LIFE HISTORY OF HENRY MERWIN THOMPSON

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PROLOGUE

Merwin Thompson lived a full and good life. He was a loyal friend, honest in all his dealings, a caring neighbor and relative, a loving husband, father and grandfather. He wanted his children to be educated and religious and to be solid citizens contributing to their communities. Readers, who are his posterity with his legacy strong in your memories from reading his life history, may you live this vision of his.

BACKGROUND

Merwin was born November 1, 1885, in Scipio, Millard County, Utah. He lived in Scipio for the first nineteen years of his life. He was the first child of Elizabeth Yates and Henry Thompson and was named Henry Merwin Thompson after his father, though he went by Merwin, his preferred name his whole life. His sisters and brothers were Bessie (Hansen), Vera Louise, Leland, Gordon, Sterling, Shelby, Ethel (Taylor), and Norma. Vera died as an infant. Norma lived to be eight years old. Sterling told about wearing dresses as a young child. On this page we have a photo of Merwin in a white dress and a black wide-brimmed hat when he was two or three years old. Dressing little boys like this was evidently a custom in those days.

The family was in Scipio because Merwin's grandfather, Daniel Thompson, brought his family from Fillmore to Round Valley in 1868. While in Fillmore he had served as Second Counselor to Ira Hinckley, President of the Millard Stake.

(Gordon B. Hinckley is his grandson.) This stake president called Daniel to move to Round Valley to be its first "Presiding" Elder. A presiding elder functioned like a bishop in those days. He was the ecclesiastical leader of Round Valley, which was later named Scipio by Brigham Young. Daniel was sustained as bishop March 9, 1869. At that time, there were 100 families living in Scipio.

THE CHILDHOOD YEARS

The following four childhood experiences are in Merwin's own words:

The Dime and a Watermelon: "I was kind of a lazy kid, and my father always provided me with a pony so I spent most of my time riding around the town. I was out early one morning riding around when I went past our neighbors (Sam Roberts) city lot. He motioned me over to talk to him.

"He said, Tell you what I'll do. I'll give you a dime if you help these guys cut this patch of corn.'

"A dime was quite a lot of money then for me. I was eight or nine years old. I didn't have anything else to do, and he said, Oh, you can cut it in an hour.' I knew that was not right, but I piled off my horse, and we began cutting corn with a short hoe...not a harvester, mind you, but a short hoe. I took a big armful, whacked it off, and then took it over and piled it up. The corn had been frozen and the leaves were just as sharp as a razor, pretty near. And there was a lot of old ripe redroot weed that got down your back or in your eyes or any other old place. We had a miserable day I'd say. Instead of getting done in an hour, we worked like the dickens 'til noon. I went home and got my dinner and came back. We worked 'til dark. Sam was there and kept his word. As soon as I cut the last stalk of corn, he gave me a dime.

"I was just ready to get on my pony and go home when here comes an old lady from Oak Creek about thirty miles away peddling watermelon which she did all summer as long as there was anything to peddle. When she came around the corner with that cartload of watermelon, it looked mighty good after that long day I'd had. I went over to talk to her and jewed her down as much as I could [Merwin used the word l'jewed" which meant for him 'Iconvinced'' her to sell it for less. Perhaps the term did not have the offensive impact that it does today]. Finally, I got a pretty good size melon for my dime. So I took the melon over to the ditch bank and sat down for a treat. Of course, Sam and his two sons joined me. Sam, he ate most of it. Us three kids got what he didn't eat. After we got through, I climbed on my pony and went home. All I had to show for that hard, miserable day's work was the good taste of watermelon in my mouth."

The Brickyard: "When I was ten years old, I went to work at a brickyard. That was real hard work, and I put in ten hard hours for 50 cents a day. I helped the man make the dobies, [adobe brick] put them in the kiln, and then went out in the hills to help him haul the wood which we took back to burn [cure] the brick. I rarely worked less than ten hours. When we were working on the kiln, it was ten hours, but when we were out after the wood, we worked 'til we got the load of wood in. That was my first job where I made any money. I remember, for that summer's work, I bought me a saddle to put on my pony."

Summer Job: "The next summer I got a better job. I worked for ten hours for 75 cents. I went and asked father about working. He was running the old co-op store and working on the record books. He didn't pay much attention. When I asked him, he just answered, I guess it won't hurt; one day will do you.' [Henry meant that he didn't think Merwin would last more than one day at this hard job, or maybe he was challenging him this way to drive Merwin to new heights.] That was Wednesday, and I was to go to work Thursday morning. I said to him, Well, I'll stay 'til the end of this week if it kills me. Oh shucks, I may as well work there till time to go to school.' I graduated from the 8th grade in Scipio, I think, about 1901."

Politics: "One of the first things I remember about politics was during the political campaign of 1896. [He was eleven years old.] That was Grover Cleveland [Democrat] against William McKinley [Republican] for President of the United States. The state candidates were in Scipio all afternoon working for votes. In the evening they had a procession; a brass band went on ahead, and then the torchlight carriers went next. [A torch is a stick the size of a broom handle with a ball of fire on top. It's held over the shoulder and is waved back and forth.] It was a very spectacular thing for Scipio to have this torchlight procession. The townspeople followed the torchbearers and politicians up one road and down the other. The town is laid out in city blocks. When they got through, the politicians went to the schoolhouse and held a rally.

"My mother and father were in a group that sang Goodbye, Old Grover, Goodbye'. After the singing, the rally started. My Grandfather Thompson [Daniel] was one of the main speakers. I remember he stood by a table and raised his fist and whacked it down on the table saying, I'm a Republican from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet!' Up to that time I hadn't declared my politics at all. Both of my grandfathers, by the way, held torches in the torchlight parade, and they were both good Republicans. I thought, if Republicanism was good enough for them, why it's good enough for me. So I became a Republican right away and that started a series of bloody noses. There were sometimes several arguments between me and the Democrat kids, I remember that."

Merwin's father loved horses and was a sheep and cattleman. Herding cows and milking them were Merwin's chores from the time he was a small boy. He learned to handle horses by saddling, riding, and caring for them as well as learning to use a workhorse and team. He learned to manage livestock on the range from his father.

His two grandfathers were men he respected. Daniel Thompson was a cattle rancher and farmer who taught Merwin methods of seeding, irrigating, and

leveling land. His maternal grandfather, Thomas Yates, a farmer and grocery merchant, was a kindly Englishman. Both grandfathers were church and community leaders.

His grandmother, Elizabeth Francis Yates, was Millard Stake Relief Society President. One of her responsibilities was to travel to various wards of the stake visiting sisters in need and counseling leaders. His grandfather assigned Merwin to go with his grandmother Yates on such occasions to drive the horse and buggy and to care for them while his grandmother was visiting. Merwin was about fourteen years of age at this time.

The stake took in all of Millard County and south. He mentioned going to Pioche, Nevada, also. This stake visit took ten days each time they went.

Merwin loved living in Scipio where there were many activities for young people to enjoy. The activities most often mentioned were the picnics and weekly dances. The dances were held at the church or at the outside pavilion near the church. Often they went by horse and buggy to Maple Grove in the mountains south of town about eighteen miles for outings and picnics.

