

HISTORY #8

MERLIN (EASTHAM) AND JAMES KEARL

AND THEIR FAMILY

From Histories written by

Grace (Kearl) Lambourn

Condensed and edited by Cyril Kearl

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Grace said that the first recollection she had of her Mother, as a Mother, was on the cold winter evenings when they sat around the stove in the kitchen listening to the stories of her childhood days in England, her trip across the plains, and her youth in Grantsville.



Merlin when she was about  
13 years old.

They were like fairy stories to them and they never tired of hearing them. Merlin would often hold Chase on her lap. He was subject to bad attacks of the croup and needed a little extra care. It was at these times and in subsequent years that they learned of their mothers early life.

Her father, John Eastham, was a railroad engineer, who had been transferred from Lancaster (where most of the Eastham ancestors were born, lived, and died) to Derbyshire and then to Yorkshire. There Merlin was born in a little village called Masborough, or

Masbro, across the river Don from Rotherham where her father worked. She was the daughter of John and Jane Huntington Eastham, and she spent the first six years of her life there. The big event each day, weather permitting, was a trip across the bridge over the Don River carrying the noon lunch to her father.

She told about the little tobacco shop, which had once been a church, built on the bridge and which recently has been restored to a church, a picture of which is in Kearl family history book.



John Eastham

Merlin went to school and to a dancing school in Masbro and all the children were sent to church. Grandmother had been converted and baptized into the Mormon Church in 1839, but she felt that the children should go to any church rather than to none at all so they attended a local

Protestant church in Masbro.

When Merlin was six years old her father received an offer to run the first engine on the newly built railroad in the West Indies, however he would have to agree to stay there for four years. The salary would be higher than his present one and he promised his wife that if she would consent to let him go, that when he returned he would bring her and the family to Utah and Zion. This had been her dream since the day she was baptized into the church. So it was decided that John should go to the West Indies after the family moved to Leeds, Yorkshire where there was a branch of the church and here they lived during the time that John was away.



Jane (Huntington) Eastham

Jane opened her home to the missionaries and among those who stayed at her home was Joseph F. Smith. He was there for the entire time of his mission and to the day of Grandmother's death she was Mother "Eastham" to him.

When John returned from the Indies, he kept his word and began preparations for the journey to Zion. On April 29, 1865 (26 years after their conversion)

the family sailed the ship "Belle Wood", arriving in New York City after an uneventful voyage, one month to the day from the date of their embarkation.

They disembarked at Castle Gardens, New York. After a few days of rest they travelled by rail and boat to a little place called Wyoming on the banks of the Missouri River. It was a gathering place for the immigrants to prepare for their journey to the west. They left for Utah on July 3rd with about 400 other saints. The two oldest girls of the Easthams had emigrated with their husbands a year previously and settled in Grantsville, Utah. They had written their parents that there was no General Merchandise store in Grantsville, so John decided to become a Merchant. He bought goods and fitted up three wagons for the journey across the plains, this third and strange part of their journey. Everything was so different from anything they had ever experienced, although Merlin said that to the children it was an exciting adventure. They were blessed with good health, especially Jane, who had always been frail, but hadn't one sick moment on the whole trip.

They never saw an Indian the whole time they were on the plains, however, when they were making camp some distance from Fort Laramie, soldiers came out to invite them to camp within the Fort walls as a Danish Camp had been attacked by the Indians on the previous night.

On November 8, 1865 they arrived in Salt Lake City. The girls, Emma and Louisa, with their husbands were in from Grantsville to meet them and take them back to Grantsville where John

and Jane would live for the remainder of their lives.

They built a small store which they owned and operated until Jane died. They also built a nice little home in 1866. It looks much like it did when John and Jane left it - a monument to their industry and foresight.

The life of Merlin and her sisters in Grantsville was simple but interesting. They attended school. The meeting house and dance hall in Grantsville was lighted by candles and each autumn a dance was given. Everyone attended and paid their way with candles. Merlin said that they would dance all night with an intermission for supper. There were some natural springs not too far away where the children used to go swimming in the summer.

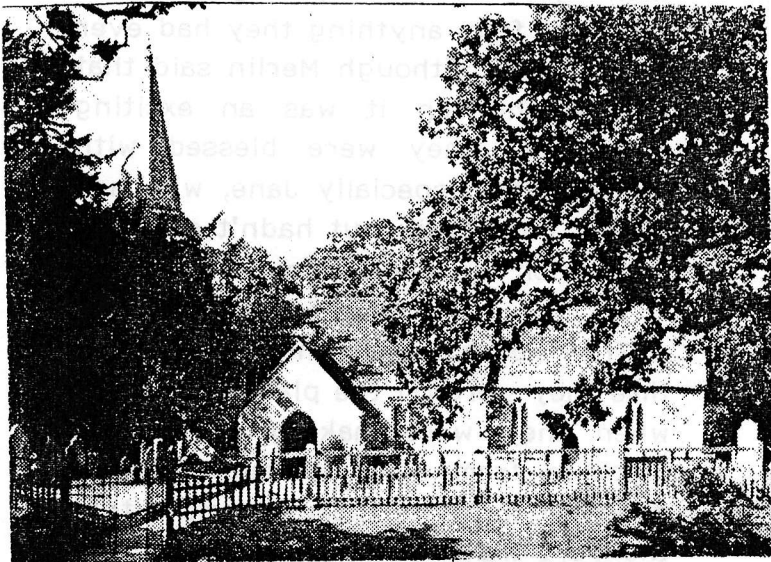
preserve of the New Forest (which is now like one of our National Parks) as a guard and a woodsman, as had his father. John Kearn and Elizabeth Gates Kearn had had nine sons and daughters. Only James and his brother Alfred had joined the church.



