

FAMILY HISTORY – CYRIL AND MARY KEARL
Chapter Three – The Early Years in Paris, Idaho

After his mission was completed dad returned to Round valley. He too felt out of place as a ranch hand and decided that he wanted to go to college. He wasn't very well prepared to attend a University.



Dad when he was at Utah State.

He had only a few years of grade school. He talked to the President of Utah State and was told that it would take seven years to complete his high school and graduate from College. I don't know how he managed to enroll that first year but he did.

He moved to Logan, his mother kept house for him and he started school at Utah State Agricultural College (USAC). He studied at nights and proctored many of those required high school courses.

Only a year or so after he started that first year at Utah State and after a correspondence courtship, mother who was teaching school in Orem, and dad were married.



Mother – about the time she and my Dad were married.

The first year of marriage mother went to Utah State with dad. It was an exciting time in her life. She took a class in Foods, one in Home Construction and Sanitation, and a course in History. The next July Del Mar was born and after that she was fully occupied tending children and raising a family.



Dad at Utah State.

While Dad was in school my two older brothers were born. With a wife and two children and almost no help from his

parents and in those days none from the government. Dad worked part time, went to school and took care of his small family which in those day and in these was no easy task.

It's my understanding that he shared an interest with his brothers in land in Round Valley and that while he was in school he gave up his interest to finish college. He was very active at the USAC participating in many extra-curricular activities. He was editor of the college yearbook (the Buzz) acted in several plays, sang in the Glee Club, and debated.

He graduated in four years with a BS Degree in Agriculture. When he graduated mother said that they were so poor that she didn't have a dress that she could wear to his graduation.



Dad in his cap and gown at graduation from Utah State.

After his graduation he worked for a short time for the Cache County Extension Agent and was in charge of 4-H clubs and then the opportunity to be the County Agent of Bear Lake County was offered to

him, he accepted and they moved to Paris, Idaho.

Bear Lake is an isolated, high (5,000 feet) mountain valley with a short growing season of two to three months. They still joke about Bear Lake's two seasons, winter and the 4th of July.



A view of the Bear Lake Valley.

During the winter months the roads were impassible and the only traffic into or out of the valley was by foot or later by train through Evanston or Montpelier. An Apple or an Orange in the middle of the winter was a real treat.

The main occupation in the valley was farming and ranching. The main crops were hay and grain raised to feed livestock. The cattle grazed in the mountain range land during the summer and were brought down into the valleys in the winter. The weather was unpredictable. It often froze on the fourth of July and sometimes snowed in September. Often hail or snow destroyed the crops.

Paris was the county seat of Bear Lake County and was located about 10 miles north of Bear Lake. At that time,

because of the lack of transportation most little towns like Paris were very prosperous and self sufficient. A spur of the Union Pacific Railroad (now gone) came into the town from Montpelier and went up Paris Canyon to carry out phosphate from a mine there and lumber from mills up the canyon. There were two LDS wards in the city. Today there is only one ward and less than 1,000 people live in Paris. Many of the business that existed then are now gone. People drive to Logan or Salt Lake City to buy things they had to be purchased locally in those days. It's a quiet little town now living on its memories.



Paris from the top of the hill above our house.

I was born on July 20, 1923 in Paris, Idaho. I was the fourth of six children born to Chase and Hazel Loveless Kearl. I was born in an old frame house that we were renting, the Sutton house.

Like most children of that day in remote parts of the west, I was born at home on the kitchen table. My uncle, Dr. Ashley, was the physician in attendance. The nearest hospital was ten miles away in Montpelier, which was an hours drive over dirt roads. (Today there are no Doctors in Paris, Idaho.)



My second grade picture

I remember very little of my first seven years which I spent in Paris, Idaho but I do remember a few choice experiences. I don't recall exact dates so I will report them only as happenings, without dates.



The old Sutton House where I was born. It's long since disappeared.

For my Mother life was difficult with few rewards. Her day was hard endless dirty work. Those first few years she had no electricity, gas, plumbing, or central heating. No refrigerator, no radio, no telephone, no automatic laundry, and no vacuum cleaner. For baths, laundry, and

dishwashing she most often hauled water from an outside well. To heat it we chopped kindling to fire our wood burning stove. Mother boiled laundry in a tub, scrubbed it on a washboard using home made soap until her knuckles were raw, and wrung it out by hand. Ironing was a business of lifting a heavy metal weight heated on the stove top.