Vaudeville shows sometimes came to Scipio from out of state. These were traveling theatrical shows comprising separate acts of different kinds such as song and dance numbers and humorous acts. Merwin and his sister Bessie loved the songs they had heard. After the shows as they were on their way home, she would get him to hum or whistle the tunes they had heard so she could get them in her mind. They would stop at a fence, and she'd pretend to play the piano so she would not forget. Bessie played "by ear"...a blessing in her life, in her home and in the homes of her brothers and sisters and friends. She was the focal point in bringing the family around the piano to sing the old songs of their childhood. This she did as long as she lived. Most of the songs they sang together were Negro spirituals, Scandinavian folk songs, or love songs. Some were silly songs.

During his teen years, Merwin went to the sheep herd in the summer to help his father. Two places he often talked about were Tin Cup in the mountains between Soda Springs, Idaho and Freedom in Star Valley, Wyoming, and Inkom, south of Pocatello. One time he became so homesick that his father put him on the train and sent him home. He missed his family, and dances with his friends, and other fun activities.

Henry Thompson, Merwin's father, was considered the expert cowboy of the town of Scipio because of his ability to throw a rope (lasso) or tame a horse. Anytime a horse got loose and no one could catch it, the directive was, "Go get Hen Thompson, and he'll catch it for you."

To quote Merwin: "When we were young boys (16 and 14), me and my brother Leland drove a herd of six or eight horses from Scipio to McCammon, Idaho. My father needed them to help with the sheep herd. We each rode a horse, one of us leading the herd and the other following the last horse. The lead man held a halter rope of another horse or tied it to his saddle horn. [Most likely each horse had a halter and rope to keep the group tied together.] We actually brought the horses down State Street in Salt Lake City. This was a long journey. McCammon is in Chesterfield County south of Inkom in Marsh Valley." This is approximately four hundred miles from Scipio. How long did it take them? How did they feed and water the horses and control them at night? Merwin did not give any more details. Harold explains that the brothers would get permission from the farmers along the way to corral the horses at night. Then Merwin and Leland would sleep on a haystack.

HENRY MOUNTAIN CATTLE DISASTER

Following is a family story that was often discussed in family gatherings. Daniel Thompson, his brothers, and some of their sons were in the livestock business in Scipio. They grazed their cattle between Scipio and the Henry Mountains for the summer range. Daniel Thompson, Thomas Yates and Will Robins took their cattle for several years back and forth to the Henry Mountains. They came home occasionally, but the cattle stayed. Each year they took the yearlings to the railroad at a town named Thompson near the Colorado border. In the late fall of about 1898, a heavy winter storm brought great snowstorms to the mountains of southern Utah. The men and their horses were lucky to get out. Cattle were marooned and many of them died. This was a catastrophe for the Thompson clan, emotionally and financially. However, some of the cattle survived as evidenced by the money mailed to the family year by year as branded Thompson cattle were found by honest cattlemen of the area. Wells Robins, one of Henry's nephews, said that thousands of cattle were involved in the cattle drives to the Henry Mountains. The government owned the open range and grazing was allowed. A chuck wagon followed the drive with equipment and food so meals could be cooked and served. For several years (not just one) this group of men drove cattle to the Henry Mountains for summer to fall grazing.

After the family moved to Ogden (to be explained later), a Mr. Hatch contacted Henry by mail to inform him that he had found cows and steers with the HT brand on them and wanted to contract to pay $15 a head for each one the Hatch family could get out to market. So for a number of years, Henry was still getting checks from these men for his cattle.

This restitution was the Law of the Range as Henry told his grandson Harold Thompson: "When a cowboy rides the range, he has fastened to his saddle string an iron ring. When he finds a cow with a calf that is not branded, he builds a fire, heats the ring, ropes the calf, ties it securely. Then he takes two sticks through the ring and brands whatever brand matches the mother. This is called a running iron. A cowboy never uses his brand on the calf or a cow with another man's brand on it. This is how the offspring from the cattle left on the Henry Mountains that snowy fall were later found, branded and sold with the proceeds coming back to Henry Thompson who by that time was living in Plain City. Those men were downright honest and made agreements vocally or by mail. Some of these steers would be five or six years old with horns. They were roped and tied to a tree all night to wear them down. In the morning two or three cowboys kept the promise by branding them and sending them to market. The cattle were then driven to the railroad for loading at Thompson Station near the Colorado border and shipped to market at Omaha or Chicago."

Sterling, one of Henry's sons, had more than one experience while trucking cattle in the Hanksville area with men relating an experience of a relative of their own either branding HT calves or seeing a calf with the brand on years after the snowstorm plight.

On May 2, 1899, Henry left for a mission to Scotland for two years. His wife Lizzie managed the Scipio Co-op during this time to support her young family of children. (A co-op was a general store common in small communities. Here farmers contributed their produce, grain, meat, vegetables, etc., to be sold. They shared the profits.) Merwin recalled this as a difficult time for his mother His two grandfathers were very supportive of her and her children. Merwin was 14 years old. He was the oldest child and was given a lot of responsibility to help his mother and brothers and sisters in his father's absence.

When Henry returned from Scotland in September of 1901, Elizabeth left the children with her relatives and traveled by train, probably boarding the train in Juab about 25 miles north of Scipio, to meet her husband in New York City. She had sewn some nice clothes and made pretty hats for this occasion. Some say they attended the World's Fair in Chicago on the way home.

WORKING WITH LIVESTOCK IN IDAHO & UTAH

Henry worked for Walt Lindsay (his sister Annie's husband) in Eden the summer of 1902 and then at his father-in-law's request returned to Scipio to manage Thomas Yates holdings there which included two herds of sheep, two hundred head of cattle, and the biggest farm in Scipio. In 1903 Walt Lindsay requested his help again. Merwin tells of going with his father that year to the

sheep herd in the Chesterfield area of Idaho. Names of other places in Idaho where the sheep were herded include Inkom, Indian Creek, Marsh Valley, Tin Cup (north of Soda Springs going towards Freedom, Wyoming) and Thompson Canyon. The sheep were shipped upon maturity from Pocatello. Henry became Lindsay's sheep foreman. In Merwin's own words:

"I had worked for Grandfather [Yates] while my father was gone on a mission and even before that so I knew pretty well how to handle the farm work. I worked in Scipio all that one summer, and in the fall of 1902, I got the increase in the livestock for my part of the deal. I don't know, I imagine I had about twenty-five calves. I bought some from our neighbors and raised them as well. I also had two or three cows to care for. About this time, father got a chance to go in the sheep business in Idaho with Walt Lindsay, his brother-in-law. I went up and worked one summer [1903] herding sheep around a place called Chesterfield County. Indian Creek was another place west of Inkom there in Marsh Valley. That was the first year after the Indian Reservation had been thrown open. That was part of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation that the government threw open for settlers. So we just went right up on the deal with our four herd of sheep, a winter herd is 2,000 sheep, and started lambing.

"One day when I was 17 years old, I was there all alone, and four husky old-timers came up on their horses with guns strapped to their sides and told me that our sheep were eating off their feed and they weren't going to put up' with it any longer. "One of them said, If you're not off of this place by sun-up in the morning, why the Lord pity you.' "I said, Well, these are not my sheep, so I can't take them off unless I'm told to by the owner, and I know nobody is here to tell me that now. So I'll be right here, and I'll take what you give me.' "Then the man tartly replied, Well, you think about it because if you don't run out of here, I'll tell you, you don't know what will happen to you.'