James Kearn

When James was 18 he and Alfred, left England and with their families came to Utah in 1854, on the sailing vessel Windmire. They settled in Grantsville, Tooele County. Alfred had married Caroline Taylor but they had no descendants. James worked hard for the established settlers to acquire a place of his own. His pay was usually food for his family or animals to help him build his own herds. He purchased cows for milking and beef cattle. He built a home, planted an orchard, garden, and fields. His life was relatively promising and prosperous.

During part of 1856 and 1857 James served as night guard in Echo Canyon, during the Utah War. In 1861 James went, with some other men, to Florence Nebraska to bring in converts.



The church in Brockenhurst. The village where James was born.

When Merlin was 17 she met James Kearn, a convert to the church, who had come to Utah from Hampshire, England. Very little is known about James's early life. He had worked on the game

According to the history of the Ira Eldredge Company they carried flour back, which they left in specified caches along the road. At Florence they picked up loads of people, carrying as many as fourteen to a wagon. The wagons picked up their passengers in April and reached Utah in September. He made another trip to Florence for the same purpose the following year, 1862.

Merlin and James were married in the endowment house in Salt Lake City on 12 July 1869. James had just been called by Brigham Young to leave Grantsville and the farm he owned and help settle the south end of the Bear Lake Valley and they prepared to leave immediately for that location. Once before James had been called to settle southern Utah but he had avoided it by outfitting some one else to substitute for him. In those days you didn't turn Brigham Young down. Merlin was James's 3rd wife. His two other wives could not move just then for various reasons.

Their wagon was loaded with the essentials needed for the several months of camping which they knew they would have to do before they had a cabin built. They were taking with them milk cows, livestock and an extra team. A friend of James, George Willis, went along to help drive the cows. Merlin said she often walked for a few miles as a way of working out the kinks and getting relief from the rough roads and the trails over which they traveled. They often had to remove rocks and brush in order to drive their wagon through. The trip took them two weeks. They had to stop often to let the livestock rest and graze. I am not exactly sure which route they took but it probably was over mountains from Cache Valley, through canyons and into

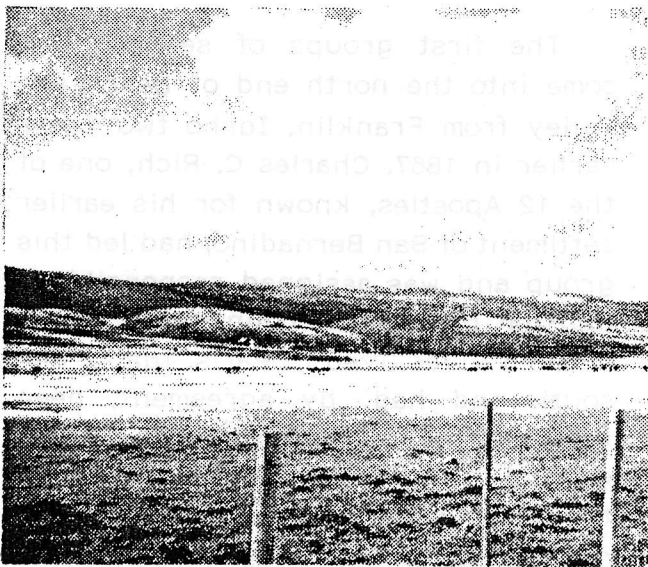
the south end of Bear Lake Valley.

The first groups of settlers had come into the north end of Bear Lake Valley from Franklin, Idaho two years earlier in 1867. Charles C. Rich, one of the 12 Apostles, known for his earlier settlement of San Bernadino, had led this group and was assigned responsibility for that part of the county and with 5 of his 6 wives lived in Paris, Idaho. The south end had, by agreement, been reserved as a hunting and fishing ground for the Shoshone Indians. After the Civil War they had been put on reservations in Wyoming and the south end was now available for settling.



A view of the Bear Lake Valley

When they arrived Merlin and James traveled from St. Charles to Round Valley and liked Round Valley as well as any area that they had seen in the valley so James set up a make shift camp on the west side of the Round Valley and Merlin cooked for him. I imagine that he said, "Merlin, we will settle here", and she probably said "Yes, Jim." She always called him Jim. The land was probably free for the taking for the first settler who got there.



### Round Valley

When they arrived in Round valley, they found virgin meadow grass up to their waists and ready to be cut and stored to feed the cattle in the winter. James went to work immediately at this very important task.



### The Cottonwood Trees where Merlin camped when they arrived

Merlin made shift at housekeeping with a few utensils and a old stove set under some Cottonwood trees camped out in the

open for six weeks that fall and Merlin cooked on that stove. The stove didn't draw and so didn't cook well. Bugs and dust got into her food. It was frustrating. She planted some Horse Radish by her door and those plants still grow there where she once lived. After about a month James had stored enough hay to feed the oxen and cows through the winter. The hay was the winter feed for the stock, although in a mild winter cows and horses could winter out because there was so much good grazing on the hills and in the meadows. I'm sure James cut that hay by hand with a scythe.

Before the cold weather came James, George Willis, Larry Morgan and John Anderson got out some logs and built a shed for the cattle. Merlin moved into the shed and felt like she had a mansion. Then they built her a two room log cabin. They chinked it and Merlins cousin from Evanston came and she help carry mud to daub one room while Jim was gone to Salt Lake for Fanny. It had a dirt floor and a mud roof and they spent their first winter in it.

There were only a few white settlers in the valley those first few years and most of them were in the northern end of the valley where the headquarters of the Bear Lake Stake was situated.

