as though we stood face to face. In every field of knowledge and science, in heaven and earth, undreamed advancement has been made.

However, the greatest event since the birth and resurrection of the Savior was when the Father and Son appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Priesthood of God restored, and the Kingdom of God again established on the earth. Can it be the great changes of my life are to help usher in the millennial reign and make this earth a celestial orb?

We are told this life is the time to prepare to meet God, and man is saved no faster than he gains knowledge, so perhaps I should say a word on this subject. I think some of the most valuable knowledge gained came to me in our home. My parent's life was a sermon. It was at my mother's knee I learned to talk to, and know I had a Father in Heaven who would watch over me. I learned to pray for a living Prophet as we knelt in family prayer. I never knew my father to miss a meeting he was suppose to attend. I have been told he once rode a horse, with no saddle, to Preston and back to attend a Stake conference. In

those days, conferences were held two days; Saturday afternoon, and two meetings on Sunday, (and at times, two meetings on Saturday!) People would come in wagons and buggies. Father furnished many a load of hay that conference visitors might feed their horses. In the Sunday morning meeting, the Sacrament was administered and passed. As a Priest, I remember blessing the Sacrament at conference. I was told never to refuse to perform a task or calling that came to you in the Church, and I never have.

According to the record, my father gave me a name and a blessing on May 6, 1900, being named after father's youngest brother, James, and mother's youngest brother, Alvin. I still remember going to church in the Cambridge Ward. In fact, it was in a Sacrament meeting that I first learned to whistle. I am sure I must have tried many times without success, but that day I got my lips just right, and it came out loud and clear. Everyone knew I had found my whistle.

I recall the day the Cambridge Ward was divided and wondered why it was that many of the ladies were crying. Little did I know the ties of love and friendship at that time. The dividing line between the two wards was the first road running east and west about a mile north of Downey. I think there were only about 18 families in the Downey Ward. All were active and attendance at Sacrament meeting was about 80%. Today there are only 14 survivors of the original members, 7 of which are in the present Downey Ward, and three of them being in the Criddle family, and seven are in other Wards. Church was held in the school house in Cambridge and Downey. Cloth curtains were drawn to form divisions for class

rooms. When the weather was good, we sometimes went outside for exercises and it was while at Sunday School (I think the first year in the Downey Ward) I learned the song "A Little Boy Went Walking", which I have sung to all my sons and daughters.

A LITTLE BOY WENT WALKING

A little boy went walking, one lovely summer day.
He saw a little rabbit, that quickly ran away.
He saw the shining river, go winding in and out,
and little fishes in it, were swimming all about.
And slowly, slowly turning, the great wheel of the mill,
and then the old Church steeple, the little Church so still.

The bridge above the water, and as he stopped to rest,
he saw among the bushes, a wee brown sparrows nest.
And as he watched the birdies, above the tree tops fly,
He saw the clouds a sailing, across the summer sky.
He saw the insects playing, the flowers that summer brings,
He says, I'll go tell mama, I've seen so many things.

I recall Sept. 15, 1908, when my father took me to the warm springs, now known as Downata Hot Springs, to be baptized. It was just a pond of warm water with some logs around it. The following day, I was confirmed by R.L. Dixon, who had just started to teach me in my second year at school.

George T. Hyde, who up to this time had been our closest neighbor on the south, had built a new home in Downey (now the Willis L. Brim home). So. R.L. Dixon moved into the Hyde home and became our neighbor. Friendships were formed with the Dixon family which still exist. This home is now owned by Reed Criddle, and Clark Criddle lives in the home.

It must have been about 1906 that father got our first buggy

called a "white top". It had a canvas top with curtains on the side that were rolled up when the weather was good. About 1912, father got a surrey. I think it must have been the most wonderful buggy in the valley. It had a coal oil lamp on each side which could be lit to give light. I recall riding to McCammon to see an airplane fly. It was built like the Wright Brother's first plane, the pilot being out in the open.

A few cars were seen at this time, but when father died in November, 1913, he had never ridden in a car. Trucks did not come until a later date. While on my mission, 1920-1921, I never saw a truck in St. Louis, all delivery being made by horse drawn carriages. When one wanted to go some distances, we went by train. There were four passenger trains going each way through Downey at this time, each carrying mail. It took a 2 cent stamp to send a letter. With the passing of time, the mail service has gotten worse. Today it takes 15 cents to send a letter and at times, the pony express would have been faster.

I have mentioned the fact that I started to school in the fall of 1907, my teacher being a Mrs. Beckstead. I still have a folder she gave me at the close of the school year. It has her picture on it and the names of the students in each grade. There were 51 students and eight grades, all being taught by Mrs. Beckstead in one room. The following year, R.L. Dixon taught all grades. Downey was growing rapidly at this time, so the classes were divided. Rooms in different parts of town were rented and we went to school in three different buildings. I spent one more year in the school house under Mable Pratt. We thought we were growing up

when we could leave the younger grades behind; Virginia Pratt became my teacher, (no relation to Mable Pratt).

In 1911, a new two story brick building was built and we all went to school together again, there being four class rooms and four teachers. Alice Merrill being my teacher, followed by a Rose Pratt, (still no relation to the other Pratts). However, the following year, 1913-1914, Traphosia Pratt, (Virginia Pratt's sister) was my teacher. My last year, 1914-1915, Mrs. Bradley was my teacher when I graduated from the eighth grade. There was no high school around, so my schooling came to an end, save for four months which were taught by J.H. Gore. I took a leading part in a number of school plays, being the huntsman in "Snow White". I still remember one of the songs I sang.

Although there were no recreational things to play with, we could still run and make as much noise as anyone. The games played were "Pomp pomp pull away", "Run my sheepy run", "Fox and Geese", marbles, and when someone brought a ball, we played ball, the first ones being home made. I hardly knew what a football or basketball game was like, but I did like baseball. I always loved to read, and up to the present, do much reading. The events and things of early life were easy to remember, but as I grow older, my forgettery is more efficient, which I regret as I cannot remember recent events.

Looking back over my life, I think no one had a greater influence than my mother. I recall as a small boy we were told that if we were not good, the Devil would get us. I slept with mother and dad and in the night would reach up and touch a mole mother had on the side of her nose. With the assurance it was mother, I felt

secure. One night after dropping off to sleep, Uncle James Hyde came to spend the night. A bed was made on the floor and I slept between father and that man. As I reached for mother in the middle of the night, I felt only whiskers. I thought the Devil had me for sure. I let out a scream that must have woke the whole house. Never was a child more scared. Eva told me not long before she died that she still remembered the event and that I cried the rest of the night, even though mother came and got me.

How often I wished I could go off and play Sunday afternoon as many of my friends did. But no, I had to go to Church with mother and dad. We were not told to go to Church, they took us. In good weather we often walked to Church. I would rather walk than get the horse ready. I recall I had to give a ^{talk in} primary conference one time.

When the Hyde Block was built about 1910, a large canvas was placed over the top floor so as not to ruin the maple floor for dances, and there we held church until the old school house was purchased and moved to the lot just east of our present church building. It was enlarged and used until the present church building was built about 1930. The canvas was removed from the floor in the Hyde Block building, and dances were held almost every week of the winter. People came from far and near to the dances. It was an exchange of dances. When we took a girl to the dance we would dance the first dance with her, one in the middle, and the last dance. The others were exchanged. We danced the Quadrille, Virginia Reel, Waltz, Two step, One step, Three step: but, mostly the waltz, heel and toe polka, and coming through the

rye. It was at the dance that many a romance began.

As a Deacon, I rode a horse as far as the Hot Springs to gather fast offerings. The Aaronic Priesthood did the janitor work in the Church, which was heated by stoves in different parts of the building, (it being a T shaped building). I was never an ordained teacher, but served as President of the Deacons Quorum. On January 2, 1917, I was ordained a Priest by Bishop O.P. Merrill. I recall Bishop M.A. Thomas coming to me in Sept., 1919, asking if I would go on a mission. He had talked to mother first, but she had not mentioned it to me. Having been taught never to refuse a call, I said, "yes". I thought of many missions I might be called to, but was surprised by my call to the Central States. I was instructed to be in Salt Lake City at 8:00 A.M. on November 11, 1919, would be set apart that forenoon, would have the afternoon off to make final arrangements, and on the morning of the 12th get my endowments, and would leave for the mission field that evening.

Never had I been so far from home, Pocatello being the largest town I had ever seen, and in 1919 it was not very big. Here I was in Salt Lake City! It seemed so large! Mother and Uncle George Bennett were with me and showed me around. Apostle Richard R. Lyman set me apart as a Missionary; Swen F. Johnson having ordained me an Elder on October 26, 1919. At the Denver and Rio Grande depot we met eleven other Elders, all going to the same mission. I was so green and inexperienced. It was a good thing the others had been around, as I just followed them.

Now was to begin one of the most outstanding, and I feel the most profitable, events of my life. For the next two years nobody called me James. I was Elder Criddle! We were instructed to learn by heart the fourth section of the Doctrine and Covenants before we landed in the field. "Can you guess how I felt as I waved goodbye to mother about 6:30 that evening?" Never had I been away from home or my mother a week in my life. What did the future hold now? Friendships were formed on that train that time will not erase. It seemed the train stopped at every little siding and town to take on passengers, express, or mail. I have a mental picture of the Royal Gorge. Never had I seen such a sight! We all watched the Rocky Mountains pass from view and we were upon the plains. About 8:00 P.M., November 13, the train pulled into Denver. We were rushed from one train to another, and were on our way to Kansas City, traveling all that night and not getting to Independence until about 1:00 a.m. on November 15. We were met and instructed where to find rooms and to be at the office the next morning where we would purchase our derby hats as that was what all the Elders were to wear.

President Samuel O. Bennion was in St. Louis at the time holding conference, and it was expected we would remain in Independence until he returned on Monday. Being Saturday, we were looking forward to a night of rest, but about 4:00 P.M., a call came to send all 12 Elders to St. Louis. So, another night was spent on the train. We arrived in St. Louis about 8:00 A.M. Sunday, November 16. We were soon on a street car, my first,

and on our way to 5195 Maple St. where the Church was located. With only time to clean up, we were soon in Conference, twelve green Elders sitting in a row trying to stay awake after the many hours traveling from Salt Lake City. I mention these things to show the changes. We received no training before entering our field of labor, where now it is intensive training in Salt Lake City and Provo. We were days getting to our field, today only two or three hours to St. Louis.

In the 25 months I was in the field, I never had a personal interview with our President. It was all group instruction. Our President left after our conference and the following day the Elders were assigned companions and fields of labor by our Conference President. (Today he would be called a Zone Leader.)

The First World War had not been over long, so there were not enough old Elders to be assigned to the 12 new Elders. I received no assignment, but was left in St. Louis, and the Conference President was to work with me. Because of his responsibilities as Conference President, we did not do a lot of missionary work. He took me to several places of interest, showed me the city, and got me some minister discount cards so I could buy at a discount. However, they were used but little. He did, however, take me out a few times tracting. We lived in the basement of the Church and prepared our meals there. The Branch President invited us to dinner Thanksgiving evening.