"Just then, my father rode up over the hill which was quite a relief to me! They told him the story and talked worse to him, I believe, than they had to me. He started to laugh and then told them, Well, I used to be in the cattle business, too. A sheep man came along and ate my feed. I could see if I was going to get along, the only thing I could do was go into the sheep business. Now, you can take my advice, you go in the sheep business, and then you can get some of this feed. Otherwise, you're out of it.' "They told him what they told me, and he just laughed, thought it was the biggest joke, and promised he'd be ready for them, but they never showed up.

"We finished our lambing and went on over into another valley called Chesterfield. It was a nice open canyon there, and I stayed all summer. The name of the canyon was Thompson Canyon. After I shipped the lambs, I went home to Scipio."

Henry joined Jack Spiers in partnership with the sheep herds. Henry was gone from home with his sheep work for two or three months at a time. With each sheep herd he had six or seven dogs, a team of horses to pull the sheep wagon, plus two or three saddle horses. Henry Thompson herded his sheep in several different areas. One was Ant Valley or Ant Flat near Beaver in the South Fork area east and north of Huntsville, Utah. Other locations mentioned by Merwin included Scare Canyon, Blacksmith's Fork and LaPlatta.

Henry Thompson maintained two sheep herds of 1,000 sheep per herd on Hog Up Mountain. This location, is west from Ogden to Tremonton, then to Snowville, south to Park Valley near Lucine and Grouse Creek. One winter Sterling Thompson remembered that there were two sheep herds in the area. Leland, Sterling's brother, and two sheepherders cared for the one herd with the help of dogs. Henry and Sterling and helpers cared for the other herd. Each camp had two herders and one camp tender. Sam English was like a member of the Thompson family and worked for Henry. Ster was the camp tender with the responsibility of cooking on the stove in the sheep wagon. He claimed he was the poorest cook there was. He had to hunt for wood to use the stove. His father kept supplies available for the cook such as eggs, canned milk, flour, dried fruit, canned vegetables, etc. Ster learned to make bread and raisin pie. He remembered his brother Leland eating a whole pie by himself. Ster spent part of the winter in camp. He did not attend school beyond the sixth grade. Gordie stayed all winter with his father in camp 1913-1914. Sterling went home for Christmas. Then he returned to camp and stayed until spring. His father Henry had a great ability with Dutch Oven cooking.

Sterling recalled two bad experiences associated with the sheep herds. Once they were caught in a serious lightning storm, which killed two of the sheepherders. Another experience was the time Sterling tried to poison coyotes and killed the sheep dogs instead.

Norm, Merwin's son, tells of his father's experiences on the winter range with the sheep herd near Kelton, Utah, a town northwest of the Great Salt Lake. The water on a mud flat would seep under the sheep at night. It was so cold that by morning, some of the sheep would be frozen to the ground.

Henry sold his sheep herds and tried his luck at ranching in Mackay, Idaho in 1916 for two years. Then the government built a reservoir on that property and ended the ranching experience. Henry returned to live in and around Weber County close to his family.

SCHOOLING AT LDS BUSINESS COLLEGE

In 1903 Merwin attended the LDS Business College in Salt Lake City. Because his family still lived in Scipio, he lived with his Aunt Louise Robinson, his mother's sister, | and her husband and family. He enjoyed getting better | acquainted with his cousin Harold "Hal" Robinson his peer, who later became a physician and practiced in California. They nourished that kinship through the years. Louise Yates Robinson was called to be the General Relief Society President of the Church. She served from 1928-1937.

These are Merwin's own words about his schooling in Salt Lake City. "My mother had been determined that I was going to make something of myself. She was going | to have me be very religious. She used to take me to everything that went on in the ward of a religious nature. I was a religious lad. I think she thought if she could impress on me the need of going to church and get me in the habit of it that when I got old, I wouldn't change. I remember both my mother and her mother, my grandmother, wanted me to go to a church school. So at the end of summer at the beginning of the school year, I went to Salt Lake City to the old LDS University for one year. It was right across the road east of the Temple where the church buildings are now [1973]. They had three buildings which was a quarter circle, and the intention then was to build two more to make it a half circle there on Main Street. The other two were never built. They gave it up for some cause. The last I investigated, the business college was still there but Barrett Hall and the Brigham Young Memorial were torn down.

"During that school year, I stayed with my Aunt Louie. She was one of the nicest ladies that every lived. She became General President of Relief Society of the Church after that, and she had a nice family, so I had the very choicest environment there and, of course, went to a church Louise Yates Robinson school. One of the Hinckley family from Millard County named Bryant was my geology teacher. [Bryant Hinckley is President Gordon B. Hinkley's father, and Ira, Gordon's grandfather, was principal of the LDS Academy.] Christian Larsen was my English teacher and another professor by the name of Henry Peterson was my math teacher. He was a brother to the Peterson brothers over in Taylor. He was a brilliant man who later became the principal of the school.

1904- FAMILY MOVES TO OGDEN

In 1904, Henry and Elizabeth were convinced by Walt Lindsay, Henry's brother-in-law, to come to Ogden to live. For two years the family lived in a house on 34th Street and Washington Boulevard. They were members of the Ogden First Ward. The church building was located at 32nd Street and Grant Avenue.

Merwin and Henry stayed in Eden some of the time where Henry was manager of the ranch of Lindsay Land & Livestock Company. Walt Lindsay evidently encouraged his Scipio relatives to come and work for him, knowing their situation because of the Henry Mountain disaster. Some of Henry's brothers and nephews also came from Scipio to work on the ranch: his brother Ray; half brothers Earl and James; his nephews Clint, Everett, and Stanley Robins; and their cousins Ira and Clark. Another man to work there was Lorin Hansen, who was a skilled cowboy with a good horse and a good dog. He and Merwin became fast friends. By 1907 Lorin married Merwin's sister, Bessie, so they stayed life-long friends as well.

Being the boss's son, Merwin got up before daylight to round up the horses for the day's activities. He also drove workhorses and mowed and hauled hay.

ATTENDING WEBER ACADEMY

While Merwin was working at the Lindsay Ranch, he was given the job of hauling a load of hay down Ogden Canyon on a wintry day. His description follows: "I was hauling hay down the canyon with a wagon and two horses pulling it. It was the coldest job that ever was in the wintertime. I got pneumonia as a result and nearly died. While I was in this weakened condition, mother worked on me pretty hard about going to school to the Weber Academy. My father talked about it also when he was around, but he wasn't around very much."

Merwin felt that he wanted a job so he could earn some money. As he put it, "I did not want to be broke." His father promised to pay his way to college. "Finally, Father got kind of disgusted and said to me, Now, if you will go with me tomorrow morning and have a conference with Brother McKay and then decide you don't want to go to school, I'll quit, and I won't say anything more about education.' My father knew the difference between an educated and an uneducated man. He wanted me to be educated. David O. McKay, principal of the Weber Academy, had been my father's missionary companion in the Scottish Mission years before. They were good friends.

David O. had been president of the Glasgow Branch, and when he was released, Father took his place. Anyway, Father thought if he got me up to the Academy that it wouldn't take long for Brother McKay to convince me. Since I'd had a year at the LDS School in Salt Lake, I guess I should have been anxious to go to another church school, but I wasn't." Reluctantly, Merwin went with his father to talk to Brother McKay.