The Bear Lake Valley with its good hunting and fishing had been, for centuries probably, a gathering place and summer camp for various indian tribes. They came in the summer and made camp all around the lake. Fur Trading Rendezvous had been held on the south end of the lake in 1828 and 29. At first the indians were very

resentful of the whites. They were antagonistic when white settlers began building homes. Who could blame them? They tore down the fences that were first built. Pres. Young had advised the settlers to be kind and tolerant and share food and no serious incidents would occur. The white settlers shared their food with them and were kind and each summer, as years went by, fewer and fewer indians returned until finally they ceased coming altogether. They had become a novelty and if a few Indians passed through the town the children gathered and stood with open mouths and wide eyes to watch them. His advice had been good.

When James came back from Grantsville in February he brought two little square windows. The cabin didn't have a door so Merlin used a little square table that the the Presiding Elder, Brother Oldfield had given to her when he move away for this purpose. One night a skunk came to visit them and Jim shot it as it was leaving. The smell never entirely left the door step.

George Willis returned to Salt Lake but he had liked what he had seen in the Bear Lake Valley and came back in the summer of 1870 and settled on land of his own north of Laketown. He married one of the Cheney girls, Delina, and they raised a family that included Elijah. Lije married one of Merlin and James Grand Daughters, Norma.

They had brought a good supply of staple groceries with them, and with fish in abundance and a cow giving milk, they lived very well that first winter. There were a few settlers in Laketown, a town about three miles away, where they attended meeting on Sunday, when the

weather and roads permitted.

Winter passed and with the coming of spring hopes of good crops motivated them to work hard. James planted crops and worked to improve the cabin. The baby, Merlin Edith, that was born in August was healthy and strong. One wonders how it must have seemed for a young girl not yet out of her teens to have had a baby without the benefit of a doctor, among comparative strangers, so far from her loved ones. But this was only a repetition of the experiences of thousands of women in those early days of pioneering.



Merlin

Merlin kept busy cooking, mending and one day she found a wild gooseberry bush. She picked enough berries to fill a jar. She had no sugar to put in them but it was a pleasure to see them sitting on the shelf.

Ogden was the nearest source of supply for most of the things they needed. Roads were few and bad. The mode of travel was by oxen and wagon or horse back. There was no regular mail. It came only when someone arrived in the valley from Salt Lake City, thus

Merlin seldom heard from her folks and this, I think, was her hardest trial.

The Eastham girls had been very close to each other, always full of fun and humor. Merlin was the first one to leave Grantsville. I think how her mother Jane must have worried, not knowing how things were for months at a time.

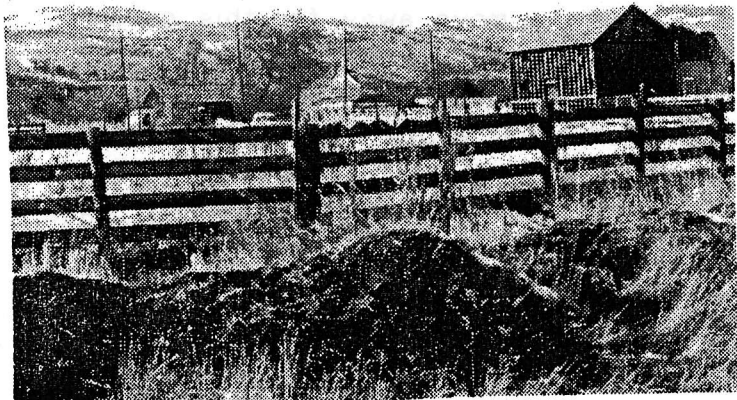
In the summer of 1879 James built a large room on to the original little cabin and this one had a lumber roof and floor. Probably the nearest place to acquire lumber would have been north 40 miles to Montpelier or south 50 miles to Evanston.

The winter of '70 and '71 - four years later - brought many hardships. The grain froze that year. There had been neither the time nor the means to add much to the cabin. When storms were long and violent the mud roof leaked and the chinking fell from the logs and had to be replaced. Merlin told about how two bulls fighting near the cabin hit it with such force she thought it would fall down. She reached through the broken chinking with her scissors and prodded them until they moved away.

The winter of 1872 and '73 were again hard ones. The wheat froze again and could only be used to feed the stock. People were living, for the most part, on fish and milk. Some of them became ill. They were virtually snowed in. No fruit. A meager supply of vegetables. They had a barrel of molasses which James bought every year in the fall. This was used for sweetening. It was finally decided that a few of the men would try to go through the mountains on snowshoes to Logan and bring back what flour they could carry on their backs. They managed

very well going but when they were half way home a terrific blizzard came up which lasted several days. They were afraid they would get lost if they attempted to travel in the blizzard, so they made a camp. Their food ran out and they mixed the flour with water from melted snow to make a stiff dough, which they wrapped around sticks and baked it over the fire. They arrived home safely but with very little flour. Merlin would always laugh when she spoke of this.

She had a wonderful sense of humor. She would always see the funny side of things. In fact people had to make light of bad situations. Situations that would have defeated a less courageous group.



### Meadowville

At the north end of Round Valley was a little settlement called Meadowville where there was a ward. Several families lived there, the Judds, McLeans, Kimballs and others. They had socials and entertainments to which they invited the folks from Round Valley.



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year since Merlin had left her parents and sisters and home in Grantsville to help carve out a new life in new surroundings. Living conditions were improving and also a mail route had been established between Evanston, Wyoming, and Soda Springs, Idaho on the north, so she heard from her people quite regularly and they must have been happy to hear from her and know all was well.