Shortly after, St. Clair Nixon, who had been in the field but two weeks when I arrived, was assigned as my companion. He had never been out of St. Louis since coming to the field, and knew nothing

about laboring in the country. We were assigned to Howell County. There was not a Saint in the county, and we were to travel without purse or script, leaving all money behind. Never were there two more humble Elders, yet we were determined to do our best. We were one and a half days getting to our field of labor. We were to replace two Elders. One was going home, the other was to be a traveling Elder. The first night, they had made arrangements for us to stay in a home. A meeting was held that night in a small one room school building at which the old Elders talked. The next morning we were on our own as we bid Elders Morris and Hancock goodbye.

We were in the tops of the Ozarks, the country covered with trees, mostly oak. The roads were little more than trails, with here and there a small area cleared of timber, which was farmed and fenced with a rail fence. Corn being the main crop. Pigs ran loose in the woods and lived on acorns. Before butchering, they were penned and fattened on corn. Many of the homes were log and had no modern conveniences as we know them. It was seldom we had light bread as we know it, but the main staff of life was soda biscuits or corn bread which was cooked for each meal. The 5½ months I labored in Howell County, I gained 22 lbs. on corn bread and molasses.

Having no experience, and not knowing what to do, Elder Morris, one of the Elders we replaced, said "go into the next school district, see the trustees, and if the school building was voted open for meetings, travel around and announce a meeting that evening." This we did. We were given dinner, but had no supper.

We visited the school and asked the students to tell their parents a Gospel meeting would be held that evening. We prayed much and at the appointed hour, a fair crowd had gathered. We started our meeting by singing, "The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning", which of course no one had ever heard. I gave a prayer and Elder Nixon talked. I think he told all he knew and all I knew and then he called on me to talk. We sang another song and he told how we traveled and would like entertainment for the night, and closed with a prayer. I guess they thought our sermons were not worth entertainment, so we were left alone in that school building. It was in December, so the weather was rather cool. We knew not what to do so we sat the night there in that building. We prayed, we studied, and did much thinking. Also, we wrote some letters home. I told my companion after the first meeting that I did not care to hold another meeting until we got something to say. So, for weeks we just tracted and did much studying. All the school buildings were just one room and we held many meetings, even more than some of the older Elders.

These experiences were not pleasant at the time, but are wonderful to have had. We learned to talk to the Lord and he answered our prayers. The people fed us and we were given a bed to sleep in each night for the rest of the time we were in that county, save one, when it rained so hard that only three or four young men came out. So, another night was spent in a school building. I guess it was a good thing as my pants got a hole in the seat, and it gave me an opportunity to do a little tailoring. With nothing better on hand, I used a sock. It would at least cover the hole, until I could replace the pants.

Elder Nixon was the hardest working Elder I had as a companion. It was during this time that I learned another lesson which has been of great value to me. The Lord so blessed us with words that I guess it went to my head. I failed to ask for His inspiration. As I look back now, He must have thought, "If you are equal to the task, go ahead"! I got up to talk. I could not think, words would not come. My mind was a blank. I was a failure. I knew why I had failed and how it humbled me. It was one of my greatest lessons, and most valuable in my life. How weak we are when we stand alone, but how strengthened by inspiration when we ask.

Another experience happened of which I have said but little, as to me it is most sacred. One Saturday evening and the following Sunday morning we held meetings. We were being entertained by a family who showed us great kindness. As we were eating Sunday dinner, a daughter living close by came and said her husband was sick. The mother accompanied her home. Not long after, she came back again very much concerned. The family all went over to the son-in-laws home. He seemed very bad. The mother went to a neighbors place about one-half mile distance to call a doctor. As the son-in-law grew steadily worse, they feared the end was near. Elder Nixon said he would go tell the mother to hurry back. I had not been in the house up to this time, but stood a short distance away. It seemed a voice said to me, "You have Priesthood, exercise it." Unwavering in faith, I walked in, took hold of the wrist of the sick man. I felt virtue go out of me. I felt weak. He turned and looked at me. I left the room, went out and wept. Never had I known such an experience. Tears come to my

eyes as I record this. Very shortly the father came out and said, "You healed him!" His son-in-law wanted me to stay and not leave. He said as I took hold of his wrist he felt something go through him and all pain left. I told them of myself, I had no power to heal, but I held the Priesthood of God, and by that power he had been healed. It gave us the opportunity to explain the Gospel to them and of the restoration of Priesthood.

When the doctor came, he had no explanation, but left some medicine. We were asked if he should take it and Elder Nixon said it would do no harm. The next morning we were on our way, never to return or hear of the family. I am sure that as future Elders met that family they would receive a warm welcome. The man's name was David Walker, Pottersville, Missouri. I have thought of the words of Zenos, when he said, "The Lord spake into my mind." It was so on that occasion.

Many were the days we traveled in rain, mud, sleet, and snow. Our feet were often wet, but never did we have so much as a cold the 5½ months Elder Nixon and I were together. At times, I milked cows, helped feed the stock, sawed wood, and helped the people we stayed with whenever possible. Some Elder described country work by writing the poem "Mormon Tramp" as recorded here:

MORMON TRAMP

Would you like to take a journey
Over those rough and verdant hills,
Then just leave your purse at hdqrs.,
And deposit all your bills.
Come along without your wardrobe,
Bring the books from which you shout
If you think we're not hummers,
We'll dispell that foolish doubt.
Now don't mind that measly money
Leave behind every stamp.
All it takes is faith and butt in
To make a Mormon tramp.

Out thru western country
That's the road we'll take today,
For we have some friend to visit,
And we'll do it on our way.
We'll start out rather easy,
Only twenty miles at first,
Then we'll work up kind a gradual,
Thirty miles a day or burst.
Grab your grip and lets be going
Just walk, you needn't run,
For that hill is a mighty steep one,
But the worst is yet to come.

Don't go near that little red house
That's a Catholic lady there,
And she likes a Mormon Elder
Like a dog likes a hare.
Hear the telephones ringing,
They just pass it down the line
Here comes the Mormon Elders
Lock your door and pull down your blind.
So, you're getting awful hungry,

Well, we'll ask for dinner soon.
 Well well, I didn't notice, it's a
 Quarter after noon.
 Brother you ask this place,
 And hold your mouth just so,
 For if we're turned down this time,
 Hungry all the day we'll go.

Mr! We are very hungry.
 Hunger makes us bold you know,
 And we've traveled without money,
 As the apostles did of old.
 Now if you could please oblige us
 With just a little feed,
 You will get the promised blessing,
 Help a brother in need.
 What feed a Mormon Elder?
 Well you fellows, there's the gate,
 And you had better hit the highway,
 Without any further wait.
 That was mighty interesting
 Are they all about alike?
 No! That man was mighty decent,
 But the worst is not in sight.

We'll just draw our belts up tighter
 But we'll leave one notch for supper
 And if they turn us down tonight,
 We'll have to make our belt more tight.
 So, we struggled all the afternoon
 Without a bite to eat,
 Stopping now and then to rest,
 Our burning blistered feet.
 We have covered nearly twenty
 Ere the setting of the sun,
 And we haven't had our supper,
 But the worst is yet to come!

Do you see that white house yonder,
 With the barn all painted red,
 That is where we get our supper,
 There is where we get our bed.
 Now follow close behind me,
 And wear that weary look,
 For that is where we get our lodging,
 If it cost us both a book.
 We are Mormon Elders mister,
 Can we stop with you tonight?
 Now my knees have knocked together,
 And we've prayed with all our might.
 No! I haven't got the room boys,
 But I'll tell you where you can.
 Just go to my next neighbor,
 He's a thorough Christian man.

So, we called upon his neighbor,
 And we were told our tale of woe,
 But the town was full of Christians
 And they kept us on the go.
 Now we were weary, worn and jagged
 With our faces all forlorn
 And we take our final refuge,
 In this farmers ancient barn.
 Soon we're peacefully sleeping
 Dead to all the world 'til day.
 And we dream of our loved ones,
 In a land of far away.

The summer of 1920, I labored in the cities or towns of Scott and Girardeau Counties with Elder O.V. Bunderson. The winter of 1920-1921, I labored in St. Louis. I had a number of companions, But mostly with William R. Haslam, then Milton H. Taggart. The last months of my mission were with Elder A.F. Bollschweiler, the latter two Elders were from Salt Lake City. It was with Elder

Taggart that I met the Strauser family. Since coming home they have visited me a number of times. Although the parents are dead, I still hear from Ethel Paul. As an Elder, President Spencer K. Kimball also visited in their home.

Elder Taggart was very good on the violin. As he could not take his violin with him, we made one out of a cigar box, got hair from a horse tail for a bow. He could play most anything on it. People could not believe their ears or eyes. Elder Taggart is the one that made "Springtime in the Rockies" famous. It was the theme song of a dance orchestra he had after he came home. They were known as the "Vagabonds of the Air". The music came over the radio.

I baptized eight people, but I had no part in their conversion. I just reaped the harvest of others. I have a letter received while in the field, from a brother and family who said they were ready to be baptized if I would come back. However, others were assigned to that field and I asked them to be baptized by the Elders there at the time. I do not know if they were baptized as I soon left for home.

I have recorded but a few memories of those 25 months, but my life has been influenced by that period of time more than any other. I was released on December 11, 1921, just 25 months from the time I was set apart. I was the fourth Elder to go from the Downey Ward. Lorin, my brother, the first, served 1910-1912. Guy Whitaker, 1912-1914, S. LeRoy Salvesen, 1916-1918, and I 1919-1921.

The Mission President, Samuel O. Bennion, gave me my release with instructions to write a letter to the First Presidency to report my mission and safe arrival home. I think I talked in all meetings held in our ward the first Sunday home, December 18, 1921.

I was soon asked to be a counselor to Guy Whiteaker in the Presidency of the YMMIA and teach a teenage group in Sunday School. On July 22, 1923, when the Downey Ward Bishopric was reorganized, I was sustained as second counselor to Bishop J.F. Hartvigsen, C.W. Taylor being first counselor. It was something new to have someone so young in the Bishopric at that time, and single too. On Sept. 9, 1923, I was set apart and ordained a High Priest by Stephen L. Richards, an Apostle, and later a member of the first Presidency.

In 1925, I moved into the Cambridge Ward, and then started to serve as a Counselor to W.O. Barnes in the MIA, which position I held until called to serve as a Counselor to William O. Thompson in the Bishopric, Fred Penrose being First Counselor. I was set apart on February 9, 1930, by Apostle Melvin J. Ballard. I was also chosen as Second Counselor to Parley P. Bright in the Presidency of the Portneuf Stake High Priests Quorum, with Jacob L. Hartvigsen as First counselor. Before going into the Quorum Presidency, I had been asked to accompany the Quorum Secretary Carl A. Olson, to visit all the High priests in Downey, Swan Lake, Cambridge, Grant, and Woodland Wards. I was serving as first counselor to the High priests quorum at the time of my release in November, 1935. As a member of the Bishopric, I also taught the Gospel Doctrine class and had charge of the Melchizedek Priesthood in the Ward. I taught that class until I went into the High Council in November, 1942. On January 21, 1934, Willis L. Brim was chosen to be the new Bishop of the Cambridge Ward, with Fred Penrose and myself as Counselors. I was set apart to this position by President Heber J. Grant on May 13, 1934. On November 15, 1942,



ABOVE * Myself and Elder St. Clair Nixon, my first missionary companion. We labored in Howel County, Missouri doing country work. This was Ozark country.

RIGHT - As I looked when I came home from my mission in 1921



As a missionary in 1920.