"It didn't take very long for Brother McKay to persuade me that I should go to school. When you get around people who know something, it doesn't take long

to realize that you want to be that way, too. I said to him, Well, I'll come here, but there are two subjects that I won't take. I don't want any theology, not any at all, and I think English is a waste of time.'

"I remember exactly what his answer was, Merwin, anyone who comes to our school has one required class and that is theology. So if you come here, you will take theology. As for English, I hope you're not like a neighbor up in Huntsville. He said to me one day, I ain't never had no grammar, but I can talk just as good as them which has."'

Merwin recalls that he thought for a minute and decided, "I don't know whether there's much difference between me and that neighbor." He agreed to register for classes. Brother McKay taught him in four classes: one in theology, "The Life of Christ", and three in English, one being Shakespeare. School records show that for two years he took the following classes: English l,ll, and lll, Theology 1, Typing, and Bookkeeping.

He learned to love English as a subject particularly the study of Shakespeare. He could quote from his favorite plays verbatim right up to the time of his death. He loved David O. McKay as a teacher and was happy that he had gone to the Academy. President McKay often quoted Shakespeare in General Conference to illustrate a point. Merwin also tied Shakespeare's wisdom to a life situation. Perhaps the one quote we heard most often was, "To thine ownself be true and it will follow as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man" (William Shakespeare - Hamlet, Act I Scene lll). Harold remembers Mother and Dad reading Shakespeare together, each taking parts.

Merwin's graduating class was 1906. Many times in his later years he attended Weber College Founder's Day banquets and stood to be honored with his "06" classmates some of whom were W. Arthur Budge, Carl Torgeson, Parley Farrell, and Parley Taylor.

Merwin loved Weber College and supported it over the years. Wouldn't he be pleased today to know that his grandson, Dr. Paul H. Thompson, has served successfully for twelve years as President of Weber State University (September 1990 through September 30, 2002). Paul has received tremendous community and family support during his tenure as Weber State's President.

BUYING AND WORKING THE FARM

Elizabeth convinced Henry that her boys needed to live on a farm so they could have work to do and learn responsibility. Henry was a partner to John Spiers in the sheep business. They came to an agreement on July 22, 1907,

for Henry to trade a herd of sheep (1,000 head) for 130 acres of Spiers' farmland in the southwest part of Plain City. (A summer herd of sheep totals 1,000 with lambs. A winter herd totals 2,000 with no lambs as they have been weaned.) In Merwin's words, "Father bought this farm over here and he didn't want it; he wasn't a farmer. He didn't have any love for farming at all, but mother had all of the boys in there running the streets of Ogden with nothing to do and she didn't like it. So she and I persuaded him to come and look at this farm. So he bought it and turned me loose on it. And, of course, it was understood that all the boys would stay and work together."

When the family moved to Plain City, they lived in a little house north of the Plain City School and later a house across the street from the present Plain City Stake Center (1995). The farm was about two and a half miles south of the center of town and west on the road to Warren.

It was a happy day when the cement block house was finished (about 1910) so the family could move in and live on the farm. Elizabeth was delighted to have a new home. She was also pleased to be close to the farm so her sons could have a cooked meal instead of a packed lunch.

Merwin's schooling had prepared him for a job he had hoped for, that of working in a bank. This he did for a very short time. But he soon came to know what he must do...that was, take over the leadership of managing the farm and supervising his brothers, keeping them busy and involved as his mother had hoped. Farm management would be a full time job, so he put aside his plans of working in a bank. His skills in bookkeeping and accounting helped greatly in farm management. He also served many years as secretary treasurer in two irrigation companies. His skills were apparent and appreciated. His books always balanced to the cent, and he took great pride in this.

Row crop farming was not Henry's choice of daily work. He preferred ranging sheep and cattle. He and Merwin talked it over. Merwin promised to take charge of working the farm, that is, the leveling, plowing, planting and harvesting with the help of his four brothers. Merwin was twenty-two years old when he took on this responsibility in 1907. Both Gordon and Sterling, in later years, told of Merwin teaching them and being their authority figure when they were young boys. Ethel remembered having to ask Merwin for permission to play with friends.

He expressed his feelings about the farm this way: "It was hard work, work I didn't understand. The farming I had done in Scipio was nothing like this, and it was quite a different life, I tell you. But I knew I had to make a go of it. If I failed here, that was the end of it. I wouldn't ever have the courage to make

another start. I've never been away from this old place for very long, ever since I came here. I think I'm right in saying that Simon Legree was a pantywaist of a slave driver compared to what this old farm was for me. I'm not saying it boastfully, but I honestly believe that I worked harder than anybody I know. Of course, that shows that hard work doesn't hurt you. I'd start on a job, and I'd stay with it 'til it was done if it took twelve hours or fifteen hours or sometimes even thirty hours at a stretch. But the old farm has been all right. Anyway it afforded me the greatest opportunity to live the life of Riley now."

Henry was away from home a lot with his sheep business. One of the children told of coming downstairs for breakfast one morning to find a strange, bearded man with the family and asking his mother who he was. It was their father, Henry! At one time, he was away from the family for eleven months.

Henry Thompson owned many sheep, cattle, and beautiful horses. When one of his sons rounded up colts and brought them into the corrals to break them to ride, the horses were snubbed to a fence (tied tightly) and a gunnysack put over their heads so they couldn't see. A saddle was put on them, and they were secured with a hackamore (a special halter with a rawhide nosepiece). Then one of the boys would climb aboard. The boy hung on until it stopped bucking. Then he let it run until it was fatigued and manageable. Elizabeth would put her apron over her head and run to the house. Soon she could be seen peeking out from the curtains at the window to see if anyone got hurt.

COURTSHIP OF MERWIN AND MARTHA

"While at the Academy, I developed a friendship with Norman and Lynn Bingham. They knew I liked to dance so they invited me to Riverdale to one of the dances there. I finally took them up on it and dated Pearl Peek. At that first dance, I met Martha Hansen who was there with William Heslop from Plain City. Her cousins, the Farr girls, were also there as were my sister Bessie and Martha's brother Lorin Hansen [married in 1907 when Bessie was 19 years old].

"Martha was one of the nicest gals I had ever laid eyes on. I really liked her, but I had planned my life pretty well and never mentioned my liking her to her. As far as I was concerned, she was free as a breeze to do as she pleased. She never committed herself to me."

However, he dated her every chance he had, but farming was foremost in his life at that time. He had to make the farm go. He did not have much courting time. Martha lived a long way away in Roy. Merwin would travel to see her in a

horse-drawn buggy. He trained Old Nett, his horse, to travel the road with the reins tied to the dashboard so he could sleep both going and coming home.

Merwin told about having pneumonia before he attended Weber Academy. He had two bouts with Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever also. The first was when he was working the sheep herd with his father in Idaho. He was so ill that he was sent home on the train and put out on the plafform at the Ogden station in the rain. By the time the family got to him, he was delirious. He asked for Martha. She came to the home and sat by his side for hours. That was before they were married. "That cinched it for me", he said. "I decided she really liked me." He was bit by another tick and had the fever again about 1926 and was very ill in his own home.