She scrubbed floors on hands and knees, beat her rugs with a carpet beater, killed and plucked her own chickens, baked bread and pastries, grew and canned her own vegetables, patched our clothes on a treadle operated sewing machine, darned stockings, made jelly and relishes, rose before the family to start the stove for breakfast and pack our lunches, polished the chimneys of our kerosene lamps, and even found time to tend the geraniums, hollyhocks, nasturtiums and petunias that grew around her house. It's astonishing that she had any energy left after her day's work.

We were children of the great depression but if anyone had told us that we were poor we would have been astounded. There were 12 million unemployed during those years. Poverty is relative and no one had many material things. Rarely did we have any money in our pockets. To eat in a restaurant was unthinkable but we all ate well enough. There was always a bowl of oatmeal at breakfast. We had a big meal Sunday after church but many times during the week we had "Lumpy Dick" for supper. (It was made of milk gravy thickened with lumps of flour.)

Anyone with a car was rich. Ours had ising glass curtains that had to be buttoned onto the frame in bad weather. Two cars in a family was unknown of. It

had a spare tire on the rear and a tool box on the running board. The running board was a step between the front and rear fender that was about 10" wide and was fastened to the side of the body of the car. You stepped on this and then into the car.



Mother and our first car, A Model A Ford.

Cars didn't have starting motors and to start this car you had to crank the engine by hand. If the piston fired at the top of it's stroke it would backfire while you were cranking it, and the crank would be thrown backwards against the forearm with considerable force. Broken arms caused this way were common. My brother, Delmar, once broke his arm when this happened. Most early cars had a vial on top of the radiator which showed if the car was overheating. We usually had to stop and let the car cool off and maybe fill the radiator when climbing the long steep grades over the mountains. Along the road there were occasionally wooden watering troughs which collected water from springs. These were maintained for cattle to drink at and you could fill your radiator from them. Everyone knew exactly where they were located.

We seemed to have a lot of flat tires which we fixed on the spot, or if we couldn't, we put on a spare and fixed the tire when we got home. The rubber in tires seemed to be of a poor quality. Everyone carried two or three spares and used them frequently. If you had a car you had to become a fair mechanic. It was common for car owners to gather together and talk about their problems. A camaraderie was formed and was nicknamed "Gasoline Alley". Jokes about "Gasoline Alley" were popular and a comic strip with that name was in newspapers. Service Stations had tall gas pumps which had glass bottles about 5 feet in the air. The service station attendant would physically pump 1 to 10 gallons, whatever you could afford, into the bottle, then he would put the hose into your tank and you would see the gas drain out of the bottle as it ran into your car's gas tank by gravity. There were no modern motor driven pumps.

Early in my life we moved into the first home that my parents owned, the Jensen house. It was a white frame bungalow with a small front room heated by a wood burning stove. We had a big kitchen with a large black kitchen stove which had a galvanized hot water tank at the end of the stove. This was our only source of hot water. There was always a wood box by it's side which my brother Russ and I had to keep full. The older boys took care of feeding the livestock, milking the cows, and I guess they chopped the wood. I recall carrying it into the house and filling the wood box each night.

To a little boy the winters were something to remember. I recall what to me, at least, was a shoveled path about

two feet wide and so high you couldn't see anything but sky on the way to the garage or barn. We had an inside toilet which was very rare in those days (thank goodness). The home had two bedrooms. Mom and Dad had one and we five boys shared the other. Del and Spence slept in one bed and we three smaller children slept in the other.



The Jensen House - The first house my parents owned.

Paris had wide streets. We had a fair sized front lawn and because people used to trail milk cows to pasture we had a picket fence in front of our house to keep the cattle out of our yard.

Mom always loved flowers and had a flower box in front of our living room window and a small flower bed near our front porch. It was usually planted with nasturtiums and we would butter a piece of bread and make a delicious (?) sandwich of nasturtium leaves. This or a crust of newly baked bread dripping with melted butter, honey, and maybe some sugar and cinnamon sprinkled on top was a real treat.



