

January 4th 19.32
a sketch of the life of your
mother

Merlin Eastham Keal

Nov 6th 1852

I was born at the little village
of Masbro, near Rotherham, six
miles from Sheffield. My parents
names are John Eastham and
Jane Huntington Eastham. they
were born in Lankershire England.

I was born in yorkshire
England. My father was a
Locomotive Engineer, having
run on one line in England
for 21 years. My parents were
all ready to come to Utah
several years before they did
come in 1865. I never knew the
reason the journey was put off.
we lived at Masbro till I was
seven years old then we moved
to the City of Leeds in Yorkshires.
while there part of the time we
kept Conference house where

The missionaries would make their home while in that part of the mission. I well remember presidents Joseph K. Smith and Ezra T. Benson and others coming to our house whenever they had time, and they sure seemed to enjoy the time spent there. My father, being a very temperate man, when the English Government opened up a railroad in the East Indies, they asked father if he would go. So father told Mother if she would be willing for him to go ^{for four years,} when he came back he would come to Utah with her. She gave her consent. Mother was not a very strong woman but she was willing to make sacrifices for the Gospel sake. So she had her two eldest girls come to Utah in 1862, both were married shortly before they left England to young men in the Church (nephews) James Ratcliffe and Andrew McMillan.

father came home after staying 4 ③
years in India, worked a year on
his old job again, then on the
29th of April 1865 we left
Liverpool on an old sailing
vessel the (Belle Wood) and
there were 600 Saints on
the ship besides the crew, the
Captain said it was the best and
quickest trip he had ever made
across the Atlantic. the Saints
had a merry time coming over
with meetings, concerts, and some
times a little dancing as there
was a company of Saints belonging
to a band. so we had music,
but there was a sorrowful
time too as one old Lady and
one baby died on the ship and
it was a pitifull sight to see them
lowered into the sea. well at
~~last~~ last we landed at Castle
Gardens New York, staid there
a day or two then traveled on
to a little place called Wyoming

seven miles from the city of
Nebraska then a town of houses.
we were put on shore on the bank
of the river with no house to get
into or no place for our goods but
with doors. there was a herd of a
cow of a plain were we all went
into when it rained and I believe
there were thunder storms the
greatest part of the time we stayed
there 9 weeks while the brethren
went to Omaha for wagons and
cattle. father paid a Bao and
wifes way across the sea and a
single man's way so they would
drive our teams across the plains.
we had two wagons, four yoke
of oxen and two cows to start with
the cows were milked in the morning
and the milk put in a little keg
and fastened onto the side of the
wagon and the jelling of the
wagon churned a little out
of butter so we had a little
butter every night.

we traveled with the Church! ⑤
freight train as there weren't enough
independents to make a train of themselves
(about 50 persons on train)
we didn't have any bad luck - after
we got fairly well started on
the plains, but lots of mishaps
at first - such as broken
wagons, tramped and runaway
teams, wild teams and poor
drivers and on thinking about it
now don't know how they got
along as well as they did. I am
sure the Lord must have helped
us out some. There was a large
company of Skondmanians that
year - enough for a train of their
own and it was good for them
as they could understand one
another better than if they had been
mixed with the English speaking
people. We got along fairly well
of course there were many funny
things happened. I remember one
in particular we had to come down
to the flat - ever through a ^{gully} ~~not~~
~~flat~~

just wide enough for the (6)
wagons to get through and then
the oxen had to jump into the river
and get across to the other side.
one wagon upset and a lady
was in the wagon as it lay on
its side but the water was not
very deep but a box of tea spilled
and floated down stream.
The men soon hauled the wagon
lifted up again and we went
on our way rejoicing. I don't
know how many times we forded
the platt, but quite a few.
we didn't see an Indian on the
trip but when we got to fort
Laramie and were going to camp
there for the night we got word
not to stop but keep traveling
all night as the Danish train
had been raided by Indians
and the ^{the night before} wife of one of the
Brethren stolen and he never saw
her again. the fort was up a
~~little~~ ravine ^{quite a distance 3 miles} from the road

the trains had to travel. (7)

I have seen accounts of the raid but they was not anything like what I heard about it would be some that were there when we were about 3 days drive from Great S. L. to one of my Bro in laws James Ratcliffe met us with ox team and wagon and brought us some nice fat fresh beef; father asked the Captain if we could drive ahead of the train so as to make better time. he told us we could as there wasent much chance of seeing or being molested by anyone, we were too close to the City when we got to where the road turned off to climb the big mountain they had to have all the teams to get one wagon to the top and leave the other at the bottom till they could come back for it which they did and it was 12 P.m. that night before we could go

to bed that was now 6th my ⑧
13th birthday and mother made
a rolly polly pudding to celebrate
it. the breakfast after lunch we
arrived in S. L. and there was
a band playing and the music
sounded heavenly to me.