"On July 24, 1907, 1 made a date to bring Martha to visit her cousin Ivy Bingham at her home in Plain City." [This was the Joseph Bingham home, which figures in Merwin's life four times. First, he visited Ivy with Martha. Second, Merwin and Martha had a room there after they were married; Evelyn was born there. Third, it was the Charles and Lula Telford home, their neighbors and friends as well as Lula being Martha's cousin. Fourth, after Martha and Ruby's deaths, Merwin married Lula and they lived in this house.] "Jimmy Etherington was Ivy's boy friend at the time. He and I convinced the girls to go on the Bamberger [train] to Salt Lake City and on to Saltair [a resort on the south shore of Great Salt Lake] for dancing and the rides. That night after the dance, we stayed at a hotel on First and Main. Of course, there was a girls' room and a boys' room...no Hanky Panky whatever!" The girls' parents had approved of their going.

"We continued dating although I did not have much dating time because of farming, milking cows, hauling sugar beet pulp, etc. In the meantime, Martha met a Mr. Johnson from Ogden who was working in Roy at the canning factory. He had time for courting. Merwin heard about this romance and was worried.

"About October of 1907, I had not seen her for several weeks, so I made a point to have a definite date on a Sunday afternoon. Before I left her home, I found out that she had a guy on the string. She handed me a letter she had written to me. I took it home and read it over and over. I was through! One good thing is that I never saw them together. From then on, I gave up Martha. I gave my word to my father that I was tied to the farm and that I was there for the money.

"Then I had a surprise invitation. Martha invited me to attend her birthday party on June 15, 1908." [She would be twenty-one years old.] "It was held on the big lawn at the Poor Farm." [The Weber County Infirmary was a two-story house where older people who had no other home could live and be

cared for.] Her father Chris Hansen had been hired to be the superintendent. "It was a pretty place. At dark time Roman candles were lighted. The Hansen family had prepared a lovely party. Food was spread on a huge outdoor table. There were fun games and dancing. Many prominent young people from the area were there. I was proud to be invited. I liked the Hansen family. Martha was a popular girl. She was pretty as a picture with her auburn hair, pretty face and nice clothes. Her mother saw to it that her daughters dressed well. They made their own clothes. There was nothing vile about Martha. I hung around after the party was over and helped the family clean up and put things away. I really wanted to find out about Mr. Johnson and Martha because I had heard that they were going to be married. Johnson was out of town and not at the party.

"I talked to Martha alone on the stairs for a long time. She told me that she was engaged and a wedding date had been set. I tried to convince her of my interest in her and hoped she would think things over in my direction. When I left, I was worse off than before. I did not hear from Martha or see her for a long time. I had a heavy heart, was disappointed and discouraged. As a result, I threw all my efforts into farm work. I did not date or go out for recreation.

"Then on Valentine's Day, February 14, 1909, things began to happen. I went to dinner with my friend Elmer Richardson to a restaurant in Ogden. He told me about having a date that night with Maude Bolten, one of Martha's best friends. He called her at the infirmary where she was staying with Martha. After a while, he came back to tell me that someone wanted to talk with me on the phone. I guessed it was Martha and told Elmer I did not want to talk to her because that was all settled and she was not going to make a monkey out of me. Then Elmer said, You go to that phone or I'll pick you up and take you there.' He weighed over 200 pounds, so naturally I did as he said.

"Martha said to me, Please come with Elmer. We don't want them alone around here tonight."' As the evening progressed, he and Martha had time to themselves to talk. She'd had a change of heart for some time pertaining to Mr. Johnson; this night was the opportunity she had been waiting for. "I really think that Elmer had a plan with Maude all along for me to come.

"As we talked, she asked a very surprising question, How would you like to get married in the fall?'

"My answer, You know, I'd like that better than anything!'

"Oh happy day! I saw her as often as possible whenever my farming responsibilities allowed. What a great summer! We were married in the Salt

Lake Temple on October 20, 1909, and I brought her to Plain City to live. I was twenty-four, and she was twenty-two."

They lived with her parents who had moved back to Plain City from Roy. Their home was south of the church on the west side of the street. It had been the home of Martha's paternal grandparents. Later they moved into two rooms of her Uncle Joseph Bingham's home. When Merwin's parents' gray block home was finished, he and Martha lived in the west bedroom until their own home was built in 1916. This house was a red brick home of four rooms west of Merwin's parents' home. A pasture separated the two homes. The home would later have a garden on the east, large shade trees on the west, and a group of barns and sheds to the south beyond a backyard, garage, and driveway and much later a fireplace for family picnics. In the front of the house a porch would be built. The house was situated back from the road with a drainage ditch next to the road, a walkway across the ditch, and a gate into the fenced yard. From the front porch, you could see across the Plain City/Warren road to cultivated fields as far as the eye could see.

BEGINNING THE DAIRY BUSINESS & HIS OWN FARM

Part of Martha's dowry from her father, Chris Hansen, was a Holstein cow. Merwin always gave his father-in-law credit for starting

him in the dairy business. In 1922 he began dairying in earnest when he bought four registered Holstein heifers from Joseph Skeen of Warren. These were daughters of a group of registered cows, which Bishop Gilbert Thatcher selected on a trip to Wisconsin and shipped to Utah. As a result of Bishop Thatcher's contacts and buying ability, many townspeople in Plain City began buying registered dairy stock. Along with Merwin from Plain City were Henry T. Maw and sons, Elvin, Leslie, Abram, and Leonard; the Robson brothers, Alvin and Ralph; William Skeen and Lewellyn Hipwell; from Warren were Joseph Skeen and Frank Stewart. Merwin built up his registered herd gradually until he had a herd of sixty-five cows with heifers and calves "to boot."

In 1929 Merwin built an ultra-modern dairy barn, which housed twenty head of milking cows, arranged in two rows of ten stalls. There were individual automatic drinking cups for each cow which made it possible to confine them in the barn twenty-four hours a day for several months during the cold winter season. He also installed an electric De Laval milking machine, which was unusual for that time. His sons, Harold and Norman, were delighted not to have to milk by hand except to strip the cows briefly after taking off the machine. Their chores before school and in the evenings were to milk and feed the cows.

In 1930 the Plain City Farm Bureau, with Bert Taylor as president, decided to promote the dairy industry by holding an exhibit of the Holstein breed in the town and by inviting those from other parts of the county to join in the plan. They called this special day Black and White Day. The entire town joined in promoting this impressive occasion.

John Maw's store sold black and white Levis with bell-bottoms. The wedge in the bell was white. Almost every man and boy in the town wore a pair of these for the celebration. In addition to the Holstein exhibit and judging, there were horse-pulling contests and a baseball game plus concessions for hot dogs, drinks and candy. At noontime a delightful meal, including the town's famous asparagus, was served in the church dining room to exhibitors, committee members, and any townspeople who cared to attend. Even the children and teachers from the elementary school were invited to participate in the meal.

In 1960 when Merwin was 75 years old, he built another modern milking barn, which was an elevated herringbone type. Of course, this barn had a refrigerated milk tank and low-line milkers, one of the first in the county. He lived to enjoy this barn for another fifteen years.

Merwin was a member of the Board of Directors of the Plain City Farm Bureau and took an active part in initiating the show. A few years later when a special committee was organized to operate the show, he continued to act as director. It was changed several years later to an all-breed dairy cattle show, and Merwin continued to be responsible for the Holstein exhibit. As part of this responsibility he would spend several days each year canvassing northern Utah encouraging Holstein breeders to bring their show herds to Plain City Dairy Days. He proudly filled this position for forty years until he resigned about 1970. He exhibited his finest cattle the first year and for many years thereafter.