### The "Big Creek"

There was a problem getting there. A wide creek ran from the big springs on the west side of the valley and wound its way several miles through the meadows and finally into Bear Lake. The problem was that there was no bridge over big creek. To solve this the folk from Round Valley would go to the south side of the creek where the folk from Meadowville met them with teams and wagon to transport them the mile or so to Meadowville. They removed their shoes and stockings and waded the creek with the men carrying the children. Merlin said that they had wonderful times with the families of Meadowville. A feeling of brotherhood developed among them and helped them over the rough times.

During those years more families settled in Round Valley. There was the Prices, Hydens, the five Earley brothers (Merlin always called them the Early Boys although all of them were older than she was.) There was also the Smith, Anderson and Murphy families. I mentioned the Kimballs. J. Golden Kimball lived in Meadowville at that time and was a friend of Merlin and James. In fact he wrote at some length in one of his books about Mother Merlin whom he considered a "queen among women."

The years have a way of rushing by and now it was Autumn of the fifth

On September 17th of 1874 John Henry, named for her father John Eastham, was born. They welcomed a son. Merlin was kept busy cooking, washing, and sewing, all done by hand. She knitted all the socks, stockings and mittens. This she did for all of her family until the youngest was quite grown. She could knit without benefit of light and the clicking of her steel needles kept time to the flow of her stories or songs, some of which I'm sure she invented as she went along.



### The Kearl Ranch

Very definite changes were taking place in the valley. More settlers were coming in. Most of them settled in Laketown. More fences were being built and fewer indians were returning to the summer camp grounds by the lake.

The people worked early and late, plowing, planting, harvesting and in winter they worked in the timber getting out logs for building. James had thought for some time that the

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"big springs" that fed the "Big Creek", could be used to run a saw mill. The "Big Creek" was wide enough and deep enough to have been called a river. After watering many acres of meadow land it flowed into Bear Lake. He had acquired land in that area where the main ranch building were - and are - and so he built a saw mill.

In the winter months the men would go into the hills and camp through the week cutting logs to take to the saw mill to be sawed into building materials. This was a blessing to many people who had to go so far to get the lumber which had been shipped in by rail. Now these folks had only to bring in their logs, which were plentiful in the west hills, and have them sawed into lumber at James's saw mill. I don't know exactly what year he built it but it is still standing.

The saw mill that James owned on the "Big Spring" on the west side of the valley.

James was a practical man. In those days there was a good deal of moving about, always of course by team and wagon. Normally it was a two day trip from Cache Valley to the Bear Lake Valley. The roads at best were poor. Sometimes people leaving Cache Valley in late October or November would

become "snowed in". Often weather conditions might be ideal until late afternoon on a day when a foot of snow might be dumped down on you in one night. Even with the absence of communication systems as we know them today, people seemed to have some knowledge of who was going where and when; and it was not unusual for Bishop Ira Nebeker to call father and say, "Jim, John Anderson and his family are snowed in at the head of Blacksmith Fork River. Will you hustle up some men and provisions and go get them." Father would get a couple of other men who had good saddle horses and who along with their horses could "take it."

He would get fifteen or twenty wild horses and drive them forward. These animals, not wanting to climb the steep side hills would follow along the floor of the canyon; and not wanting to go through brush and trees heavily weighted with snow, would follow through the open spaces where obviously lay whatever road there was. The wildest horses would take the lead and when they grew tired they would drop back and the less wild, but fully confident horses would become the leaders. Thus a road was made to the "snowbound" travelers, wherever they were and they were brought out safely.

Merlin never complained about those early days and I am sure there were times when it was discouraging. She spoke, rather, as though they were a grand adventure. She was well and young, the children were healthy and a source of great joy to her and as each day brought its plans and work so each day brought its pleasure. She lived by the proverb that "Women made the best of what was theirs. Small and plain as their lot might be, a merry heart could make it a never ending feast."

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tremendous physical courage. He was stern, and cold, and matter-of-fact, almost austere. Chase said that he never saw him laugh and that he thought he never did. No one laughed in his presence. There was not much to laugh about in those days so it made little difference. Often he seem to have little or no patience or sympathy with an individual or condition. He believed literally that "man must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow." On a cold winter day his sons could wear sweaters, coats and boots; but all of these came off before you started to load hay.

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### Putting up hay

He reasoned that if you couldn't work fast enough, or hard enough in your shirt sleeves you desired to freeze.

When he laid out a job for his children to do, it was almost always once and a half as much as they could ever hope to accomplish in a given time.

If he was home on Sunday he always went to church. He always took his children along unless they made it to a hideout. Chase said he never heard him offer a prayer or preach a sermon or take part in a discussion.

James was a stern man but it may have been a quality the was needed to cope with problems peculiar to those times. The frontier wasn't very far away. It was a hard land with many enemies. His code seemed to be that if troubles stalked you, you did not turn

the other cheek. If you were soft or tolerant of evil it would devour you. He made his contribution to the settlement of the west and it was not an insignificant contribution. Brigham Young was a great colonizer but he never could have accomplished much without the loyalty and assistance of men like James. He possessed a type of kindness peculiar to himself only. He was an enterprising type of individual.

James died when Chase was quite young and since he had other families he spent part of his time with, Chase didn't get really acquainted with him. He was considered a stern man. When Grace was 16 years old and working for G. H. Robinson in his General Mdse Store an old man came in one day and G. H. said, "This is Jim Kearl's daughter." The man was John McLean who had lived in Meadowville when my James lived in Round Valley but had been living in Idaho for years. He came over and took both of her hands and said, "So this is Jim Kearl's daughter." Then he told the following story. In those early days the people in Meadowville depended almost entirely on the wheat crop for their living, while Father had eggs in many baskets. A few cattle, a few sheep, hay and grain, so that if one crop failed he had still had something to support him. When the grain froze the folk in Meadowville invariably went to Father for help and it was always fell to John McLean to be the messenger. Father would say, "I know what you've come for John", then he would take money from his pocket, a twenty dollare gold piece more than likely, and say "Go and buy flour for your people." McLean said that there two or three winters when Father practically kept them from starving.