Ma Bry

The family in those Paris, Idaho years.

We had electricity but lights and a radio were all I recall that it was used for. In back of our home was a garage, a large corral, a big slab barn, and a chicken coop. We always had one or two milk cows, a few sheep, generally a horse just for riding, some chickens, and of course, a dog. Our horse, Queen, we got as a colt. She had some race horse ancestry. She was a faithful and dependable animal but one that "spooked" easily. Often she would shy across the road leaving us sitting in mid air. Delmar and Spencer were always good to take us younger children riding with them. Dad sent to Spokane, Washington for the saddle for her. It was made by one of the west's best saddle makers. He used to say, "Ten dollar horse, and a forty dollar saddle"

I remember one time when Delmar and Spence were playing on the garage roof and Delmar slipped and picked up some big splinters in his rear end from the wooden shingles. I don't suppose that it was funny to Delmar but to a little boy seeing his big brother lay with a poultice (a bandage with a mustard salve intended to draw infection out of the wound) on

his fanny was very impressive.

Mother had "folk" remedies for many of our illnesses. Mustard poultices on our chests were a treatment for colds which were common in the winter.

One of the early purchases for our family was a piano. The old piano box set by the garage for many years and was one of our favorite play places. Once Del and Spence tied a cat up on top of this box. It either jumped or fell off and banged itself. It was an accident, but I recall how badly we all felt and particularly Mom. She was always kind to animals and we took many a sick critter into the house to nurse it back to health. I assume five boys helped develop Mother's patience. She was tolerant, kind and never seemed to be cross or too busy to take care of us, our friends, or our pets.



Ma and my pet chicken.

Much of our food came from the garden or the livestock we raised. Mother canned most of vegetables we ate during the winter months. We also used to cure our own ham and bacon. Dad would have a pig butchered and we'd sit at the kitchen table for several nights rubbing the bacon and hams with a special salt to cure it so it would last for some time. I

recall rubbing those darn hams for hours (it seemed) to get them as fully penetrated with the salt as we thought they would absorb. The finished hams were delicious. In my early years I don't ever remember having canned food purchased at a store in our house.



Del, Bry, and me pushing kittens through a store pipe.

Mother baked all of her own bread and made delicious scones. (Fried bread dough). We churned our own butter. A chore I hated. She would keep our milk on the back porch in a container. We'd skim the cream off the top and after a few days we'd have enough to put in the old wooden churn and churn the butter. It seemed like it took forever to make it into butter and buttermilk. Mom would "fish" the chunks of butter out of the churn, squeeze the buttermilk out with a paddle, salt it a little and we had butter for the table. A by-product of butter making was buttermilk to drink and after a while one acquired a liking for it.



**Spencer, Me, Bryant, Delmer
Four little Kearl Boys.**

Mom also used the butter paddle to spank us if we were in need of a little reminding of something done or left undone. Dad used his belt or his razor strap for this purpose. It was a game in which we tried to make Dad think he was hurting us and he knew just how to crack that strap so it sounded terrifying. Neither of us fooled the other one.



Dad hiking with Spencer and Delmer

I don't recall having an icebox or refrigerator until I was in High School. I remember putting the milk on the back porch and in the morning sometimes we'd find a mouse in it and would then have to feed that milk to the pigs or chickens.

The light cream, "top of the bottle" as it was called, was just fine for breakfast "mush". In those days you didn't buy

prepared cereals. We ate lots of cracked wheat, or rolled oats.

Mother worried about our health and we took a big spoon full of cod liver oil every morning and night. I especially hated the cod liver oil, a nauseating goo tasting of raw liquefied fish. It had the viscosity of axle grease. It did no good to gulp it down quickly, because it coated the lining of mouth and esophagus like a thick layer of glue. It did no good to vomit it up either. "It's good for you and will ward off all those dreadful diseases," Mother said. There were always plenty of dreadful diseases. Scarlet fever, mumps, chickenpox, and whooping cough floated in the air. Cod liver oil was the defence.



Mother, Spence, Del, and Bry up
Bloomington Lake.

In most early pictures of us we were wearing dresses. We hated this but it was easier for Mom to make dresses than shirts and pants. Flour was sold in cotton bags that had printed designs and after she used the flour she made use of the bag. Most often the print was of flowers and much of the clothing children wore when I was a child was made from these empty flour sacks.