ABOVE - Elder Orin V. Bunderson, my second companion, with whom I spent the summer of 1920, working the towns of the Scott and Cape Girardeau Counties in Missouri.

I was sustained and set apart as a High Councilman and President of the High Priest Quorum in the Portneuf Stake by Apostle Stephen L. Richards. As I was released from the Bishopric on December 20, 1942, my labors as a ward officer came to an end.

After two years on the High Council, I was chosen to serve as second counselor to Leo O. Hanson in the Portneuf Stake Presidency with LeRoy Olson as first counselor. I was set apart by Charles A. Callis, an apostle, on November 12, 1944, and was to have charge of the Melchizedek Priesthood of the Stake. On April 17, 1949, I was sustained as President of the Portneuf Stake of Zion. Apostle Henry D. Moyle, later of the first Presidency, interviewed me, and I shall never forget how I felt as he said, "You are to be the next President of the Portneuf Stake".

Never had I prayed more sincerely that the call would not come to me, but being a member of the Stake Presidency, I knew that my name would be considered. When the word came that the Stake was to be re-organized, I never slept a wink that night and after the statement of Elder Moyle, "You are to be the next President," I never slept that night! The Devil kept telling me that I was not big enough for the job, and I had to agree with him. Then into my mind would come the thought, "You never sought this calling, but you have been called by an Apostle, whom we consider as a Prophet, Seer, and Revelator". How could I refuse? I chose as my counselors, Willis L. Brim, who had been my Bishop in the Cambridge Ward, Henry A. Cammack from McCammon, with E. Reese Davis as clerk. Elder Marion G. Romney, later of the First Presidency, set me apart as Stake President. Clyde L. Burrup served most of the time as Stake clerk as E. Reese

Davis left our Stake. There were a total of 32 high councilmen who served with me. A new Ward and Stake House, and a new Seminary building were built in Arimo. The attendance at Sacrament meeting doubled and the number of missionaries from the Stake increased three or four hundred percent. We were led by that voice of inspiration, which at times, was almost as though a voice was speaking to us. All of the Bishoprics had a number of changes. The Melchizedek Quorums and Stake Auxillaries had a number of different leaders. All gave loyal and inspirational leadership. With the help of the Stake and Ward leaders, great improvement was made. One being the starting of meetings on time! At one time, I could have said that most of the general authorities had been in my home, some of them several times, including Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold B. Lee, Spencer W. Kimball, Hugh B. Brown, Ezra T. Benson, Mark E. Petersen, LeGrand Richards, John A. Widstoe, Stephen L. Richards, and Marion G. Romney, just to mention a few.

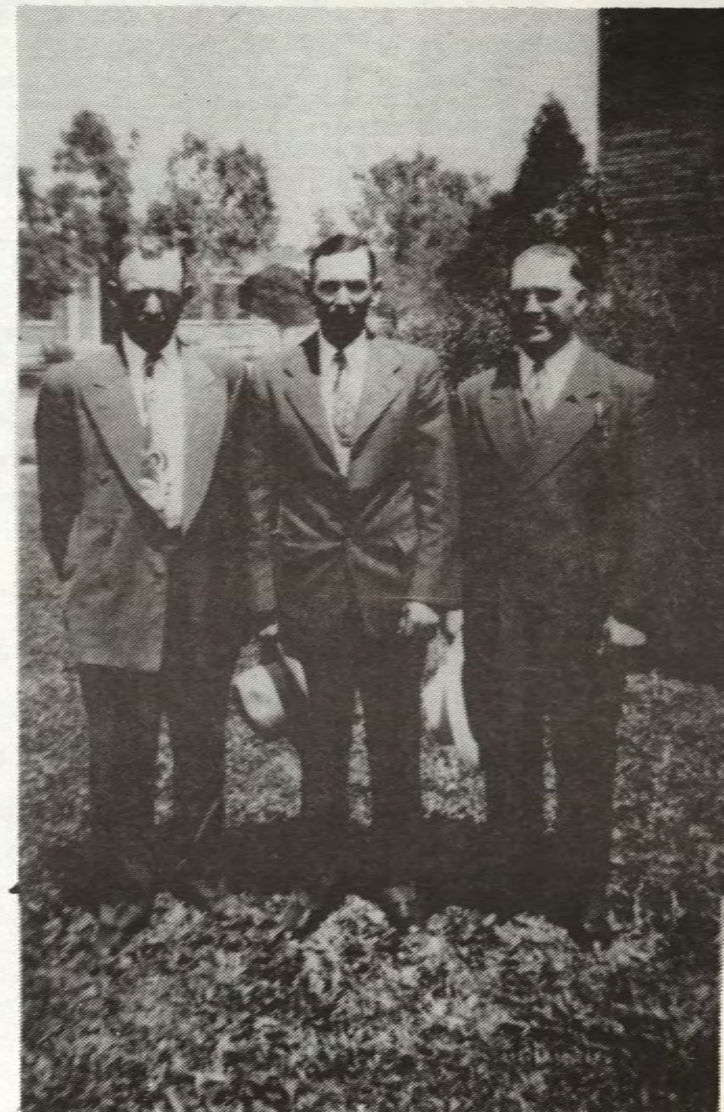
In 1964, a change was made in the Church and the Stake Presidency was assigned to preside over the High Priests as a Quorum, so I became Quorum president again. Acting under the direction of the First Presidency, the Cambridge Ward was dis-organized and taken into the Downey Ward, December 14, 1952, and the Downey Ward was then divided and became the Downey and Downey Second Wards.

During the years I labored in the Bishopric, we made an annual visit to each home. As you labor in the Church, or kneel united in prayer, a bond of love is established. If it be in the mission field, in the Ward, or Stake, it is the same. I always



Portneuf Stake Presidency - 1960, now called the Arimo Idaho Stake.
 FRONT ROW - Clyde L. Burrup, Stake Clerk, Willis L. Brim, First
 Counselor, James A. Criddle, Stake President, Henry A. Cammack,
 Second Counselor, Walter Messenger, Welfare Clerk.
 BACK ROW - Erik Olson, George Aslett, Warren Barnes, L. M. Toler,
 Melvin Maughan, Alma Anderson, A. M. Christensen, J. M. Hyde,
 Joseph Morris, George Gambles, Lydon Green, James Capell.

These are twelve of the thirty two who labored on the High Council
 while I was Stake President.



The Portneuf Stake Presidency - 1944-1949
 LeRoy Olson, First Counselor, Leo Hanson,
 Stake President, James A. Criddle, Second
 Counselor.

loved the people. I have known the power of their faith and prayers in our behalf. Many blessings came into our lives because of Church callings. I have sat in sacred assemblies with the Church leaders in the Salt Lake Temple and also the Logan Temple. For 24 years, I attended General Conference twice a year, where I had a reserved seat. At one time, I stood at the pulpit in the Tabernacle and gave the opening prayer at a General Priesthood Conference of the Church. I have been asked to talk a number of times in the Logan Temple, also at one time in the Canadian Temple in Alberta. I was called from the congregation to talk at a conference in Alberta Canada, by Thorpe B. Isaacson, a member of the presiding Bishopric. While in Mexico at the time Dale got married, I was asked to talk.

In 1950, Bessie and I went to Detroit and got a new car, and visited many places of interest in the east. At Palmyra, we attended church at which I was asked to talk. The caretaker, an operator of the Joseph Smith farm, invited us to spend the night with them. At that time, he and his wife lived in the Joseph Smith home. Bessie and I had the privilege of sleeping in the room where the Prophet slept and in which some say the Angel Moroni appeared. However, this was not true, as at the time the Angel appeared, the home as we know it was not built. I have talked in Church in Seattle, so I can say as did President Grant, I have preached this Gospel from Canada on the north to Mexico on the south, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific. I have visited Nauvoo and Carthage on three occasions and felt that I stood on sacred ground. I have been in Richmond, Missouri, and visited the visitors center where the Liberty jail has been restored as it was when the Prophet Joseph Smith was incarcerated for several

months, and where the Lord gave many of the choice revelations we have today. The Washington Temple is the only Temple completed on this continent that I have not been in several times as of February, 1980. I was present at the dedication of the Ogden Temple, and the rededication of the Logan Temple. I have done more endowments than all the other members of my father's family combined.

I have found the Devil told the truth on one occasion, even though his motive was evil, when he said, "everything must have its opposite if we are to know good from evil, virtue from vice, light from darkness, health from sickness, and pleasure from pain." I have experienced each and know that wickedness never was happiness and that the acts of a moment can bring a lifetime of regret. An angry word spoken can never be recalled. We never need to repent for that angry word or deed never committed.

The furthestest back I can remember was seeing my brother, Ervin in his casket when I was only three years old. I always enjoyed being with my brother, John, and we still laugh at the jokes he pulled on me. As he was plowing one spring and the sea gulls were feeding on worms in the newly turned soil, he said if I would crawl up the dead furrow and throw salt on the gulls tail, I could catch one. I am sure I must have spent hours with a pocket full of salt, but I never got any on their tail. He must have enjoyed laughing at me and he still does. At another time, there were ground owls that lived in badger holes. They could turn their heads around farther than anything I had ever seen. John told me that if I would stay some distance away, they would watch me, and

if I would just walk around and around them, I could twist their heads off. I don't know how far I walked, but no head came off. After each circle, the head would flip back and start over again.

One Sunday we were left home and did not go to Church. Perhaps we were herding cows or pigs, but at any rate, we were alone. I noticed John spit on the ground and it was brown. I asked him what he was chewing and he showed me a plug of Horse Shoe Tobacco. Mother had the same for many years. She would soak it in water and pour the water over flowers. I thought if John could chew tobacco, I could also. So, he cut me off a small chew with the warning, "Don't swallow any of the juice, or it will make you sick!" I don't know if all tobacco is like that or not, but it seemed as hot as pepper in my mouth. As I was about to spit it out, John said, "Oh chew it. The longer you chew it, the sweeter it will get", which never proved true in my case, as I soon spit it out. Then John showed me what he had in his mouth. It was unsweetened chocolate. That was the first, last, and only time I tried to chew tobacco.

I never tried whiskey, so was never drunk. However, when in my teens, I thought it looked big to see a man on a fine horse with a cigar in his mouth. I had a fine horse, so all I needed would be that cigar to be a man. I got the cigar and could blow smoke like a veteran. The first car to pass me was our Stake President, George T. Hyde. It made me feel small, but I continued to smoke. It was not long until my hands, and then my feet started to go numb. The numb feeling crept up my legs and arms until the two met, and then I was sick! As I rode down through Cambridge, it seemed that with

every lobe of the horse, I would heave. If my stomach had been loose, I am sure it would have come up also. Arriving at home, I did not go to the house, but crawled up and hid in the barn. I did not want mother to know what I had done. I knew my mouth tasted rotten and I might stink. After a time in the barn, I went to sleep. When I woke, I felt better, but such a rotten taste in my mouth. I had to go to MIA that night. Would everyone know from my smell what I had done? No one said anything to me, but I no longer had a desire to be a man if it took a cigar. So, my smoking days came to an end. I had learned by experience.