At one of the Weston reunions Joseph Weston related that in his opinion no one person had contributed as much to the welfar of the people in Laketown than Jim Kearl. "If there was

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as much to the welfar of the people in Laketown than Jim Kearl. "If there was a bridge to be built , a building to erect, a bone to set, a tooth to extract, or some sick person to be wheedler into getting well," Jim Kearl was sent for. I must say "that without him we would have been s sorry lot. James was gradually acquired land and stock and become fairly prosperous.

Chase said that when his father came to visit Merlin or to stay the children made themselves scarce sometimes hiding.

The seasons were short and early frosts still damaged grain and gardens. No fruit was being raised in the Valley as yet, then President John Taylor came through the Bear Lake Valley and blessed the land that the earth should produce and the climate become more mild. From that day on the crops were better, the gardens rarely touched by frost, and fruit trees were planted and successfully raised.

The first meeting house in Laketown was a one room log cabin with a dirt roof and dirt floor and a one room school house was also built. Brother Oldfield was the Presiding Elder in the early days and then in 1887 Laketown a ward was organized in Laketown with Lehi Early as Bishop and later Ira Nebeker was set apart as Bishop and he held this office for many years. Soon after he became bishop a new meeting house was built with a board floor and a shingled roof with lumber from the saw mill donated by James. Laketown was a part of the Bear Lake Stake with Charles C, Rich of Paris, Idaho, on the northern corner of the valley as Stake President.

Comparatively speaking there were quite a number of people in the north end of the Bear Lake Valley. A brass band had been organized with Josiah Eardley as Band Master. President Rich

sent them to the various settlements in the valley to play for there residents.

On his travels, James saw some good land in an area about 5 miles north of Randolph that had a nice stream of water running through it. Land seemed to be available for the taking in those days. There weren't any Land Offices. James built a log house near Otter Creek and in 1879 moved Merlin with her four children. I don't know what people did when they moved, if they could sell and give a title to land or if they simply abandoned it. At any rate the family was settled at Otter Creek and in April of 1879 Robert was born and in January Willis (Will) was born. The family lived during two of those winters in Randolph so that the older children could go to school - that would have been Edith, Jeanette and John. Merlin and her family live at Otter Creek for 8 years.

During those years James carried the mail, originally from Evanston to Soda Springs but later only to Paris. He moved his second wife, Ann, to Paris, Idaho and with Merlin at Otter Creek, his first wife in Round Valley and his second at Paris he had several places he could stay at as he traveled that long distance over the mail route.

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It was lonely at Otter Creek. It was 10 miles to Laketown and 5 miles to Randolph. Merlins nearest neighbor lived a mile away and sometimes there was no one nearer than 3 miles.

In August 1870 the first of the ten children of Merlin and James was born. A daughter named Edith. In the years 1872, 1874, 1876, and 1878 the following children were born, Jeanette, John Henry, George, and Robert. One night in May of 1882 a man, his wife and children who were heading for the north end of the valley were lost and when they got on the wrong road saw the light in Merlin's house and came there seeking help. They were ill and didn't know what their illness was. Merlin never thought of a contagious disease, but shortly one by one all of her children became ill. Willis, who was 3 months old, was the only one who did not get sick. No doctor, no telephone. James brought help and they did what little they could to cure this illness but on May 6, 1882 little Robert and on May 14 Jeannette also passed away. People came from Round Valley, Laketown and Randolph to help but there was little that they could do. There could be no funeral because of the contagious nature of the disease. James, with the help of a man who made caskets, and with others to assist him put the two little ones in homemade caskets and buried them in the Laketown Cemetery while Merlin stayed in Otter Creek with the other ill children. They had learned by that time that the whole territory was suffering from Diphtheria. If there had been good communications others might have been warned and there might have been a quarantine or if the strangers had taken the right road they would have stayed overnight in Laketown and spread the Diphtheria there. But this was the way it happened and that was the way it was to be. (Alan and Cyril, one year when visiting that cemetery, found their gravestones, broken and fallen over.

They put them back in place and repaired the damage.)

Sometime between 1882 and 1887 the family left Otter Creek. James built a log house in the Laketown Ward, and Merlin was able to attend church regularly and have neighbors. There were four other children born to Merlin and James, Morton, Ethel, Chase and Grace. For some reason Merlin spent one more winter in Round Valley. Edith took care of the children in Laketown so that they could attend school. Chase was born in Round Valley on February 10, 1890

Merlin had yet three other tragic events to face in her life. The death of Edith at the birth of her second child, the sudden death of James in 1902, and in 1912 the death of Ethel at the birth of her second child.

Mother had great courage and great ability in many things. She was a fine practical nurse and for many years she attended all the mothers at the births of their children. She nursed the sick, took charge at the time of death, perhaps because of her own tragedies, she had empathy for others and could give more comfort to those bereaved.

About the time Willis was born James bought her a sewing machine and I have heard her say that she almost got more pleasure out of looking at it than sewing although I am sure it was a welcome relief from the tedious hand work. She had had five children before she got that sewing machine, and as she never sewed very well, nor liked to sew, it must have been a task to make clothing for the childrn. Now she could sew in less time and with more satisfaction. Quilting blocks and carpet rags were sewn on that old machine long after the children had grown and were wearing "store bought clothes."