Merwin was secretary and treasurer of a dairy association in Plain City. He hauled milk to the skimming station in Farr West. There the cream was skimmed off the milk to be sent to make butter. The skim milk was then returned to the cans brought by the dairyman and picked up to take back to feed the calves and pigs.

Soon after Merwin started farming his own land, his father-in-law, Chris Hansen, and his brother-in-law, Lorin Hansen, came to Plain City to help with a project. They built a woven willow fence out of white willows to contain the pigs Merwin was raising. The fence was about 40 rods long and three feet high. It extended from the canal near the Murald Hodson property and east to Draney's headgate near the road to West Weber.

After the harvest, the pigs were given the run of the farm to clean up grain, hay, sugar beets, etc. Later a wire fence was built in this same location to replace the willow fence.

Merwin and his brothers operated the farm as a partnership until about 1917-18. Merwin tells the history of the farm: "We worked together until we paid for the farm. We had ten years to pay for it. We paid Jack Spiers off in 1915, two years before it was due. When we had started in 1907, all the boys were here, but one by one they decided to leave. Father had helped us divide the property so each of us had some. Father and I and Gordie made a partnership agreement for dividing up our land." Because the land was now paid off, several of the boys decided to each buy some of the land for their own. Merwin continues, "We had a heck of a time deciding which pieces to take and how much to pay. It drug on so finally I said, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll set the price on each piece of land and you can take your pick.'

"So that's what happened, and I got a lot of poor land including the building lot for my house. It was as bare as these floors. I started building a four-room house in 1916. I got twenty acres. Then I bought twelve acres from Gordie and fifteen acres that ran around the river and was pasture. I ended up with 80 acres."

Leland went to World War I and served in the cavalry at Fort Lewis, Washington. When he returned, he had no desire to farm. He married Maude Neal of Plain City on the 28th of December 1911. They had a daughter Cleone. Her parents later divorced. Cleone married Paul Smith on the 4 h of June, 1929. They had three children: Jack Lee Smith, Paul Eugene Smith and Gerald Duane Smith. Their family home was on the north side of 20th Street in the 400 block in Ogden, Utah. Their neighbors across the street were Evelyn and Harry Weenig and family. Evelyn and Cleone were cousins.

Leland spent most of his adult life in the Los Angeles, California area working for Brunswick Bowling and Billiards company. He had a great ability as a salesman. He married Clara Feltz. They had son Lorin who eventually married and lived in Henderson, Nevada until his death in 1997. He had no children. Leland and Clara divorced.

During World War II Leland came to Plain City to find work. He was invited to live in Merwin and Martha's home. He found work at Second Street Depot as a security guard. Uncle Lee was a pleasant, happy person at ease with people. In 1938 he married Florence Jean Dustin. Leland died March 26,1964, in San Leandro, California. He is buried in the Plain City cemetery.

Gordie and Margaret lived in the block house from 1917-19 SO he could be closer to farm work. He traded homes with his mother so she could be nearer to the middle of Plain City. She was Relief Society President. The house in town was an adobe house just north of the school.

In 1919 Gordie moved to Hansen, Idaho, to farm. Both Lyle and Byron were born there, in 1921 and 1923, respectively. During this time Sterling, Shelby, and Merwin took part of Gordie's holdings.

Merwin continues, "Shelby had a house between our parents' home and the corner. When he gave up the farm, Father let him have the house, which was moved over to West Weber. Shelby later injured his leg and back on his job at Amalgamated Sugar Factory. He contracted pneumonia and died at age 29 in 1 931. Glendora, his wife, raised her family of five children in that home and never remarried.

"Ster stayed for a while, but then he got a job as building supervisor and custodian of the Weber County Court House and jail. He and his family moved to Ogden and lived in an apartment in that building for nine years."

In April 1923 Gordie and family returned to Plain City where he rented a house near the center of town not far from the garage where he worked as an auto mechanic after taking a course in California. He worked with Roland Etherington in a garage near the John Maw store. In 1928 Henry transferred his land to Gordie and moved to Ogden to live. Gordie and his family moved into the family home which soon became their home, and he became a full time farmer. He and Merwin worked the farm from then on, sharing equipment and children to help harvest the crops. Sterling's family was also involved.

When there was a problem with irrigating, Gordie would say, "Go get Mer, he'll know what to do." To irrigate a row crop required two people usually a man at one end of the row and a boy at the other. They could watch a series of rows to see that the water completed the rows. Holding the shovel vertically signaled that the water was at the end of the row. Then dams were made so the water would be directed to rows needing water.

Gordie reminded us in his later years that the hrst irrigation water used on the farm came from the Plain City Irrigation Company. One ditch ran south from the Weatherston farm and the other south through the Marriott farm (where Fremont High School is now [1995]). The farm also had water rights from a second irrigation company, the Pioneer Land and Irrigation Company, which brought water to our farm and others on our street and west to the town of Warren. The first pump put on the Weber River by any irrigation company was

south and east of Sterling's place. It was used for four or five years. It was a steam pump fed with coal. Later an electric pump was installed.

Both Gordie and Sterling were water masters, Sterling for Warren Irrigation Company and Gordon for Pioneer Land and Irrigation Company. Merwin was secretary for Pioneer Land and Irrigation Company for about fifty years. Gordon was president for that same company for many years.

Merwin would put in long hours at planting and harvest time, and then he had to milk cows and feed other animals. He prided himself in having good farm buildings and equipment. He loved farming but agonized over the land payments and keeping things in running condition.

He was sensitive to hay and dust and had severe attacks of hay fever and asthma. These were life threatening at times. For example, while Don Buswell was in the service and LauRene was teaching school, she stayed with her father and mother. One day she recalls hearing a loud knock on the back door. She ran to open it and found that her father had crawled from the barn on his hands and knees. He gasped in a barely audible voice, "Get my atomizer." After a few draws on the atomizer, he was able to talk to her. It was a very scary moment in her life. During World War ll he purchased a gas mask from the army surplus store to use when he went into wheat bins to get feed for the cows.

This helped, but they were awkward and hot to wear. Martha would sometimes feed the grain to the cows because Merwin was so allergic to the grain.

MOSQUITOES

Mosquitoes have been a problem to the farmers of the area for years. Merwin gave the following account: "This is one of the worst spots in the world for mosquitoes. The river would overflow in the spring and fill the creeks and sloughs. The larvae hatched in that stagnant water and in the summer the mosquitoes were unbearable. It was terrible. The horses couldn't work early in the morning or late of an evening. To try to get the insects off of them, they would lay down and roll. I can remember Mark Bingham going with me to get a couple of 50-gallon drums of kerosene to spread around the sloughs. We were nearly eaten alive. It was tough going. It didn't do much good because the other neighbors didn't do anything to help the problem in their areas. Finally, the county got generous and brought us used crankcase oil. We spread it around. That helped but still not enough to give much relief. Things began to change when the Mosquito Abatement District was organized and fogging machines were sent out and also dams were made blocking off the sloughs. This was about 1947. It's been like heaven since then, and some people gripe

about the tax that they have to pay to make it happen. Gordie was a charter member of the Mosquito Abatement Board and served on that board most of his life."