When I left the mission field, President Bennion said, "I want you to go home and get married". I had gone with a few girls before my mission. We had no car, so I only went with those that could walk where we wanted to go. The last girl I went with before my mission was Vesta Salvesson, and then only two or three times. We corresponded several times while in the field, but I had no girl to come home to as we were only friends. After arriving home, I went with other girls before I started with Vesta again. She lived in Downey and worked for Leaders, keeping house while they ran the butcher shop and grocery store. I soon started to like her and the more I was with her, the more I liked her. At Christmas time, 1922, I gave her a gold watch and asked her to marry me, to which she said yes. At this time, I kissed her for the first time.

I had no place to take a wife and nothing to keep a wife on, so we were not married until December 5, 1923. I gave her a small diamond a short time before our marriage. I think I had about \$350.00 when we got married. We did not have a lot of furniture

to start out with, but Vesta had a few pieces which helped out. We went to Salt Lake City to be married in the Temple. Nobody went with us. We left Downey about 4:30 A.M. on the train. That day we got our license to get married, and that evening we went to the old Salt Lake Theater. We were at the Temple at 7:00 A.M. the next morning. We never got out of the Temple until after 4:00 P.M., so it was not as it is today. We had rooms in the New House Hotel. After our marriage, she moved into my room, as we liked it the best. We planned to visit some of my uncles around Salt Lake City, and then go to Hyrum and visit her folks, but our trip was cut short as we got word that John was in the hospital with appendicitis and to come home. Vesta's parents gave a wedding supper for us to which her family and part of my family were invited. We had no shower, and very little was given to us, but we had each other and that was what was so important.

I rented a farm about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile east of the railroad tracks on the Cambridge road three miles north of Downey. There was a small house on the place with two rooms not more than 10 feet wide each. This was our home until April, 1925, when we moved on to the Chad Johnson farm, he being the uncle of Vesta. By foreclosure, it was owned by the Anderson Lumber Co.. I got a mortgage on it and the ground I had received out of father's estate to pay Anderson Lumber Co. \$5240.00. I had always been taught to keep out of debt. Before the purchase, I talked to a number of friends, and their advice was not to consider it a debt, but an investment. This farm was located $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles northeast of the old Cambridge Church. We now had a good home, grainery, barn, and stable for both cows and horses, shop, and a garage; although I had no car to put in the garage. We had a buggy and sleigh

to ride in wherever we went until 1927, when I purchased a Chevrolet coup for \$700 for which I paid cash. There were over a hundred prune trees on the place when I got it, a strawberry patch and a large raspberry patch, from which we sold a lot of raspberries delivered for \$1.25 per case. We had a water right to Brush Creek, so we were able to raise hay and have a good garden. The one bad feature was drinking water. There was a cistern about 6 rods below the house into which we would run water from Brush Creek. We would then have to carry it up the hill to the house. After a few years, I built a cistern up by the main ditch, and from there piped it into the house and to the yard to water the livestock. I started out with one cow and the herd was built up to twelve, which Dale, Melvin, and I all milked by hand. We separated the milk and sold cream for as little as \$3.50 for five gallons of heavy cream. The milk was fed to the calves and pigs.

I was a lover of good horses, raising many, and would barter and trade to get the best, and match them up. People used to say they could tell when spring was coming as John and I would be trading horses. A number of my draft horses, which were of Clydesdale and Perchon breeding, won prizes in the ring at the local fair. My saddle horse, Fox, the foal of a wild horse, which was sold to help keep me on my mission, was the fastest horse I was ever on. On him, I could cut out any animal and drive it home. He was so fast on the turn, I would have to hold onto the saddle horn, and without the saddle, he could jump out from under me on the start. I was told that the fellow who had him last started racing him and that he cleaned up on everything. Fox was the only horse



The wedding picture of James A. Criddle and
Vesta LaVon Salvesen, Married Dec. 5, 1923.



George S. and Elizabeth Salvesen,
parents of Vesta



James and Vesta in front of the house
where they began married life together.



"Be it ever so humble. —"
South side of our home on the farm.



Vesta and Verda



Verda, Mable and Vesta with their
Grandmother, Hancina Salvesen

BELOW - Vesta LaVon Salvesen
as she graduated from school.

RIGHT - Vesta's brothers and
sisters about 1960. Front row,
Syble, Mable, Verda, Orba,
daughter of Helma, seated.
Back row, Conrad, Herman,
Orville, and LeRoy.



I ever knew that I could drop the reins on the ground and he would stand and never move. Other saddle horses which bring memories were Darkey, Moon, Pippen, and Rusty, the latter two being gated American Saddle horses. When I purchased my first crawler tractor in 1941, a 40 horsepower International TD 9, I traded 12 head of horses on it.

Perhaps I should tell about Mutt. We had several dogs, but only one worthy of mentioning. He was a one man dog, and would follow me in the field all day. Even after I got the tractor, he was always with me. He was kicked by a horse when only a pup and had received a broken leg. I put a splint on the leg and it healed but was always a little crooked. He was a natural heeler, and could move any cow or horse. He never did like anyone else, and would growl at children and others if they started to pester him. He never tried to bite, but would go away from them. All he wanted was to be with me. He always stayed home when I left, but as soon as the tractor started up, he would be on the way to join me for the day, though I was a mile away. He knew the sound of our sleigh bells, and as I drove home, would meet me a mile down the road. I wondered what to do with him when I moved to town. He would never be content off the farm. However, that problem was solved shortly before we moved to town as he found some coyote bait, and in less than ten minutes, he was dead and every joint in his body set stiff.

In the fall of 1936, I bought 80 acres from George Bowman, which joined my farm on the west. I also bought the Luthy place which joined on the east, and paid \$3050.00 for the two places.

In 1938, I purchased the rest of the George Bowman farm, consisting of 240 acres for \$5200.00. I felt I was getting along fine as in 1941, I raised over 9000 bushels of wheat and had an income of over \$9000.00. In 1944, we had a very late spring and a dry summer, yet a good harvest. I purchased a Massey Harris self propelled combine for \$2800.00 and harvested 12,000 bushels of wheat; had a gross income of about \$20,000.00 and paid a federal income tax of \$1763.24. Because of World War II, the school bus would no longer pick up our children, so we decided to sell our cows and move to town. In 1944, I purchased the John Hyde home in Downey for \$6500.00. I had been on the farm for almost 20 years. Beautiful are the memories of our farm life.

In the spring of 1948, I purchased a home and 560 acres of land at Weston, Idaho for \$40,000.00. I kept the same only a month or two and traded it to Frank Shrives for 920 acres on the west side of our valley. The next few years I had a gross income of over \$30,000.00 each year. In 1952, I purchased the Orion Christiansen farm of 240 acres up Cherry Creek for \$27,000.00. My gross income increased, but so did expenses. I now had two crawler tractors, with a full line of farm equipment. Uncle Sam wanted more and more, so I decided to get rid of the farm, and by 1967, I had sold all my holdings to my son Dale for \$130,000.00. Today, the same would sell for a half million dollars, such has been the inflation. I still long to go to the farm. It is a joy to get on the tractor and help Dale with the farming.

Great have been my blessings. I have tried to pay an honest tithing, and I do not believe I have been indebted to any man or

INSET - Taking time out
for lunch, Carol, James
A., Connie, and Jean.
1944

1941 - My first tractor
pulling a combine with
Robert Burnside and
Melvin Stones assisting.



Lunch in - when we ate before the combine.

1941- My first tractor
pulling combine.
Robert Burnside and
Melvin Stones assisting.



1944 - My first self
propelled Massey Harris
combine

or owed a dollar to anyone for over twenty years.

As I write this record, I see the wisdom in the counsel of the Church. Everyone should keep a life journal. With the passing of time, memory fades, and I am trying to tell of events that happened over fifty years ago. Vesta kept no record of our life together, and neither did I. However, for the benefit of her sons and their families, I shall tell what I know. Vesta LaVon was born on March 14, 1901, at Downey Idaho. It must have been on the homestead about five miles southeast of Downey. She was the fifth child in a family of eleven: Helma, LeRoy, George, Rachel, (the last two died as babies), Vesta, Verda, Mable, Orville, Herman, Syble, and Conrad. Her father was George Sylvinius Salvesen. He was born in Kristiansand, Norway, on March 10, 1870, and was a child less than two years old when his parents came to America. They were converts to the Church and they settled in Blacksmith Fork, east of Hyrum, Utah. He had very little schooling, if any, and was doing a man's work while yet a boy. He helped build the railroads here in the west. I know from personal experience that he could do more work than any man I have ever known. I tried to pitch hay with him, but was left far behind. He would work all day at farm work and then work far into the night cutting sage or hauling rock.

Vesta's mother was Elizabeth Hardwick Johnson. She was of Danish descent and was born November 4, 1871, at Skull Valley, Utah. I know nothing of her early life, but in those early days everyone learned to work and her life was never an easy one. She was large of stature and very strong. I have heard the family tell how she would hitch a team onto a wagon filled with barrels and go about three miles to dip

water from Marsh Creek with a bucket, then haul the water back to the farm to water the pigs, chickens, and livestock. Elizabeth and George were well mated when it came to work. I don't know how she was able to raise nine children, keep them well clothed, and prepare such hearty and tasty meals. It was a joy to sit at her table. I have heard her tell of how she milked cows, churned butter, and would walk to town carrying butter and eggs to trade for the things most needed. Growing up in such a home, everyone had to work. The family were members of the Downey Ward. Before Vesta and I were married, she taught a class in YWMIA, and a primary class in Cambridge after our marriage. She received her schooling in the Downey Grade School, many times walking from their home to school and back in pain. Her little toe on each foot was turned under her other toes which caused much discomfort, until they were cut off when she was yet a young girl. Vesta was not more than 12 or 13 when she first started to work at the Enterprise Hotel in Downey. She was so efficient that she never had a problem finding work. From the time she was a child, she sewed all of her clothes. She was a good seamstress and made her own wedding dress. She was never idle, did beautiful embroidery and crocheting. As a girl she helped with the harvest, even pitching headings. Perhaps it was the hard work she did that caused the goiter to develop that later caused her death.

I recall the evening of August 27, 1924. We drove a one horse buggy into Downey to see the show, a distance of about three miles. After we returned home that night, Vesta started to have labor pains. We feared she was going to have a miscarriage as the baby

was not due for a month or six weeks. I went to the phone at Alvin Hancocks, our closest neighbor, and called her parents. They came and got her and took her to their farm, as that was where they lived at the time. The following evening I drove to the farm not knowing just how things were. As the pains became worse, I called the doctor, but was told he was in Salt Lake City and would not be home until about midnight. We then called a midwife, Mrs. A.C. Anderson, who worked with Dr. J.H. Hartvigsen. Father Salvesen went and got her, at about 1:00 A.M.. August 29, Dale was born. At his birth he had no fingernails and it was almost impossible to wake him up to nurse until the time that he should have been born. Dr. Hartvigsen arrived not long after the birth and I paid \$35.00 for Dale. We were proud of our boy and always thought him equal to any of the babies of today though they cost \$2000.00. I gave our baby the name of James Dale on October 5, 1924.

Dale was never a husky baby, and when about 2½ years old, he became very thin. After a month or so under Dr. Hartvigsen's care, he told us, "I do not know what is wrong with him. You had better take him to a baby specialist in Logan." After a number of trips to Logan, he still showed no improvement. It was then that Father Salvesen said to take him to Dr. Rich in Lava. This we did, and Dr. Rich soon had him on the mend. Dr. Rich told me later, "When you first brought that child to me, I was not sure I could save him." He got a lot of cod-liver oil in the months following, which seemed to cure the rickets, which was the cause of the illness.