We wore clothing handed down from our older brothers much of the time. One

of my suits was made from one of Dad's old suits. Overalls were worn most of the time. A little boy graduated into short pants to wear on Sunday when he was 4 or 5 years old, then knickers, and finally into long pants at 10 or 12. The change over from knickers to long pants was the ritual recognition that a boy had reached adolescence or "the awkward age." The "teenager" like the atomic bomb, was still uninvited. Sometimes when we were in Salt Lake City Dad would take us in "The Pullman Wholesale Tailors" and ask, "Let's see what you have in long pants for my son." Store bought clothes were a sign of affluence and it was a big deal to have such luxuries. Long pants were a milestone in the life of a young man.

Dad always cut our hair and was a pretty fair barber. He allowed no movement from his customers and how I hated that monthly ritual.

SPENCE, DELIA, AND BRY WITH
DAD UPON A HORSE



Dad and our Jersey calf.

We always kept sheep and I remember one very mean old Rambouillet ram. He was a real sore head who had unusually large horns. The barn was on the far side of the corral from our back yard. We had to go through the corral to the barn to

feed the sheep. Spence went out to feed them one night and the ram wouldn't let him back across the corral. He had to call Delmar to the rescue. Delmar was big enough to take a club and whack the ram and scare him away.

Dad would often come home after visiting sheepmen with bum lambs that we children would mother and raise. (Bum lambs were those whose mother had died or whose mothers had rejected them and the sheepmen gave them away because they didn't have time to keep them

alive). We would keep them in a cardboard box by the kitchen stove until they were old enough to take care of themselves. We would heat milk, put it in a bottle and feed the lambs just as you children do with your younger brother and sisters do nowadays. They became such pets that my father had difficulty killing or selling them.



Five little Karl Boys - Bry, Delmar, Russell, Spencer, and Ma.

We had pets around our home most of the time. I recall one time when we found some baby rabbits. They were only three inches long and 3/4 of an inch around.

We fed them with an eye dropper. We would lay them on their backs in our hands and would drop warm milk into their mouths. I guess they lived, I only remember feeding them in the kitchen and don't recall what ever happened to them afterward. Mother was always patient with us.

Behind our house was a pasture and a hill which we called Rocky Hill. There was an irrigation canal at the crest that was one foot deep and three or four feet wide. On summer days we used to swim in this ditch, build slides on it's slick clay banks and run naked through the willow patches that grew along the banks. They were the jungles of our imaginations where we hunted wild animals, built huts and made paths.



Dad - The County Agent.

My father was employed, while we lived in Paris, as the County Agricultural Agent for Bear Lake County. "The County Agent" was an extension of the University of Idaho. His duties included advising farmers on methods to improve productivity, organizing marketing activities, and in many instances acting as a veterinarian. His office was in the country court house. I loved to go visit him. We would play with the office machines and

explore the drawers of the desks. He would take us to see the jail in the basement of that building. I recall once when there were two prisoners "behind bars" and it was frightening.

One of the stories we tell about Dad is "How we got the Kernal Nose and Ears." Long before Penicillin while he was the county's unpaid "vet" he started developing a salve to heal wounds. One day I had the family dog in the car and I slammed the door and cut off his tail. I hurried and got my Dad's experimental salve and rubbed it on the stub of a tail and the dog grew a new one. The cut off tail was laying there on the ground so I thought I'd try it on the tail and it grew a new dog. Well the two dogs were barking so loudly with joy that I couldn't stand the noise and grabbed my ears with my gooey hands and then my nose itched and I scratched it. That's where we got the big nose and the big ears.

One of his successful coop marketing efforts was organizing a Turkey Marketing Coop. They would get all the turkeys ready for market and sell them in one lot to one buyer, hoping to get a better price that way. The Co-op would usually give Dad one or two turkeys to kill for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. It was a messy chore. You had to cut the jugular vein inside the throat through the mouth of the turkey and let it bleed. It was messy, but most impressive. In those days you didn't just go to the store and buy them in a mesh bag!