James had sheep and Merlin raised

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the little lambs that were disowned by their mothers. She planted her garden, and loved her children and except for longing at times to see her folks, she was proud and happy. During all these years Merlin never saw her folks. She couldn't make that long trip to Grantsville with her little ones and her mother's poor health kept her from traveling. They heard from each other quite regularly and now looked forward to meeting again. She finally made one trip to Grantsville in 1886 (29 years after leaving for Round Valley) to see her family. It was the last time she saw her mother and she only saw her father once more before he died. To get to Grantsville meant a long trip to Evanston by freight wagon, to Salt Lake City by train and then someone had to come in from Grantsville to meet her. It was not an easy trip to make even in the best of weather and on good roads. However she made the trip and took a baby with her. That was the last time she saw her parents.

When Morton was about one year old he received a bad burn which was to leave a scar. He was safely, Merlin thought, tied in a high chair, but he lurched forward and fell with his cheek on the hot stove. At that time they only had home remedies to take care of burns. It did heal, but when Mort grew older he was very conscious of the scar and it gave him a bit of a complex. Other people didn't notice it, but he could never quite believe that.

About this time Bill, the adventurous one, climbed from the top of the bedstead into the attic and fell and broke his leg. Father set it and it healed but in Bills later years he seemed to suffer arthritis pain in that leg.

Chase had lost an eye while playing with his friends. Today it could have been saved but then he just suffered the loss and all his life he hid that loss

from others.

Sometime in the '80s James decided that the head of Laketown Canyon, where there were springs of nice fresh water and acres of fine grazing, might be a nice place for a family to live in the summer and Mother and the children were willing to go so a cabin was built for them with a little house over one of the springs with shelves all around to hold the milk pans. They moved quite a herd of milk cows there. The children were old enough to milk and mother churned every day, sometimes more than once a day. The butter was packed in salt and kept cool in the spring house until it could be sent to Evanston where it was sold for 15 cents a pound. Evanston was a railroad town and a fine market in those days. Merlin would walk to Laketown every Sunday for Church. The cows had to be milked so all of the family could not go. The boys would have been John - 12, George - 10, and Will - 8 and I imagine Merlin also did her share of the milking. Merlin loved being there in the summers. The place is still called "Kearl Springs" but no one lives there now. Ninety years ago people used to apply "squatters rights" to settle in a place for a time and then, when no longer interested just move on.

An interesting occurrence happened in the second summer they lived there. James had gone to Ogden to purchase some farm equipment and some supplies for the family since the flour was almost gone and there were other supplies that were needed. On the night James was to return Merlin used the last of the flour to make biscuits for their supper. The children had gone to bed and as she was waiting Fathers's return she heard a wagon coming and went out to find that it was not James but two strange men. They were Church Officials who were going down through Bear Lake Valley to visit the Saints. They had driven from Evanston, their horses were

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weary and they were tired and hungry. They told Merlin that they had their own bedding and would make their bed in the wagon box if they could stay and rest their tired horses and get something to eat. She had plenty of milk, cream, butter and molasses, but what would she do for bread. She was a bit shy about telling them that she couldn't give them bread. She told the children about her dilemma and they got out of bed and had a prayer circle, praying that somehow there would be bread.

Merlin went back to the flour barrel and with a clean cloth dusted enough flour to make a pan of biscuits. The men praised the fine meal and ate every biscuit, while Merlin watched and hoped the would leave enough for their breakfast, or that James would come back, however, morning came and no James. She felt that she just couldn't tell the men that they would only have milk for their breakfast, so she prayed again, and while the men were caring for their horses she went once again to the barrel, knowing that she had cleared it of every bit of flour the night before. There in the center of the barrel was a little mound of flour. She said that it looked like it had been packed into a bowl and that the bowl had been turned up-side down to empty it. She made biscuits again and by the time the two men returned to the house the table was set, the biscuits were in the oven and all was right with the world. These grateful travelers said that it was the best meal that they had ever eaten.

James arrived back about noon. His wagon had broken down and he had simply had to wait until daylight to fix it. He brought an abundance of food and bags of candy for the children. Merlin and the children had experienced an answer to prayer that they would never forget.

### The Relief Society Building

After the second summer at "Kearl Springs" Merlin settled down in Laketown and began her church work. She sang in the choir, was counselor in the Primary, taught the first religion class, taught Sunday School, was counselor to three different Relief Society Presidents.

The ladies held their meetings in their homes until they decided to build their own meeting house. They earned the money to pay for it by gleaning the wheat fields, collecting wool off the barbs on fences, making quilts, selling ice cream, and dozens of other small sources of income. James donated the lumber and they built thier meeting house. When larger churches were built with facilities for the Relief Society they gave it to the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers for a Museum and it still stand in Laketown on the City Square.

For some reason, I am not quite sure, Merlin spent the winter of 1889-90 in Round Valley, and it was there that Chase was born. In the spring they moved back to Laketown into a two room log house which sheltered she and her seven children.

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He never charged a penny for entertainments held by the auxiliary organizations. Only when young fellows gave dances did he charge. 50 cents for a couple and he used this to buy Kerosene, fuel and wax for the floors. I don't know when he built this social center but it must have been used for twenty years and long after he had gone on.

### Laketown

Grace was born in Laketown on February 19, 1892 in a log house, the 10th and last of James and Merlins children. All of them were born in log houses, and when one speaks of Abraham Lincoln having been born in a log house they could all say "Me too".

Laketown, by this time was quite a nice little community. 21 years had passed since Merlin and James had made that camp in Round Valley. There was a store, a Post Office and a fairly good school in Laketown now.