As I stated before, we moved to the farm which I bought in April, 1925, and it was there that Melvin George was born on May 25,

1927. When I came to town to get the doctor, he told me he had to leave and go deliver a baby at Boyd Denney's, and to take Mrs. Anderson and he would come as soon as possible. So, Mrs. A.C. Anderson delivered Melvin and the doctor came after the birthday party. Melvin was very thin when born, but he had such a large frame that it was not long until we had a husky boy. A trait that has stayed with him through life.

With the passing years, Vesta's goiter began to affect her health more. It was an inward goiter of the most poisonous kind. To look at her you would not know, as there was no enlargement. About 1930, Vesta went to Twin Falls to see a doctor who said he could help her, so she stayed in Twin Falls for about three months. She took Melvin with her and they had a room in a motel. Her mother was with her and the same doctor was treating Conrad, Vesta's brother, at the same time. I went out to see them one weekend and when I got ready to return home, I found Melvin in the car. He said he wasn't going to stay there, but was going home with Dad. Nothing would change his mind, so I ended up bringing him home. It was now fall and the grain was planted. I recall Dale riding the drill with me as we did the seeding before Melvin came home. I don't know how much good the doctor did Vesta, but we were willing to try anything with the hope that she could be made well.

In 1933, Max J. was born on September 28. Vesta was not well and had a number of false alarms, so her mother wanted her to come and stay with them when the baby was born. They had now built their new brick home in Downey. Dr. Hartvigsen told me it was a good thing she was in town, at the time, as she would have bled to



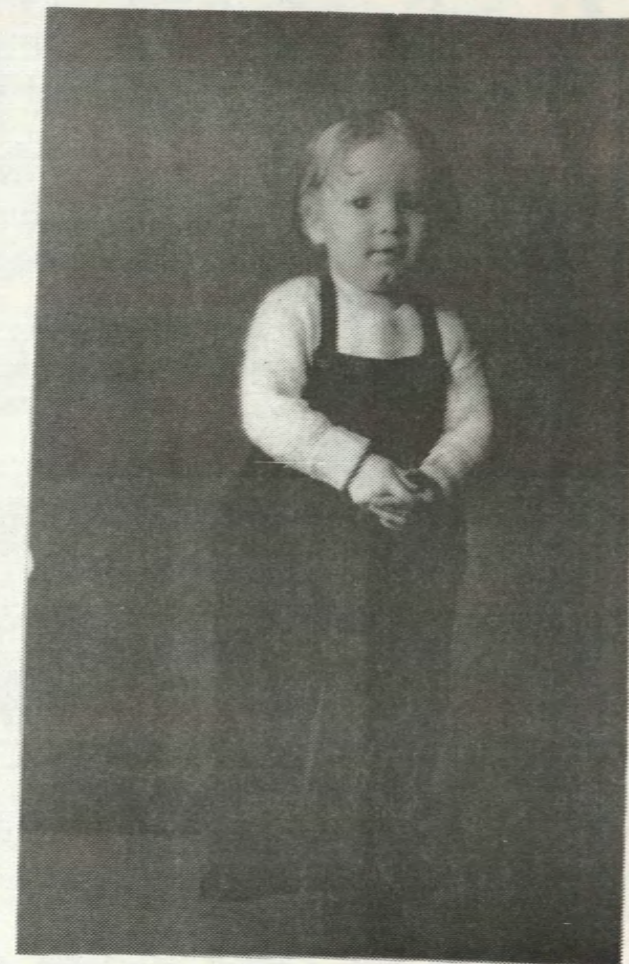
James, Vesta, Dale and Melvin
with our first car - 1928



Ready for Church - 1928



Dale looking after little brother
Melvin. 1928



Max - January 1935

death had she been on the farm. There was no hospital in Downey at the time. Max was a fine healthy boy with such beautiful hair. So many told us, "His hair looks like pure gold."

When Melvin was 4 or 5 years old, I recall looking out in the yard and seeing Melvin directly under Darky, the riding pony. He was reaching up and had hold of her teats and was trying to milk her. I feared she would step on him, or kick him, but she just stepped around him and left him unharmed; for which we were thankful. Dale was always so attentive in looking after his brothers and sisters, and was dependable and showed great wisdom. When Vesta and I left him in charge, we always knew they would be well taken care of. When Dale got old enough to go to school, he came to Downey and stayed with his Aunt Helma, as our home was $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the Cambridge School and there was no transportation. Dale started the third grade in Cambridge. The transportation was provided consisting of cars, covered wagons, covered bobsleighs, and eventually a regular school bus. During the World War II, transportations were discontinued, and Melvin and Max had to ride a bicycle or Pippen, until we bought the John Hyde home and moved into Downey in 1944.

The goiter continued to poison until it affected Vesta's heart. It is with sadness that these things come to mind. I recall we were home on Christmas Day, 1935. We had spent a pleasant day together. I was laying down with my head on Vesta's lap when the feeling came to me, "this is your last Christmas together." I immediately arose and went outside. I felt like crying. I fought the feeling

but it never left me even though I made it a matter of prayer. She grew weaker and it was suggested by Dr. Hartvigen

that she see a specialist in Salt Lake City; Dr. L.R. Cowan. At this time, when she would get down, I would have to help her up. Her sister, Verda, was living in Salt Lake City at the time and Vesta stayed with her when not in the LDS Hospital. The doctor said the goiter would have to come out, but she would have to be built up before she could stand the operation. She would go to his office every two or three days. She was allowed to come home a time or two and I called on her in Salt Lake City a number of times. The time was set for the operation a number of times, but each time her heart would start acting up, and they would have to start all over again in building her up. The doctor decided if she was ever going to stand the operation, it was finally time, so Vesta wrote me to be in Salt Lake City on April 9th and on the 11th they would operate. She had been in Salt Lake City about 3 months, the last two weeks in the hospital. She went into the operating room about 8:00 A.M. and was brought back about 11:30. The operation was considered a success. She had a special nurse to look after her. Verda and I spent Sunday the 12th with her and she seemed to be doing fine. We went to our rooms for the night and left her in the nurses care. When we returned on Monday morning, the 13th, such a change had taken place. Something had gone wrong. Her heart was acting up and she was in an oxygen tent. Evidently the doctor realized she had little chance, as we were told to call her folks.

It wasn't long until her mother and father came, also my brothers, Lorin, John, and brought Dale and Melvin. All having driven down from Downey. Later in the afternoon, Lorin returned

with Dale and Melvin, but John remained with me. My heart aches after all these years as these events pass through my mind. Slowly the hours pass until about 11:00 P.M., when they started to remove the oxygen tent. The end had come.

Vesta's earthly mission was finished. Only those who have lost a companion can know my sorrow. I have three boys without a mother, Dale - 11, Melvin - 8, and Max - 2½. How can I get along on the farm away from everyone with no telephone or close neighbors?

Her body was taken and prepared for burial by the Larkin Funeral Home. We arrived in Downey with the body about noon on the train, April 15. A large crowd was present at the depot to greet us and express sympathy. The Hendricks Mortuary from Preston were there to take the body to the Salvesen home. They also took care of the burial on April 17th. The services were held in the Downey LDS Chapel. Never had I realized there was so much in a handshake. People would take my hand, perhaps not say a word, but I was strengthened.

The spring work was just beginning, so I spent many hours working in the field and other work. I had several different ladies come to help with the housework, but none stayed long. No one wanted the responsibility of managing and running a home for the four of us, and being off by ourselves made it to lonesome. When we could care for Max, he was with us. At other times, he stayed with my sister Lonetta Hancock, or with his grandparents, the Salvesens. He would cry when he was left as he wanted to stay with the family and I also shed a few tears. Many times when I could not sleep, my pillow would be wet with tears. How I prayed that my boys would grow up to be the type of men

their mother would be proud of, and I have tried to be an example. One of the sad events of my life was trying to play Santa to my boys. Where I had depended on Vesta, I now had to buy and act alone. I shed tears as I filled their stockings on Christmas Eve. Never had I missed Vesta more. I was in the Bishopric and teaching a Sunday School class, so I tried to carry on with these assignments.

While Vesta was in Salt Lake City, many times Dale made the statement, "I hope mother can be home when I give my talk as I graduate from primary," but she had passed on. However, the day he was to give his talk, I noticed he was very quiet in the morning. I asked what was the matter, and this is what he told me: "I dreamed I was up giving my talk, which was in Sacrament meeting, when I saw mother come in and sit down". I asked how she was dressed and he said, "As she was buried". I told him that dream was to assure him that his mother would be there, but he would not see her. It would upset him and his talk were he able to see her while talking. I feel sure he did see her in his dream as he reported. The event really happened, and she was there.

I have never known anyone more mature for his age, and wise in council than Dale was to me at that time. He was a comfort to me and assumed much responsibility in looking after his younger brothers, helping with the work.

I recall shortly after Vesta passed away, President George T. Hyde, our Stake President, put his arm across my shoulders and said, "Brother Criddle, don't you make the mistake that man

walking ahead of us has made." His wife had died many years before and he had remained single trying to raise his family alone. I desired companionship, but as I thought of Vesta, it made me feel like a traitor just to think of another woman. No woman could take Vesta's place. But, she had now gone out of my life and the only place she now occupied was in my heart and memory, and there she will ever remain. To think of spending the remainder of my life without companionship was most discouraging. My boys needed a mother's love, but who could give them that? Who would assume such responsibility? Many were the times I knelt in prayer, asking to be guided in actions, and I know my prayers were answered.

One night, I saw Bessie Jensen in my dreams. She had taught school in Cambridge, Dale being one of her students. On two or three occasions, she had come up to our home to visit and discuss school, I being one of the trustees. I guess there must have been some tie between us which existed from the spirit world, which I did not realize at the time. I had always admired her, but never thought that she would mean anything to me but a friend. I recall one night at a dance when a young man of questionable character was making a play for her. I asked for a dance, and while dancing told her that he was not her type. I thought that as a trustee, and being in the Bishopric, it was only proper to drop a word of warning. Could there have been anything else? In due time, I shall answer that question.

Two days after Vesta's funeral, Bessie came to see me. She expressed her sympathy, and was with a boy friend. At that time, she was teaching school in Preston. Months had passed. Was she still going with that fellow? Had they any plans for the future? Would

she even consider going with a man years her senior with three boys, living out in the country with no phone, electricity, or plumbing, (only an outside toilet), and she raised in the city of Preston. These and a thousand other thoughts entered my mind. Perhaps it was Dale who gave me courage, as out of the blue, he said one day, "Dad, I think you ought to get married again."

I knew if my life was to change, I alone could cause the change. So, after much thought, I decided to write a letter to Bessie Jensen, Preston, Idaho, with the hope it would find her. I asked if I could call for her and bring her back to attend a big Halloween dance which was being held in the new Cambridge Grade School gym which had just been built. It was to be a big affair. Now there were more days and nights of wondering. What would be her reply? The answer came by return mail, "I shall be happy to go with you, and shall be ready and you will find me at the given address." Her mother's comment was, "that man is looking for a wife." But Bessie replied, "Because I go with him is no sign I have to marry him". "Well", replied her mother, "You don't have to be in a hurry to reply." But with her reply it seemed new hope came into my life. Again I did more wondering, "What would I say when people saw us together?"