Mother and father stayed in the
city waiting for their freight to
be unloaded they had purchased quite
a lot of merchandise in the states
where it could be bought cheap as
result of the war civil war. they kept
a store after they arrived in Grantville
and had a price list come from
S. L. every two weeks and having
bought cheap, could afford to
sell at S. L. prices which they did.
after a while they sold out as
it was too much for mother as
she never had been well since I
can remember and we were afraid
she would be sick on the ship but
she was the only one among us that
didn't have a sick day

There was not any coal at that time so the school meetings and dances had to be kept warm with wood. There was plenty of Cedar wood handy, and some times I & loads would be brought in ^{one day} by the Bishop asking the men folk to haul it from the Hills. We had no light either but the mothers made candles and they were used for whatever lights were needed after dark both in the homes and meetings places but we had good times anyway. In 1869 my husband was called by President Young to come to the Bear Lake Country to help settle it and in July 12th I was ¹⁸⁶⁹ married to him in the Endowment house ^{by Joseph F. Smith}. In August 29th 1869 we landed in Round Valley and commenced to make a home there and some of the boys are living there yet. The 1st winter was not very bad for us and my husband came from

Grantsville and through the ⁽¹⁰⁾
Hills about the middle of Jan,
but we have seen some pretty
hard times both as to weather
and other things, such as frozen
smoothly wheat ground in a
burr mill so any one can see
what black stubbed bread we had
to eat and not a great deal
of fruit at times and no fruit
in the County either. ^{Some of} the ^{men}
folks at Paris had started a
grass band with Bro Josiah
Eardly as leader.

Apostle Charles E Rich was president
of the Bear Lake Stake which
included ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~land~~ ^{land} from Soda
Springs to Crescent. I hardly
think Star Valley was settled
then but if it was it belonged to the
Bear Lake Stake too and a doctor
told me when they visited the
different associations they had
to have a team take bedding and
quilts and camp out a night or

time but had good times. (11)
Mixing among the people. either the
first winter or second president Rich.
got the base boys to come to Newtown
periodically, and Laketown to
play for us and cheer us up a bit
and we sure appreciated it
and once when president Budget
was in office he came to Laketown
on a preaching tour and brought
a few good singers with him
which was a treat also and one
Viola Pratt ^{Fillet} came up to visit some of
her relatives and she came and
sang for us. one of her pieces was
a hymn, a favorite of president
McKunley's, one she had sung for
him, it was just as I am without
one plea and she sang it wonderfully.
then we had plays and dances
and social parties, if they weren't
very stylish everyone seemed to
enjoy themselves. I ~~know~~ ^{know} the climate
as changed a good deal for the better
ever since president John Taylor came
to visit us and blessed the land for our

benefit, now we raise berries apples ^{pears}
plums and lots of good gardens. I
lived at Otter Creek 8 years 10
miles from Laketown and 5 miles
from Randolph. My nearest neighbor
~~living~~ living a mile away and
sometimes I didnt have one nearer
than 3 miles away. 2 of my children
died there a girl and boy and
were brought to Laketown for
burial. I dont like to think of
those days, much too sad. I have
worked in every association where
women work. my 1st work was in
the primary. Sister Harriet Robinson
was president then Sister Eliza
Johnson 1st Counsellor and I 2nd.
I bought a little Cantata for
the children and at Christmas time
we had the primary children
play it as it was a Christmas
story since then every year they
have something of the kind, was
chosen a teacher in the 1st religion
class organized here at that time

had to have a certificate signed ⁽¹³⁾
by the president of the Church, mine
being signed by president Wilford
Woodruff after that by the
State president Bro Keetch, was
president of Young Ladies for
about 5 years, teacher in relief
society, 2nd and 1st counsellor
in relief society, teacher in Sunday
school for years, Member of the Choir
for years and president of the

Primary for 1 year. I am the
mother of 10 Children 6 boys
and 4 girls their names are
Merlin Edith, Jeanette, John Henry,
George, Robert, Willis, Elsworth,
Morton, Ethel, Jane, Chase and
Grace. Mother had 11 children
9 girls and 2 boys, their names are
1 Emma Jane 2 Evaline 3 Louise
4 Edith 5 Catherine Curtis 6 Marentha
Althera 7 Merlin 8 Leonora 9 Jane
10 John 11 Betsy Ellen. I have 12
grandchildren alive at this writing
and 10 great-grandchildren
all having been baptized into the
Church when old enough

3 grandsons and
18 granddaughters I am ⁽¹⁴⁾
in my eightieth year at
this writing

I remember one Christmas I
made the children some molasses
Candy and they took some to the
Neighbors Children (Bro Wards)
who lived a mile away and
Their children gave mine each
a little tin Coke cutter a piece.
my two girls I mean and that
was all they got and were so
pleased with them so in those
days a very little pleased children.

• Mother