

## MEMORIES OF DAD

By Clyde

I am not sure what my first memories of Dad are. I do remember a lot of little things about him. For example, whenever he would kiss me, he had usually just put some chapstick on his lips. And when he would give me a hug, his face was always scratchy from his whiskers. I remember that he would daily kiss Mother, usually after he had finished helping her with the dishes. And, I can remember him letting his false teeth drop in his mouth to amuse little children with his "funny face".

I am sure that Dad's favorite meal was just a bowl of bread and milk. I can remember eating bread and milk myself so that I'd be like Dad, but I don't think I ever really liked the stuff. For breakfast Dad had, and still has, an unusual way of eating his cooked cereal. Instead of pouring milk over his cereal and eating it from a bowl (like everyone else) he takes a spoonful of mush and dips it into a cup of milk (usually metal cup). This was so that every bite would have a little fresh milk on it, otherwise the cereal would soak it all up.

Whenever Dad was home during the day and felt tired, he would usually stretch out and take a nap on the floor. Everyone else would lie on the sofa, but Dad liked the floor better. Working on the crawler tractor was a very dirty job. I used to be amazed how Dad could get so dirty from working on the farm. He would come home at night and his face would literally be black. He would have dirt everywhere, except for the top of his head from wearing his hat and his racoon-like mask from wearing goggles. A toothpick would often still be in his mouth from that morning. Mother would take the broom out to sweep him off before he would come into the house. Then he would go to the base-

ment, take off his clothes, and wear his dark blue bathrobe to get to the bathroom.

It seems like I remember Dad wearing only two types of clothes during my early life. It was either gray coveralls or a Sunday "go to church" suit. I realize now that this was because Dad didn't take time out for himself or for recreation. If he wasn't working on the farm to provide for us, he was busy doing church work for the Lord.

Every Wednesday night, no matter how busy he was, Dad would always come home early, get cleaned up, and then go off to Stake Presidency meeting in Arimo. As a youth, I can never remember Dad sitting with us at church. Being Stake President, he would usually preside at the meetings and would sit on the stage. But I remember that I was always proud that he was sitting up there. And I was amazed that everyone in the rest of the world from far away places like Arimo, McCammon, Lava, etc., would know my Dad and would come up to talk to him. I knew that he was an important man in the Church.

I was also afraid that Dad was so good and so important that he would be called to be a General Authority in the Church. I didn't want to have to move to Salt Lake to live so I guess that's why I had that fear. In my opinion, Dad was just as good as any General Authority that came to visit us. I am grateful now for the example of righteous living and leadership Dad set for me and the rest of the family.

We used to have a cow that Dad would milk in the sheds behind the house. I remember that Dad would put the hobbles on the cow,



sit on a one legged stool, and would rest his head against the side of the cow as he milked her. Afterwards he would take the milk to the basement, strain it, and then wash and hang up the utensils.

Every Christmas we would have to wait for Dad to milk the cow before we could eat breakfast. We would then go in as a family, the youngest one first, to open Christmas presents. It always seemed like he took longer than usual to milk the cow on Christmas Day. I also remember, and I am sure, that Dad always said the world's longest prayer on Christmas morning before breakfast. Dad's prayers were always long, but never so long as on Christmas morning.

I'm glad that Dad was on such good speaking terms with the Lord and could give long prayers. I know that one of the best compliments I received after returning from my mission and offering a family prayer was that one of his grandchildren accused me of praying just like Grandpa!

I remember one vacation we went out to the Pacific Coast. I think we were at Oregon and were staying at a motel very near the beach. We went down to play on the beach and collect sea shells. But first we received very strict instructions from Dad that if anyone got in the water or got their clothes wet, they would have to go back to the motel room. I thought it was pretty funny at the time when a wave caught Dad unaware from behind and got his pants wet. But it wasn't so funny when he made everyone go back to the motel room with him. We were all still dry.

Dad rarely got upset or mad. I remember once that he damned a cow to hell after it had swatted him with its tail during milking. That is the only time I can remember him swearing. Whenever he did

get upset at one of us kids for doing something wrong (like Keith pushing me through a living room window) he would usually say something like "What in the Sam Hill is going on!" (Whatever that means).