I was well received and impressed by her parents and sisters, LaMoyne and Anna. They were spiritual minded people. It seemed the miles were so short as we drove back. We drove up to the farm and got Dale and Melvin and took them to the dance with us. As we walked into the hall, it seemed everyone was so surprised. They just stopped and looked. Wayne Penrose was the first to come and

greet us. It seemed everyone was pleased to see us together, and so expressed themselves. During the years she had taught school in Cambridge, the people had learned to love her. I have been told they wondered, "Why doesn't Brother Criddle go after Bessie?" Now we were together.

These events are sacred to me and I share them only to my family in this record. How quickly the hours pass and the dance ends. We took Dale and Melvin home, and then the trip to Preston. Great big flakes of snow were falling. Such a beautiful snow storm and what a wonderful evening. We drove slow, but all too soon we part. But, we were looking ahead to the next date. Of that date and after we were married, Bessie made this statement, "I can show you the exact spot on the dance floor where this thought came into my mind, "I could learn to love you!" Could there have been an awakening of something previous? A question I shall yet answer. It seemed we found such joy in being together and looked forward to each date, with an exchange of letters in between. It was not long until we had an understanding that she wished to share my life, and how I wanted her. With the coming of winter, came snow such as I never saw while living on the farm. Snow so deep we could drive over fences with the bob sleighs. At times, the roads were blocked between Downey and Preston.

Bessie's school contract stated she was not to get married during the school term, which agreement she kept. At Christmas time, I gave her a beautiful diamond and our world knew we had plans. As we sat in the car Christmas night, I gave her the diamond as over the air came the tune "I Love You Truly, Truly Dear". Naturally

it became our theme song. As we danced in the ballroom in Preston that Christmas night, many people congratulated us and seemed happy for us, or could it have been a reflection of our own happiness?

I met her in Downey on New Years Eve, took her to meet my mother, then we attended the dance in Hyde's Hall in Downey, after which I took her to spend the night at the Penrose home. Long before daylight on New Years Day, 1937, I was up cleaning, mopping the floor, and trying to make the house presentable, as Bessie would be up and have New Years dinner with the boys and I. A large part of the dinner consisted of food given us at Christmas time by the Relief Society sisters of the Cambridge Ward. It was a day of joy and gladness. Though 43 years have passed, the joys of that day are beautiful in memory. With the coming of the new year, and deep snow, I could no longer drive to Preston. We could not get our car out, but a number of times, I drove to Downey in the sleigh and caught the bus to Preston. As before mentioned, at times the road was blocked with snow drifts for days at a time.

When my mother died on March 26, 1937, cars could not get up to my home, but I had pulled the car out with a team of horses, parked it, and would drive on to town. Bessie came up to be with me the day of the funeral. She was a source of strength as she stood by my side.

The days passed and the school year came to a close. The first day of June was chosen as our wedding day, school having been out about 10 days. On May 31st, I drove to Preston, picked up Bessie, and drove to Salt Lake City. We spent the night with her Aunt May, and on June 1st we were at the Temple early. Her father



ABOVE - Winter on the farm, Mutt looking on. Pictures taken January 1, 1937 when Bessie came to the farm for New Year's Day dinner.



Center - Just family members at the farm in Cambridge.

RIGHT- On the farm among the cows, Blackie looking them over.



Jan - 1944.

Three of a kind, Connie, Carol, and Jean



Keith at 5 months.

Keith, age 5 months, taking his first ride on Pippin.



Two of a kind.

and mother, Anna and Bob, and Peter and his wife were with us. Shortly after noon, we were married for time and all eternity, after which father Jensen took us all to the Doll House for a big dinner; after which they left. Bessie and I went to the Temple Square Hotel where we had a room. The first thing Bessie did was to sign her name on a letterhead from Temple Square Hotel - Mrs. Bessie J. Criddle, Mrs. James A. Criddle, Bessie Criddle - which she kept as a keepsake. We spent some time in Salt Lake City. On our way home we called on some uncles of mine, and spent our first night together in our home on June 5th.

The next twenty years passed so swiftly. On February 27, 1938, Connie was born at Downey. Helma Christensen, Vesta's sister, was running a maternity home at the time. Dr. Layton was the attending physician. In those days, new mothers were kept in bed for 10 days, not being allowed to even go to the bathroom. They became so weak that it took 10 days or two weeks to gain their strength back. We were all so proud of Connie, the boys and all. How Bessie enjoyed dressing her up so beautiful. I might say here that I gave all of my sons and daughters a name and father's blessing. I baptized and confirmed all of them members of the Church, and conferred the Aaronic Priesthood upon each son and ordained them in each office therein. With the exception of Max, I conferred the Melchizedek Priesthood upon each son and ordained them Elders. I would have ordained Max an Elder, but he was in New Orleans when ordained. I always called Connie, "Sweetheart", a name of endearment.

On December 4, 1939, another girl, Carol came to bless our home. She was such a happy child that I called her "Sunshine", as a name

of endearment. She was always such a perfectionist, I don't think she ever had anything but A's in school, and when she graduated from BYU, she had next to the highest grade in her college. She had to give a talk and her mother was asked to give a response. Carol was born at my brother John's home, Dr. Engleburg attending. Carol was a lover of music, became very good on the piano, and while still in the grade school was invited to play the oboe in the high school band. After graduation, Carol taught school in Salt Lake City, and while there, met and married Glen Roylance, recently returned from the German Mission.

It seemed each girl had a special talent. Connie was outstanding in interpretative reading and won first place in the Idaho State Farm Bureau talent contest. She was invited to go to Chicago and perform before the National Farm Bureau Convention, with Bessie attending also.

On October 17, 1943, another daughter, Jean came to bless our home. She was born at my sister, Eva's home with Dr. Engleburg attending. No one could have been more proud than Bessie and I. Bessie was a wonderful seamstress and would dress all the girls alike. I gave Jean the endearing name of "Tulip". She chose to play the flute. She became a beautiful singer, although she would not admit such; to me it is true!

While attending Ricks College, Connie met the man of her choice in Reid Gardner, so chose matrimony instead of more college. After two years at BYU, Jean was called to fill a mission for the Church in England. It was there that she met the man who was to become her life companion, Randal Densley.



Bessie as she graduated from
high school



Father and Mother Jensen - Junius and Sylvia



James and Bessie wedding picture.
Married June 1, 1937



Bessie as a school teacher



LEFT - The Jensen Family
Lowell, Junius, Peter
Bessie, Junius C., Sylvia, Anna, LaMoyn.

June 1952 - Golden Wedding of
Junius and Sylvia Jensen.

On January 13, 1947, Bessie gave birth to a boy, Keith, at Preston, Idaho, Dr. Cutler attending. He was the first of my children to be born in a hospital. Bessie and I were happy as she now had a son of her own. Through the years, she had given a mother's love to Dale, Melvin, and Max. With the passing of years, many did not know they were not her own. They in turn, loved her as they would have loved their own mother.

We now thought our family complete, but the Lord had still another son to bless our home, and after more than 5 years, on August 18, 1952, Clyde was born in the new hospital in Downey, Dr. L.G. Burkett attending. After he was born, the doctor said, "The Lord must have wanted you to have this child, as he should have been dead the way the umbilical cord was wrapped around his neck".

I shall not long dwell on the lives of our sons, Keith and Clyde, but will say that they attended school in Downey, and Marsh Valley High School. They graduated from BYU with honors; Keith then going to the University of Utah where he received his M.D. degree. His residency was in Phoenix, Arizona, and he now has a family medical practice in Auburn, Washington. Clyde, after getting his M.B.A. degree at BYU, is now working with Exxon in Houston, Texas, where he has a very responsible position. Each delayed his schooling two years to fill a mission for the Church. Keith in England, and Clyde in New Zealand. I have mentioned these events to show when I say, "I am proud of my family", I can justly do so.

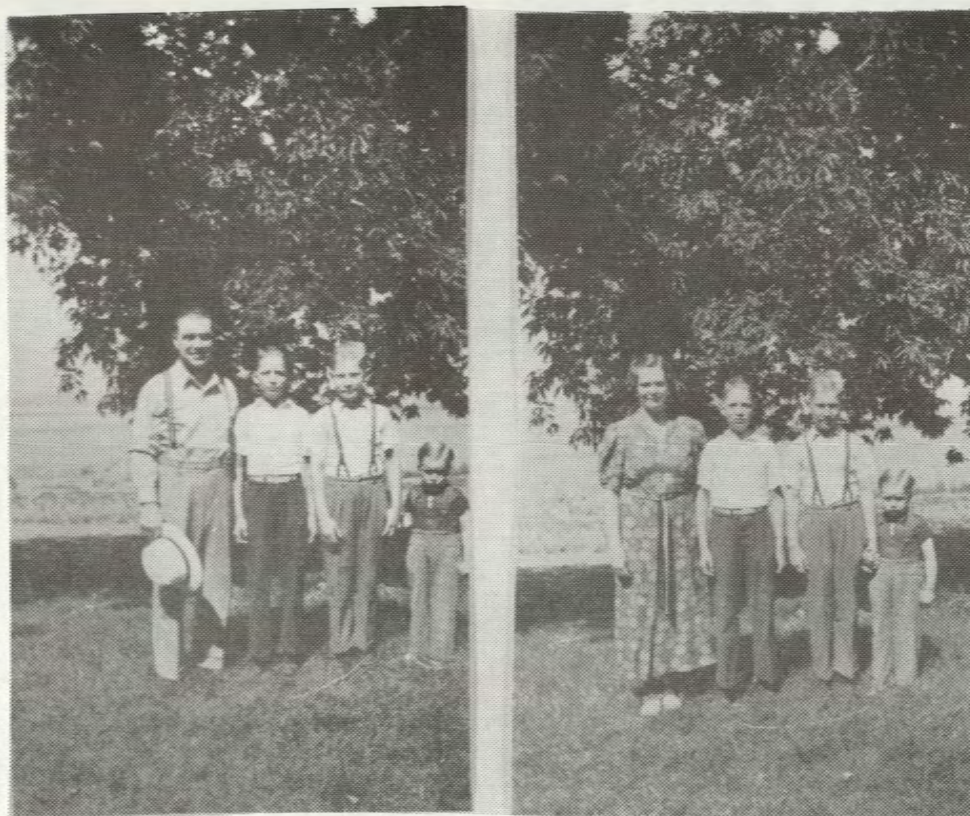
Dale, Melvin, and Max all served Uncle Sam in the Armed Forces. Dale was a tank gunner in Germany in World War II, Melvin was in the Navy and helped return the service men from the far east after the

war. Max was also in the Navy and served in the Pacific after the Korean War.

After their service to Uncle Sam, Dale and Melvin both expressed a desire to go on a mission and for the first time in the history of our Stake, and the only time thus far, they entered the mission home at the same time. Dale laboring in the California Mission and Melvin in the Western States Mission. After their return from their missions, Dale went to the BYU from which he graduated with a Bachelor Degree. While at BYU, he met and married Kathleen Bowman, who grew up in Colonia Dublan, in old Mexico. He then taught school and eventually took over the farm. Melvin started college at Logan at USU, but never graduated, and married Sherry Christiansen, a home town girl. While going to college at BYU, after he returned from the Navy, Max met and married Carolyn Read of Salt Lake City. I performed the ceremony which was 'til death do you part; but they decided that was too long, so after 20 odd years, they divorced.