Aunt Lula, Martha's cousin who would later become Merwin's third wife, remembers the screen porches being black with mosquitoes after dark. Uncle Charles, Aunt Lula's first husband, would build a fire nearby so the smoke discouraged some of the insects.

Three protective methods against mosquitoes were to wear fine netting over hat and face and tucked into the collar of a shirt or jacket, wear gauntlet gloves to protect hands and arms, and wrap newspaper around legs and arms before putting on shirts and pants. Merwin found it stifling under that protection. When he could stand the heat no longer, he would lift the netting to get a breath of air. Along with it, he would get a mouthful of mosquitoes. He came in night after night after irrigating with mosquito welts itching and irritating him. He would be exhausted. Sometimes he would be so tired and too dirty to go to bed that he'd stretch out on the floor with a sofa pillow under his head.

SHARING THE WORK - THRASHING. PLOWING & IRRIGATING

Gordie, Ster, and Merwin shared work of harvesting crops using their children and neighbors as farmhands. It was hard work, but the children and their cousins look back now with fond memories of the work experiences together hauling hay, picking up "spuds," hoeing beets and topping them. The children would start working on the farm at about ten to twelve years of age. LauRene's early morning job was taking the cows to the pasture. She fondly recalls hearing her father whistling in his farm yard, Uncle Gordie a block away whistling in his farm yard, and Uncle Sterling an additional block away also whistling a tune. She knew she belonged to a happy family.

The pay off for all the hard work was to have family excursions to Como Springs, where the day was spent picnicking, swimming, and roller skating, or to Lagoon to ride the roller coaster and merry-go-round and to play for hours in the fun house. Those were great bonding experiences for three boys of Sterling (Ray, Eldon, Ralph), four boys of Gordie (Earl, Lyle, Byron, Grant), sometimes three daughters of Shelby (Norma, llene, Fae), plus Harold. Norm. and LauRene. They came home happy and exhausted.

Threshing grain was a big seasonal project, usually in August. It took a crew of fifteen or twenty men in the 1920's and 30's to do what is now done by one man and a combine. The hired men used grain binders, which cut and tied stalks in bundles.

Martha's sisters-in-law, Margaret and Frances, shared the responsibility of feeding the thrashers big, delicious meals of meat and potatoes, vegetables, salad, hot rolls, pies and cakes. The children all enjoyed the activity, too. The men lined up at mealtime to wash at the back lawn where benches were placed to hold galvanized wash tubs and soap dishes. Mirrors were hung on the trees, and towels were draped over clotheslines. Jokes were exchanged, teasing persisted, and comradery reigned. There were lots of dishes to wash after feeding the farm hands, but with the women and girls sharing the work, it was also a time of visiting and good humor. Some of the neighbors and extended family members who were hired to help with the harvest were Harvey, Parley, and Frank Rawson; Sam, Ad, and Joe Davis; Irvin, Clifford, and Wendell Judkins; and Walter, Alma, Levi, Angus, Harold, Moroni, and Orval Hansen.

Merwin's first experience with plowing had been in Scipio when as a young boy he used a hand plow pulled by two horses to make furrows. Farming in Plain City taught him other plowing methods. The P & O plow was a two-way plow, which plowed a furrow and then threw the dirt fourteen inches. The ridges were uneven and dead furrows were created. Now the farmer had to use a shovel to open the end of each dead furrow so irrigation water could get to it. This plow had two wheels and a seat, below which was a lever to step on which raised the back end and dumped the dirt. While working all this equipment, the farmer at the same time had to guide the horses with the reins.

A much-improved plowing method involved the Sulky plow. It was powered by a tractor. There were no dead furrows because the plow went down one row lifted at the end and came back the next row with ridges correctly located. Merwin was so elated with this plow that he exclaimed, "It will never get any better that this! The two-way Sulky plow is the greatest plow ever."

To facilitate irrigation, the Fresno scraper was used to level the land before plowing in preparation for planting. It was drawn by three horses. The farmer walked behind the scraper, tied the horses' reins around his waist to free his hands so he could hold on to the long handle of the Johnson bar and release it to dump the dirt at the proper time.

Sometimes a man could be thrown up between the horses as he tried to control the process. Farming could be a dangerous occupation.

Irrigating was a constant work effort during the summer months because of weekly water turns. Merwin and his brothers, sons and nephews labored

shoveling dirt dams, lifting and placing canvas dams, adjusting headgates, and fighting mosquitoes.

FARM EQUIPMENT

A variety of equipment and implements were used on the farm in addition to those mentioned above: spike-toothed harrow, beet and grain drills, beet cultivator which cleaned weeds out and made furrows for irrigation, beet puller, beet harvester, potato planter which placed seeds in the furrows, potato digger which dug up and carried them up a chain to shake out the dirt, potato sorter with a slanted screen which rolled the potatoes into the gunny sacks, hay mower which cut a four and half foot swath, and hay rake. Merwin stored some of this equipment in a lean-to shed; the others were exposed to the weather. In the garage he had a bench with hammers, saws, toolboxes, and other tools for repairing equipment. A farmer had to be somewhat of a mechanic. Uncle Gordie was a real mechanic. Merwin and Gordie helped each other with repairs. They shared some of their equipment also. Rol's Garage in Plain City was a source of help and supplies. John Maw's store also supplied him with needed parts, as did Wilkinson's Farm Service in Ogden. A graveyard for his old useless equipment was down by the canal, hidden out of sight.

Until about 1935 horses pulled all of the equipment. So, horses needed care just as the farm equipment. They were the power that made the equipment work. Merwin did much of his own doctoring of horses. Norm remembers a dependable white horse named Sailor. Any balky or mean horse was turned over to Uncle Ster because he had a way of handling horses. LauRene remembers Old Satan. He was mean. He died of encephalitis, a communicable disease called brain fever, that infected many horses in the county in 1934. The family had riding horses and workhorses. A favorite of the family was Tony. The children would ride him to bring in the cows, to ride with friends to get an ice cream cone, to go to scout meetings, school, and ball games, etc. Tony was the children's means of transportation. He also earned his keep by pulling the potato sorter.

CROP ROTATION

Every spring manure was spread as fertilizer over all the ground. This added nitrogen and organic matter (humus). Some of the soil in the fields was dark and heavy. Merwin called it Gumbo; it had lots of clay and was difficult to manage. There was a high water table on some parts of the farm. Such conditions took particular planning and care to produce desired results. Caring for the soil was important because fertile soil is what makes a farm produce.

The rotation of crops has been used in agriculture as a method of rebuilding the soil. Each crop adds to the soil in certain ways and also depletes it in certain ways. Thus rotating crops yearly kept the soil nutritious and productive. For example, a farmer may start with alfalfa, which is a legume in which the nodules of the roots produce nitrogen, which increases the nutrition of the soil. But a farmer doesn't replace alfalfa with more alfalfa because enzymes in the soil retard sprouting of the new alfalfa seeds. Sugar beets take a lot out of the soil; after a period diseases show up and production goes down. Grain also depletes the soil but will get rid of grasses and weeds.

Following is an eleven-year crop rotation plan used by Merwin. First year, plant potatoes. Second year, plant sugar beets. Third year, plant potatoes. Fourth year, plant sugar beets. Fifth year, plant potatoes. Sixth year, plant barley and new alfalfa seed with it. The barley was a nurse crop for the new alfalfa. The next five years grow alfalfa and harvest hay. Then the process was repeated. To rotate crops was a good policy for the land .