Winters were long and cold, the lake always froze over. The snow would be deep and the temperatures could go as low as 30 below. It seemed like there was always an East wind that would blow all winter. Merlin would hang quilts on the east windows of the kitchen, the only room that had a stove. She would put hot rocks in the beds and in the morning everything would be frozen - even the bread. On those nights the poor hungry coyotes would howl and the wild cats came in close, but the chickens were always shut safely away.

Chase and Grace had their chores in the winter months. They had to chop holes in the ice in the nearby canal so that the livestock could drink. When they came home from school they cut wood with a cross cut saw to burn under the kettle in which wheat was cooked for the pigs and chickens. Merlin made them each two pair of mittens from worn out overalls. She kept one pair in the warming oven of the stove so that when their hands got cold they could change the cold mittens for warm ones.

### The Kearn Barn

When James took over the mail route he built a big barn to house 12 teams and knowing that there was no place in the town to hold dances or socials, he laid a hardwood floor in the loft of this barn. He equipped it with a stage, hanging lamps, a huge stove and bunks for the babies. The winter months were made pleasant by the production of plays that were presented in the Kearn Barn.

Grace and Chase would spend their evenings studying school lessons, making trimmings for their Christmas Tree and in the spring home made valentines. All of it by the light of a coal oil lamp. Often Merlin would make molasses candy and tell the stories of her childhood.

The children didn't always have



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shoes. Sometimes for months at a time Merlin would cut cardboard to make inner soles to keep her childrens feet off the ground or snow until she could get the money to buy a new pair. You didn't go into debt for anything. Grace tells about the Christmas morning when she was 12 and stood out side their house crying because her shoes were so shabby. Brother Mort came home from where he had been working, he looked at her and her shoes and got back on his horse and rode away. When he came back he was bringing new shoes from the store.

Summers were really a joy. There were always horses to ride, picnics, the lake to swim in, and on the 4th of July a big celebrations. On Saturday afternoons there were baseball games between Laketown and teams from other communities. The children cheered for the hometown team and screamed insults at the visitors. That night at the dance everyone was the best of friends.

The older boys worked for wages and brought part of their pay to Merlin. Even little Chase now herded sheep and Grace drove whip for the haying and rode the horse down the endless rows of cabbage and potatoes while Will followed behind holding the cultivator. It provided one of the few cash crops to buy shoes, pay taxes and tithing. The men would make many trips to the Wyoming mining camps with produce, eggs and meat. It was usually a 4 day trip with team and wagon. Usually a number of men that would make the trip and come back with coal for the winter.

Threshing grain was a big event. The men in the neighborhood help with the work and the women did the cooking. When the steam thresher took the place of the horse powered machine and you no longer watched the horse going round and round threshing lost much of it charm.

There was only one public building in Laketown and it served as a church, school, and recreation center. The children took apples and parched wheat to munch on when the teacher wasn't looking. School ended with the 8th grade. The church had built Academies to educate young people in their High School years. One in Paris, Logan, Preston, and other cities in Utah. Grace and Chase both spent a couple of years attending the one in Paris - Fielding Academy. The first year that Grace went five girls lived in a log cabin and paid \$5.00 rent, walking a mile each day to the school. Their parent took them food. No one had many clothes and very little money to spend but everyone was poor so it didn't matter much. It was a classless society.

People had ice bins filled with saw dust from the saw mill and the men cut blocks of ice and stored it away in the sawdust in the winter to use to make ice cream and cold drinks in the summer. Mother made root beer and the bottles were stored among the ice. However there were good times - sleigh riding and skating

In August of 1886 Edith died leaving two boys, one 2 years old and one 3 days old.

Every summer we would go to Garden City and pick raspberries on shares. We would be gone a couple of days and come home with two big earthen crocks full of berries. Before Mother started canning them she would always fix us children a big bowl full.

The older boys were away from home much of the time herding sheep. Ethel was in her early teens and interested in all the ward activities, so I remember Mother more in her association with Chase and I. We, of course, had measles, whooping cough, and chicken pox and the summer I was eight I was very ill

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with a ruptured appendix. How Mother must have worried, remembering the ones she had lost. I think of how faithfully she nursed us. How gentle her hands and how happy she was when we could eat a little of her custard or chicken broth.

Merlin had a wonderful sense of humor which helped her over many bad times. She had a fine alto voice and sang in the choir and in all the programs. She was the first Religion class (later to become Seminary) teacher in the Laketown Ward. Wilford Woodruff was president of the church when they started teaching religion classes and a Teachers Certificate was required for each teacher. Merlin was very proud of hers.

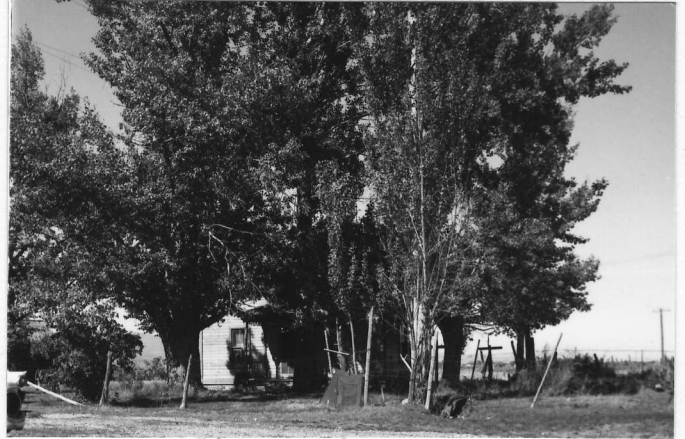
She taught Sunday School for fifteen years, was counselor in the Relief Society for twenty-five years. During that time Merlin was the President of the YLMIA for eight years and then when she was 79 years old the Bishop came and ask her to be President of the Primary. Some of the above offices she held simultaneously.