After Keith's mission and while in college, he met and married Carole Lee Haake of Salt Lake City. Clyde, while attending BYU, met and married Ann Blair of Phoenix, Arizona.

I shall no longer dwell on the lives of family members, but I wish to say we loved each one of the eight, and they in turn showed great love and still do. I know Bessie inspired each child to do their best, an influence which affected each life. Bessie loved to read and was one of the fastest readers I have known. I never knew her to read trash. She associated only with the best of characters, whether it be in person or from the printed page.



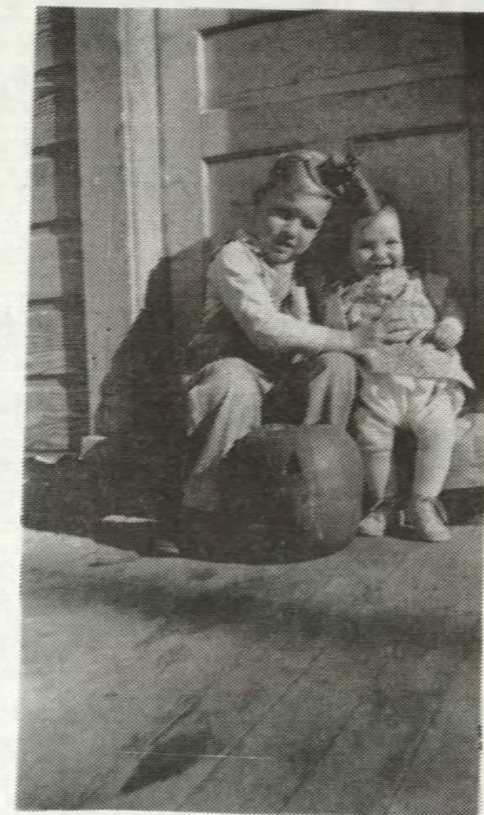
Dale, Melvin, and Max as they were when
Bessie and I were married.



1937



Max, Connie, Carol, and Jean



Halloween with Max and Connie



Bessie with her muskrat fur coat.



September 1946 before Dale
and Melvin both left for
missions.

She gave many book reviews, and it seemed she could make the characters come to life, to the enjoyment of each listener. She was a natural born teacher and held the interest of each student. Her ability and leadership was recognized in every field. She was the life of each party she had anything to do with. Her Church activities began in the Primary when just a girl and they ended in the Primary as she was in the Primary Stake Presidency for over twenty years, acting for many years as teacher trainer. She taught classes in Sunday School and Relief Society. She enjoyed a good time, and brought joy into the lives of others. She stood at the head of her class in school and skipped some classes. When she graduated from Ricks, she had the highest grade in her class. Some of her teachers called to visit in our home after we were married, both men and women. They showed great respect for her though many years had passed.

Bessie enjoyed picnics and could fix up a lunch on the spur of the moment. The fall after we were married, we went back to Detroit and got a new pickup. We called that trip our honeymoon trip. We also went back in 1950 and got a car and visited many of the places in Church history, and cities in the east, including Washington D.C..

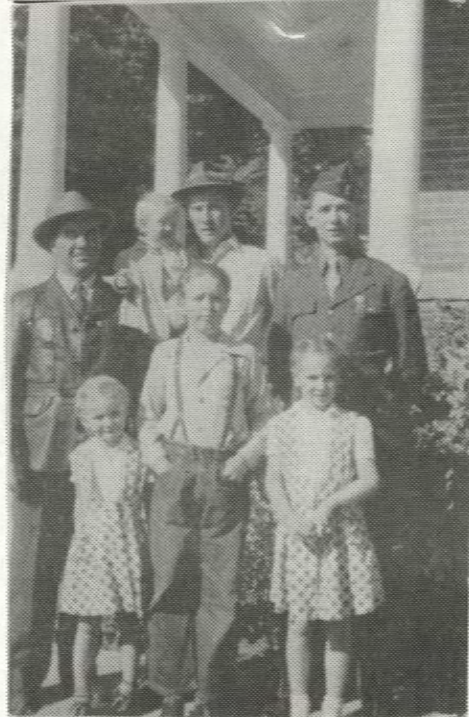
Bessie enjoyed driving the car and always did the driving when we were in heavy traffic or large cities. She got a kick out of it, while I was more nervous. Together, we made trips to Canada to visit relatives, visited Glacier and Yellowstone Park a number of times, went to the Black Hills of Dakota, saw Mt. Rushmore, attended the World Fair in Seattle, drove through the Redwoods as we drove down the west coast, were thrilled to see Bryce, Zion, and Grand Canyon. Most of the trips, some of the family went with us, but we did have a few trips just by

ourselves.

For over twenty years we attended General Conference in Salt Lake City. Many times I attended the General Primary Conference with Bessie, which was held just before the April General Conference. Many were the birthdays we spent in Salt Lake City as her birthday was April 5, 1910. Oftimes the Primary Sisters from Salt Lake City stayed in our home as they visited the Portneuf Stake. A few years after I was released as Stake President, the name of our Stake was changed to the Arimo Idaho Stake.

Bessie accompanied me as we visited the wards holding Ward Conference. I think she talked in every ward and some, many times. Her messages were inspirational and she always left them with something to think about. She had a good understanding of the Gospel, having been raised in an active home. She never retired for the night without going to her knees in prayer. She taught by example. Some years passed before I knew why she ate no breakfast when we had Stake Conference. She was fasting and praying for me. Many times as I would see her in the audience, I would feel the inspiration of her presence. I told her I would never tell her that I had a greater love for her than I had for Vesta, but I would say I had a greater appreciation. We only learn some lessons by bitterness and heartache. With Vesta's passing, I learned to appreciate my blessings in having a true and loving helpmate.

Never a day went by but I told Bessie I loved her, they were the first and last words of each day. I will not say we always saw things the same, but I will say no one ever heard us speak unkindly or yell at one another. Bessie used to say she always knew



ABOVE- Dale home on furlough
1944.



Dale, Melvin and Max continue to grow.
Dad just gets older.



Thanksgiving day - 1949.
After Thanksgiving Day dinner 1949.



March 1, 1953

Admiring each other, March 1, 1953



I feel comfortable in overalls, Dec.
1946.



1944

May 1944 on the farm before Dale went into the service.



July - 1945.

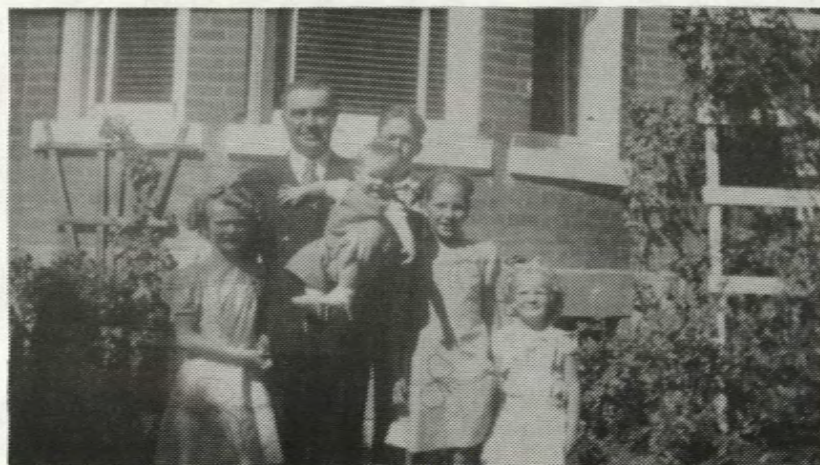
Our home in Downey as it looked in July 1945.



Easter Sunday.

Easter Sunday 1945.

SEP • 56



1947

Family pictures as the children were growing up.



1956

when I was angry, offended, or hurt, as I would go for a walk, or go out with the cows or horses. Ill feelings never lasted for long and never did we go to sleep without good feelings. Usually, there were just misunderstandings and we were not too proud or hard headed to say "I love you and will you forgive me." It is so easy to become offended when no offense is intended.

Don't let little things canker your soul. Solve all misunderstandings while the problems are small, or mole hills will grow into mountains. Unless asked, don't tell a person their faults. Be free in telling them of their virtues, and be most generous. Happiness is found in making your companion happy, and Bessie and I found happiness together. It is true we knew the challenges of rearing a family and I will not say we never worried or knew heartache. Love was in our home and we enjoyed each other. We tried to shape our lives by the Gospel teachings and I think there are no problems the Gospel cannot solve.

Years pass and the members of our family honored us on our 25th wedding anniversary in our home June 1, 1962. Shortly thereafter, the family members at home drove to Seattle to see the World Fair, visit with Max, and Bessie's brothers in the northwest. As we were returning home, we visited the Grand Coulee Dam. While there, Bessie passed out. She seemed confused most of the way home. She had long suffered from ulcers, had visited different doctors, and they figured that was her problem. As we attended October Conference in Salt Lake City, she spent one afternoon with Carol and Jean. Carol was teaching school in Salt Lake City and Jean was going to school at BYU. She told them that day, "If anything happens to me, I want you to encourage Daddy to get married again." She seemed to have more head-

aches than usual and was under the doctor's care, going to Pocatello for tests, but they were unable to determine her problem.

On Saturday and Sunday, October 13 and 14, Bessie attended Ward Conference with me in the Virginia Ward. The Bishop asked her to talk in the Sunday meeting. Wednesday evening, she attended a Primary Stake meeting. Friday, October 19, she felt rather miserable and I suggested that she not plan to attend the Ward Conference meeting to be held that evening in the Garden Creek Ward. I spent most of the day with her as she lay on the bed. She told me that morning, "If anything happens to me, I want you to marry again, as you will need a companion."

I told her not to worry as I would die first, and did not her Patriarchal blessing say, "In the absence of your husband, the responsibility will rest upon your shoulders to train the children". Little did I realize the meaning of the words at the time. Now, I see their fulfillment with my work as Stake President. I was away so much in the evening, and busy on the farm in the day, that Bessie had long assumed that role.

As I went to the meeting that night, Erma Brim, a very close friend came to spend the evening with Bessie. Sister Brim told me later that Bessie told her, "I told James this morning, if anything happens to me, I want him to marry again".

I had not been home from my meeting more than ten minutes when Bessie went into a convulsion and passed out. When the doctor came, he said, "I am concerned, something is causing pressure on her brain. It could be a brain tumor".

Those words struck me like a bolt of lightning. Dale came



Clyde - 1954
 Family Group - 1951
 BOTTOM * Jean, James A.,
 Carol, Keith, Bessie,
 Connie, TOP - Max,
 Melvin, Dale





As I looked when I went into the
Stake Presidency in 1949.



James and Bessie after 25 years of marriage - June 1, 1962.

and we gave her a blessing, but her earthly labors were over. She was rushed to the LDS Hospital in Salt Lake City, arriving shortly after daylight. A series of tests were given. They knew it was a tumor, but had some trouble telling just where. Finally, it was located at the base of the skull on the right side. On Sunday, Oct. 21, Prayers were given in each Ward in our Stake for her recovery. Tuesday morning, they operated. When the doctor reported, he said it was malignant and the size of a small orange. I asked, "How long will she live?" He said, "She can go anytime, or she can hang on for three or four months. If she does live, she will suffer intense pain, her whole personality will change, and she could lose her sense of sight, hearing, tasting, smelling etc."