Most entertainment originated in the community. The church was the most important institution in the lives of everyone in town since most social con-

tact within the community was there. Dinners, plays, variety shows all were held there. The MIA often put on plays for the city and Dad acted in many of them. Many talented people came from these small isolated communities. Talents were developed and a knowledge of literature gained which watching TV doesn't provide. We have lost initiative. Bry was also an actor. I recall going to school early one evening with Bry dressed as Ben Cupid. He had a little white costume trimmed in gold, not too much different from a present day band twirlers costume, and he had a little bow and a quiver full of arrows. How "neat" it was to have a brother in an exciting part.



Dad in a costume for an MIA Drama.

Mother didn't raise any dummies and Bry was exceptionally bright. He could read at five, skipped 3 grades and started at the Univ. of Idaho at the age of 14. The Tribune published a picture of him as a small boy in overalls walking down the main street of Paris engrossed in reading the Salt Lake Tribune newspaper. Local Merchants loved to have him discuss local problems with them.



Bry reading the Salt Lake Tribune when he was only a little guy.

Little things were important. One year for Mother's Day, we, all (except Mom), went down to the store and bought a big mixing bowl for Mom. One mixing bowl from the whole family. My but Mother was pleased.



My sister, Phyllis, with her doll buggy.

I recall the night Phyllis was born. We were all at home and Mother and Dad

sent us over to the neighbors, J. R. Pugmire, to play some games. I don't remember Mother looking like she was about to have a baby. Later, when we went back home we had a cute little baby sister there to greet us.

Our home was heated by a coal burning space heater located in the center of the living room, and by a wood stove in the kitchen. Our family entertainment included putting jig saw puzzles together, playing checkers, playing parlor games and most of all listening to the radio. The radio was the most prominent piece of furniture in our house. On most winter evenings the whole family and the dog would gather around the stove in the living room and listen to the radio. "Amos and Andy" were Dad and Mom's favorites. We hardly ever missed an episode. There was a real closeness in our family that was a result of our dependence on one another.

Houses were not insulated very well and there was no heat in the bedrooms. During the cold winter months the ice cold beds were covered with great piles of home made blankets. At night we hated to go to our bedrooms and crawl into our cold beds. Mother would heat the irons she used for ironing clothes, wrap them in flannel cloths and put them in the bottom of our beds to warm our feet. How we would have liked an electric blanket.

We went on periodic vacations as a family. I remember once when we went to Yellowstone once with both Grandma Keerl and Grandma Loveless and had an exciting time. We spent months organizing, planning and getting ready for the trip. There were lots of bears in Yellowstone.

Most people built boxes to store food and fastened them to the running boards of their cars. I recall seeing a bear rip off the lid of one of these boxes at Old Faithful and making off with the owner's food supply. It was not uncommon to jam 7 or 8 people into a small sedan. Everyone sat on laps all the way. It was uncomfortable but it built strong family ties and pleasant memories.



Mother, Bry, Russ, Phyllis, Del, Me, & Spence

On our way to Yellowstone.

In those days bears were plentiful and friendly in Yellowstone and there were no restrictions on their habitat. Feeding the bears was one of the exciting experiences of a trip to Yellowstone and everyone looked forward to it. I remember going to the dump to watch them come out, 40 or 50 at a time, to eat the garbage that was dumped there. This practice has been discontinued since it was dangerous and bears lost the ability to forage for themselves.



In Yellowstone Park.

Grandma Loveless was petite, quiet and awfully nice. A frail sweet little lady. After they retired from farming she lived in a white frame house in Provo that had an irrigation ditch full of water running in front of her house. Whenever we went for a visit she would pull out a hammer and a bag of black walnuts to keep us busy. Try shelling black walnuts someday if you want an unrewarding job.



Grandmother Loveless and we five Kearl boys.

Grandma Kearl was short, a little heavier, kind of a gabber, full of fun, and had a twinkle in her eyes and actions.



Grandmother Kearl and we children.

In 1930, when I was 7, and in the middle of the depression my father decided that his work in Bear Lake County lacked challenge and opportunity so he resigned and two or three months later accepted the position that Ezra Taft Benson had just given up as County Agent in Franklin County. Ezra was being paid \$2,400/year and asked for \$2,600. The County Commissioners refused to pay him that much but gave Dad that amount when he came there. The County Seat was Preston, Idaho and we moved there.