She was loved by all who knew her, old and young. When her children were married and moved away she opened her house to the young people of the ward.

In 1896 Merlin built a "new house". Grace was four and Chase was six and they were helped the carpenters build the new house. It was referred to by our elders as the new house as opposed to the old log house where mother had lived for 28 years of her married life.

Chase was Grace's playmate and her best friend and at this time they worked with the carpenters. Grace didn't realize that he was also her brother. They were quite enthused with the building business and would pound nails in anything anywhere and move boards from where the carpenters wanted them

to where they wanted them in a twinkling.



The new house

The new house was being built so near to the old one that for refreshments and on a hot afternoon they probably had a nap. It was this respite and the fact that the carpenters needed the money they were making that kept them on the job - or they might have "Folded their tents like Arabs." It was always a wonderful place for children to play on stormy days. Ethel's friends would gather and dance quadrilles while Mother sang the music. The young children would come to Mothers house to have their candy pulls and the older folk just to visit and maybe play a game of "500." Merlins bedroom was downstairs and there was a front room, now called a living room, a big kitchen and a pantry, a back porch and a front porch. In the pantry was a "safe". Today it would be called a cupboard but then it was a "safe". The doors were of tin, with a perforated design made with holes large enough to let the air in and small enough to keep flies out and a safe waiting for the cream to raise for butter and often to clabber for Dutch Cheese. Mothers was always so good because she mixed a bit of rich cream in it before she put it on the table.

Folks did all their own baking in those days and it took a lot of flour for the bread, pies, dumplings, noodles and

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biscuits. The flour bin was built strong and tight and when the flour got low one of the boys would take wheat to the flour mill, a few miles away, and wait while it was ground into flour to fill the bin again. The pantry had one shelf full of all the home medicines; yarrow and senna for tea, a physic, swamp root for kidneys, smelly mustard poultices around ones neck for croup and a mixture of sulphur and molasses used as a spring tonic. The logs from the old house went to the saw mill. Mother lived in this house for 38 years and loved every minute of it and every inch of the house. It seems strange that shortly after her death it burned to the ground.

George and John had gone to help settle Southern Alberta in Canada. They had been away from home much of the time with the sheep and in school at Logan however I know that Mother felt bad when he went. They were such a nice guys to have around, always thoughtful and kind.



Merlin - when she was old

We children were now capable of taking care of ourselves so more and more Mother answered the calls of the sick, sometimes going directly from a birth to a death. Mother was a born nurse and the people in Laketown relied on them for help in time of stress. She had a gift which few people possess of healing and comforting. She was known in the town to everyone as Grandma

Merlin or Aunt Merlin or Sister Merlin.

She had to endure one more tragedy, the death of Ethel who passed away on April 24, 1912 after her second child was born. Father had died suddenly in 1902. When Father died, Will, who had followed his brothers George and John to Canada, came home to run our little 40 acre farm which Grandfather Eastham had bought for Mother.



Chase herding sheep when he was 12. The little guy with a puppy in his arms is him.

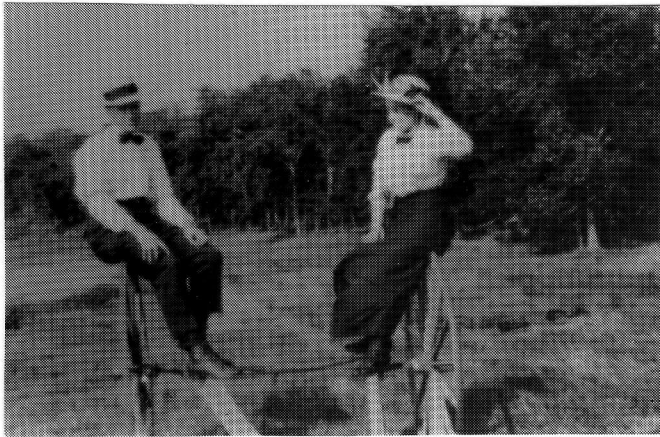
Little Chase, who was 12 years old, went to work in the summer for the Hodges Bros. and with some of his earnings he bought 100 pounds of sugar. Mother had never had 100 pounds of sugar at one time before. I doubt that she had had more than ten.

The years went flying by. Will married Bertha Lamborn and Mort married Carrie Moffat. Chase when he returned from his mission went to college and after his first year married Hazel Loveless.

These were good marriages and now there are fourth generation children of James and Merlin.

John had taken his young wife Elizabeth (Lil) Gibbons to Canada with him. George had married a fine girl he met in Canada, Rose Enders. Mother and Chase made a trip to Canada to see the folks

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Chase when he was on his mission with hazel who would become his wife after he got home.

Grace and George moved to Salt Lake City and Mother came every year to spend a few of the winter months with them but she was always anxious to return to Laketown in the spring until those very last years.

She was often called out of the audience to speak in church. She was a good public speaker, calm and poised and always had something uplifting to talk about. She lived a long and useful life. Once when asked if she would like to be young again she said, "I am satisfied with my life. I am ready nor for the passing."

Merlin died on September 30, 1934 in her home in Laketown, which had been her desire. She was buried in the Laketown Cemetary.



Merlin's grave in the Laketown Cemetary.

She said that there were few things in her life that she would have changed. It had been a good life. She died as she had lived - A true Saint.

Merlin lived in polygomy. She was the third wife. the youngest and the pioneer. She never spoke critically of polygamy but she had had more trials to face than those which affected her own family.