Again, how my heart ached for her. I didn't want her to suffer. As I returned to my room, I knelt in prayer and I thanked the Lord for the joy she had brought into our lives. I told Him, I was reconciled to her passing and to please, if she could not be made well, to call her home. Oh, how hard it is to ask the Lord to take one so dearly loved. I had talked to Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith before the operation. He said the Council of Twelve Apostles would pray for her as they met on Thursday in the Temple. All members of the family who could, visited her in the hospital. The Bishopric, Counselors in the Stake Presidency, and many others called at the hospital. None were able to communicate with her, as she did not recognize them, having been in a semi-conscious state from the time she blacked out October 19. She regained consciousness the night of the 24th enough to express her love for the family, and then went into a coma until her passing which came quietly the early morning of

October 26. Connie, Carol, and Dale were with me to give me strength. Benson from Malad came and got her body and made the funeral arrangements.

Where Vesta had been with me a little over 12 years, Bessie had been with me more than 25 years. Our lives had been one of love and harmony, but until we meet again, she lives only in my heart and memory, and I look forward to the time we shall meet again. After her passing, I wondered why she should have had the assurance she was going to die, and why she should have suggested to so many she wanted me to marry again. Could she have had some warning? Carol reported as she talked with mother at Conference time, Bessie told her that when she passed out at Grand Coulee Dam, she could have gone at that time, or she could remain with me a little longer. She chose to stay with me, but knew it would not be for long.

I would like to report some statements from Bessie's Patriarchal blessing given by George R. Bennett the year after we were married. "Because of your faithfulness in the premortal world, you were permitted to choose your parents; and because of your worthiness, to choose a husband to become your helpmate throughout life. The Lord is pleased with your labors, and joy and satisfaction will come into your heart, and the day will come when you will meet the real mother of those boys, and will join hands in appreciation for the love and affection that you have for your husband and those sons that he has had born unto him by another woman."

I now ask questions: "Why is it that we are drawn to some certain persons? Why do we make certain choices?" Could it be from a premortal existence? Why should Bessie choose to become

my helpmate? I like to think that we knew each other before earth life, and I look forward to the time I shall meet with Vesta and Bessie again. Of one thing I am sure, there will be no heaven for me unless I can have their love and association in the eternities to come.

The Stake Conference held on October 28, 1962, was the only Conference I did not attend during the many years I labored in the Stake. I arose in the middle of the night before the Stake Conference and wrote a message to be read in conference. I wanted to express the love Bessie and I had for the people, and to give thanks for the loyalty, love, and support they had shown us. Elder Alvin R. Dyer, an Apostle and conference visitor, called at my home to express sympathy from the General Church Authorities. That night, hundreds called at our home to view Bessie and express sympathy.

On Monday, October 29, 1962, her funeral was held at the Arimo Stake House. I am sure it was the largest funeral attendance ever held in our Stake. Besides the many family members attending, our co-workers in the Wards, Stakes, and region came in goodly numbers. I am sure everyone who had known Bessie through the years had a love for her. She was layed to rest in the Downey Cemetery beside Vesta. I look forward to the time I can join them in the hereafter, while my mortal body lies by their side.

All too soon, the family members return to their homes, Jean back to college and Carol to teaching school in Salt Lake City. Max remained with me a few days, and how I appreciated his presence. He had spent so little time at home since he entered the Navy. And now Keith, Clyde, and I were alone. We did our own cooking, washing,

ironing, and housework. Keith and Clyde helped what they could. To hear Clyde tell it, when we had steak, we had steak; when soup, it was soup; when vegetables, it was vegetables; when cereal, it was cereal; just one thing at a time! Many times the boys would report, "I don't have a shirt to wear to school", and I would be up in the wee hours of the morning getting clothes ready. Each day brought its problems and heartache. Life was so lonely. I did not want our life to continue as it was, and if it was to change, I alone could change it.

I thought of Alda Anderson. She had served as the Stake Relief Society Secretary a number of years until her husband, Ervin Anderson, died. He was the Ward clerk of the McCammon Ward, and blacked out with a brain tumor six years to the day prior to Bessie's blacking out. I was called to the hospital to administer to him. He too, was rushed to Salt Lake City to be operated on for a brain tumor, but his labors were finished. I was asked to talk at his funeral. Shortly after his death, Alda and Carolyn, her daughter, moved to Logan to live. I knew so little about them. I had no contact with them save in church work. I prayed much and I know the Lord directed me. Alda often came to my mind and I decided to call on her. I obtained her address from the telephone book and must have carried it in my pocket for three months trying to get up my nerve to call on her. I saw her in the Temple a few times, and took her through the veil just prior to our first date.

On April 22, 1963, telling no one of my plans, I drove to Logan and called at Alda's home. Carolyn was the only one home and she said Alda would be home later that evening. I told her I

Just Married. 6-14



Leaving the Logan Temple
after marriage.



My family - Dale, Melvin, Max, James 'Dad'
Connie, Carol, Keith, Clyde.



Alda's family - Lyle, Eugene, Lavern, Alda 'Mother'
Betty, Norma, Carolyn.



James A. Criddle and Alda Anderson
wedding picture June 14, 1963.

would call later as I wished to see her mother. When Carolyn told her mother I had called and would be back later, it started Alda to thinking. "Was there something I wanted to know about the Relief Society records she had turned in years before? What did I want to see her about?"

When I returned, I could see her through the window, sitting reading the paper. I shall never forget that picture. She greeted me at the door and after a few moments, I asked if she would go with me to the show or for a ride. She replied she would enjoy a ride, so we rode up Logan Canyon. She told me she grew up in Central, Idaho, a farming community about five miles northwest of Grace, Idaho. We spent two or three hours visiting and learning a lot about each other. I was all eyes and ears that night. I had observed she was always neat and nice looking before, but that night, I noticed how nice and orderly her home was. I liked everything I saw and heard. I have told her that the Lord must have planted the seed of love in my heart as I saw her through the window that night. By 11:00 P.M., I was on my way home, but she told me I might call again. I might report that her son Eugene had told her the week before that he thought she should "Get out and shake a hip and find a fellow!" If she did, I never knew of it, but perhaps it gave Alda assurance, as we started going together. When I called the next time, she reported she never slept a wink the night after I called. She alone knows her thoughts, so I can only guess and you can do the same.

I guess you would say we had a whirlwind courtship as we were married on June 14, 1963, just over seven weeks after that first date. Our going together came as a surprise, but so many told us

they were happy for us. All of my family approved, and her family also. Bessie's family likewise approved of her. When mother Jensen met her and was told we planned to get married, her remark was, "Be good to James", and I testify no one could have been better. I was happy to place a diamond on her finger. We were married in the Logan Temple by President Raymond for "time" in the presence of her and my family members, my Bishopric, and Counselors in the Stake Presidency with their wives. We all had dinner together at an eating place up Logan Canyon, which was most fitting, as we had spent many of our dates in Logan Canyon. We spent our first night together at Holiday Inn in Salt Lake City. The following day, Carol took us around the Alpine Loop, and we had dinner with Brother and Sister Roylance, Glen's father and mother. The following day, we attended the morning sessions of the June Conference, then drove to Manti to spend the night. Then, onto Jacobs Lake and St. George, spending a night at each, and in between, visiting Bryces, Zion, and Grand Canyon. A most enjoyable honeymoon. I have told Alda that I never won her, but that the Lord just gave her to me. Perhaps I see a lot with my heart, but I tell her I am sure there isn't another woman in all the world that could have fitted into my life better than she has. She is everything I could desire as a true helpmate, a loving companion, a good cook and housekeeper, and of a deeply religious nature. I recall her Bishop at McCammon made this statement of Ervin's funeral. "They are a couple that I have never known to speak ill of anyone."

After 17 years together, I can truthfully say, "No couple could have greater harmony." Never have cross words been spoken.

I often tell her that if there is anything virtuous, lovely, of good report, or praiseworthy, it is found in her. I have never known anyone to have more true friends. It seems no matter where we go, there are those who come and put their arms around her and express their love. I have found myself wondering at times, "Who is that man with his arm around my wife", only to learn it was a friend of years past. It is not uncommon to have someone come to me and say, "I just love your wife", and say how glad they are that we found each other. How I wish everyone could be as happy with each other as we have been. I wish to state in this record that I doubt members of her family could show greater respect for their real father than they have shown to me. I am the only grandpa most of Alda's grandchildren have ever known on her side of the family. Never have I known a family with greater love for each other than in her family. Likewise, she is the only grandma most of my grandchildren have ever known. I tell her I am glad to have a wife who is on speaking terms with the Lord, and I know her prayers and faith have sustained me in my various callings. We have had a number of enjoyable trips together driving up Highway 101 through the Redwoods to visit Max and family in Seattle, Clyde and Carolyn being with us; then to the Black Hills of Dakota and Mt. Rushmore, Carolyn being with us. Down to San Diego to spend Christmas with Carol, Glen and family; Carolyn, Keith, and Clyde with us.

Alda and I have been on two Temple tours, back to the World Fair in Montreal, up to Quebec in Canada, cities in the east including Washington D.C., the Hill Cummorah Pagent, and places of interest in Church history. We flew to Mexico City, saw the pyramids of the sun and moon together with many ruins of ancient America, and

other places of interest including Tasco, the silver capital of the world, and Acapulco in old Mexico.

We enjoyed visiting with family members and having them visit us, but most of our time is spent quietly in our home. Just to have Alda around brings a spirit of peace and contentment into my life. One thing we do give thanks for is the good health we have both enjoyed, seldom taking a pill or anything. With the passing of years, we find we can do less and less. I often start to do something and then forget what it was I intended to do, so go back to the place of starting to see if it will come to mind. Sometimes it does not come to mind until I am laying in bed. Such is old age.

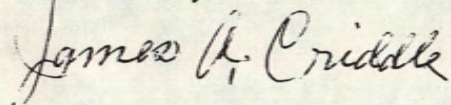
When I was released as Stake President, April 28, 1968, after serving more than 19 years, it was said no more Stake Presidents will serve so long again. I am sure none will be so blessed by having so many of the General Authorities in their homes. Something went out of my life with my release. I was no longer entitled to the same inspiration. The keys now rested with another. The counsel given by President Moyle as he interviewed me was, "Always remember this, Church work comes first", which counsel I have always tried to keep. Never did I let my work interfere. My tractor or combine always stopped when Church work called. The only assignment I had for a time after my release was Home Teacher, which I tried to fill 100 percent. After a short time, I was assigned as class instructor of the High Priest group in the Downey First Ward, which position I have held for many years.

Although I was born of goodly parents, and have had the great

honor of association with many of the Church leaders, the message I wish to impress upon each one is not the events of my life, but the fact that so called "Mormonism" is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is true. Its teachings will bring joy and gladness into each life and eternal life with those we love in the hereafter. All one must do is live and obey to become a God. The opportunity is yours. What will you do with it?

March 25, 1980. For the time being, I close this record to my family, with words of love to you and yours, and I ask God's blessings upon each one. May love and harmony dwell in each home and may the spirit of the Lord find an abiding place therein. May the joy of service be yours. Stand firm and unwavering in the truth. As challenges and trial come into your life, call to mind the words of Nephi as recorded in I Nephi 15:8. "Have ye inquired of the Lord."

With love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James A. Criddle". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

James A. Criddle