I learned very young that members of our family often share the same names. For example, I am sometimes known as "Melvin-er-a-Keith-er-a-Clyde". And, Keith is often referred to as "Max-er-a-Clyde-er-a-Keith". The same system works for other members of the family. Rarely are the boys called by one of the girl's names though.

It was hard for me to understand (and probably still is) how Dad grew up in the "horse and buggy" days. I can remember him telling us about the first time he saw and tasted popcorn; the Christmas he got an orange for a present, the first automobile he saw, the changes in farm machinery, and the wooden stoves used for cooking and for heating. I remember during one family home evening he explained how they used a dog to draw water by putting it inside a wheel and letting it run. I may not have appreciated his stories at the time, but I look back on them with fondness now and wish that I knew more of them.

Though I am sure Dad is ashamed of this story he told me, I am glad he did. It seems that as a youth he thought it was "big" to ride a horse and smoke a cigar. So, one day while at the local store he got himself a big black cigar. He then went out and got on his horse, lit up, and started to ride home. I remember him saying how he hadn't gone far before he passed some church leader (a Bishop, Stake President, or someone) on the other side of the



road and how stupid he felt at the time. He hadn't smoked much more before he ended up leaning over the edge of the saddle and losing his lunch. The cigar smoke made him really sick. He went home and instead of going into the house, went to the hayloft in the barn where he continued to be sick and eventually fell asleep. That was the last and only time he ever did anything like that. I'm glad Dad told me that story because it gives me hope. If a man as perfect as Dad is now, could have once been a foolish kid, then there may be hope for me.

I may not have shown it at the time, but I appreciate the fact that Dad had us get up early in the morning when I was young so that we could read the Book of Mormon together before breakfast. I hope to be able to do the same with my little family as they grow older.

An event I look back on with fondness about Dad, was a day he spent entirely with me. We got the horses and Dad rode Flax while I rode Peanuts. I was quite young at the time, but I remember we rode up to the home place, up the canyon, over the mountains and back down the other side. That was a special day to me as Dad showed me where he used to cut wood in the winter when the family lived on the farm. He pointed out different plants like Indian Paintbrushes, trees like Quaking Asp, and talked about the way life was when he was growing up.

Dad has a love and concern for us that we can feel. I am grateful for his letters of love and support that he wrote during my mission and since I have been away from home. He loves us so much that we could not keep from loving him. I was always afraid to do anything wrong for fear that if Dad found out, he would be hurt and disappointed in me. And, I didn't want to do that to Dad because I knew he loved me so much. Whenever I did do something wrong or stupid

Dad had a certain look that he would give me. I would feel inside that I'd rather be spanked than have him look at me that way. I felt so bad when I did disappoint him because I loved him so much.

A special event I remember with Dad is the Father's blessing he gave me prior to my mission. It was such a moving, spiritual experience for me. I remember him saying in the blessing that my mother (Bessie) was proud of me for going on a mission and that I would feel her presence during my mission. I found that promise to be true. That blessing was such a comfort to me. I'm glad that Dad was worthy and able to give me such an inspired blessing.

Another special day I remember was after I was married and Anne and I went home for one weekend for a visit. It was winter and for some reason the furnace at the chapel went out. It was too cold for services so church was canceled that morning. I remember that Sabbath because Dad and I sat in the dining room and talked all morning about the gospel. I have always been impressed with Dad's depth of knowledge and wisdom. But that day was very special to me. I figure that day must be what heaven is like - to be with loved ones and to discuss the gospel.

I have always enjoyed going home and sitting in the kitchen and just visiting with the folks. They tell you how the crops are doing, how much rain they have received, and who has been married or who died. Home has always been a place of security and comfort. Dad has helped to give that house a wonderful spirit.

We have always been taught in church how much our Heavenly Father loves us. And for a while that was hard for me to comprehend (I couldn't remember what God was like). But when I think of the love that Dad has for us, this concept becomes much easier



for me to understand and accept. I believe that Dad is perfect in obeying the commandment to love one another as God loves us.

Since becoming a father myself, I can understand more fully what being a father really is. I have had a perfect example of a Dad. I have many rich experiences to remember and treasure. I have often prayed that I can be like Dad. I also hope that my family will feel about me the way I feel about Dad. I love you Dad. Thanks for being my father.