Sugar beets were considered a cash crop, but they took lots of hard manual labor. Thinning them in the spring was a backbreaking job. They needed to be a hoe-width apart. The thinners, Norm and Harold, had a short handled hoe and would get into a rhythm. Then LauRene would hoe the beets with her father and brothers to remove the weeds and double-beets. To do the latter was a pain. "We'd have to get down and pluck them out by hand." Harvesting the beets was not only difficult but timing the harvest according to the weather was also a problem. This was done in October and November. Early frosts or snows could hamper the harvest. The beet harvest included the following: A beet digger machine lifted the beets to the surface; the men and boys using beet knives with picks on the end would spike the sugar beet, top it, and throw it into a pile; another crew or the same crew later in the day would come by with beet forks to load the wagons; a beet fork was a heavy, short-handled fork with tines in the shape of a 15-inch wide claw. The wagons would be driven to the beet dump west of the Thompson farm and north to the Bamberger Railroad extension, half way between Warren and Plain City. The wagons would line up, wagon after wagon, to be weighed before dumping the load. The sugar beets were loaded into gondola cars on the train to be taken to the sugar factory in Wilson Lane, Utah. There were eighteen sugar factories throughout Utah. The last one closed in Garland in 1980. Sugar beets were a prime crop in the state of Utah for that period of time. It was a sad day when the sugar factories closed. They closed because the sugar companies could do better financially in areas where the farms were much larger than in Utah, such as in Idaho, Oregon, and Moses Lake, Washington.

Potatoes were taken to box cars near John Maw's store and stacked seven sacks high, each sack weighing a hundred pounds. These were shipped to

Omaha, St. Louis or Chicago to produce companies. They were also sold on the Salt Lake market by truckers from Plain City. Four truckers were Horace Knight (Wanda's father), Wilmer Maw, Chester England, and Carl Olsen. They would come in the late afternoon, load up, and sell them early the next morning at the Salt Lake Market. They would return to the fields the next afternoon for the another load. During the depression years (1929-32), there came a time when farmers were not paid well for potatoes, something like ten or fifteen cents a hundred-pound sack. Rather than sell them at that price, Merwin used the potato digger to throw the potatoes out of the ground, then the best ones were picked up for use by the family or sold at a low price. Then the cows were turned out on the potato field in the late afternoon to eat potatoes to their hearts content. Similarly, when the sugar beets were harvested and topped, the tops were left on the ground for the cows to eat. This method cleaned up the fields and also provided feed for the cows. Some farmers avoided feeding potatoes or beet tops to animals because of their concern that the animals might bloat or die. If an animal became bloated by eating too much, the farmer would whip out a pocket knife, plunge it through the cow's hide into its stomach to relieve the gas and save the animal's life.

Merwin was a scientific farmer using the knowledge he gained by counseling with Arch Christensen, the Weber County Extension Agent, who would come to the farm and talk with him. This was part of Merwin's farming education. He also went to several summer encampments for five days at Utah Agricultural College in Logan. There he would learn the latest advances in agriculture. Crop rotation strategies were part of his curriculum. He also attended short courses during the winter months held at the county agent's office in the post office building in Ogden.

"Going to the AC was a happy time for us," LauRene recalls. "There were big tents for us on the campus. Many people slept there. Mother attended tailoring classes and learned the latest home economics methods about canning and other things. Because of the dairy on campus, there were free ice cream cones and buttermilk for the kids at any time of the day. At night there were bonfire programs. We had a ball at the playgrounds, swinging and digging in the sand piles. The event was sponsored by the Farm Bureau Association in conjunction with the Agricultural College."

Byron Thompson recalls how Utah State Agricultural College sponsored Field Days every year. Farmers and Dairymen attended. Displays were made of farm products that had been experimented with such as corn, pasture grasses, etc. Edgewood Hall was a farm in Providence, near Logan, designed like an English country estate. It was an impressive place for Field Days. Meals were served and the sessions were well attended. When Field Days were held at Utah State, ice cream, milk and buttermilk were served out of the USU dairy.

The Holstein Freisen Association also sponsored special events. Top dairymen in the state came to learn new methods, production records and suggestions for success.

The state and county farm organizations sponsored programs to help the farmers. Four of these were the Farm Bureau, the Federal Land Bank Association, the Utah Agricultural College Encampment, and on a local level, the Weber Central Diary.

PLACES ON THE FARM

Names were given to special locations on the farm. "Hell's Half Acre," originally a pasture, was the area immediately south of the canal bridge to the west where weeds, brush and trees flourished. It was an eyesore and became a farm machinery cemetery. But, there would be times when Merwin would go there to find parts for things needing repair.

"Sunshine" was next to the canal on the east and south of the property. It was so called because it was enclosed on three sides by a heavy growth of black willows and big cottonwood trees, which stopped the circulation of air. It was a very hot place to work. To prepare this south part of the field for use, Merwin scraped and leveled all one summer. This meant pulling up tree roots and then leveling the ground. It was always a problem working that ground.

"The Grove" was two groups of locust trees planted close together and in rows. One was on the northwest edge of the farm by the road near the canal bridge; the other was on the northwest corner next to Draney's headgate. The county agent advised Merwin to try this crop of locust trees so as to later provide hard wood to make wagon tongues and double trees. (Double trees are parts that tie the harnesses to the wagons.) By the time the trees grew large enough to harvest, however, wagon tongues and double trees were outdated. Byron, Merwin's foreman, did try to use the trees but they were too hard to bend. Tractors had replaced the horses. Nevertheless, the trees eventually provided much needed shade for cows to rest and for lunchtime brown bag meals for the family.

Rye, an unusual crop for Plain City, was grown on this farm in the tradition of farmers in Scipio, Utah. But in "Rye Patch" it became a nuisance weed because it maintained growth for many years in spite of the extermination methods Merwin used. He tried, but whatever he planted there, the rye would come up and take over.

"The Island" was a V-shaped strip of land between the canal and the river. Merwin had purchased this piece from his Hodson neighbors. A bridge was

made to get to it. In the early 1940's the land was cleared of trees and crops were planted.

Merwin had a lot of discouraging crop failures as all farmers do. He referred to himself as a Simon Legree (the brutal master in Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin) and a Scrooge (the grumpy miser in Dickens's Christmas Carol) because of how hard he made everyone work including himself. In fact, he referred to the farm as his Simon Legree taskmaster.

During the summer months in Plain City while Harold and Norm were young boys, a baseball game was played every Saturday afternoon. Seldom were they able to go because of farm work. Harold remembers a time when his father encouraged the boys to go to the game. Harold suggested that their father go with them. His answer, "I can't today. I have declared a war on Burdock weeds for this afternoon." So he went about with a shovel killing Burdock weeds on the ditch banks, fence lines and head-lands. The head-lands were the areas at the end of the rows where the cultivator could not reach the weeds as it turned to go back down another row. Burdock weeds were big weeds with pods of cotton that would blow with the wind and re-seed across the fields. He had to get rid of them. To do so, he had to dig below the ground and go for the roots.

Harold praised his father as a farmer by saying, "He was the best farmer in Plain City and Weber County. He was meticulous, hardworking and dedicated to success." Merwin Thompson was a progressive farmer, willing to learn and try new methods and willing to work harder than anyone he asked to help him. An experience that illustrates this characteristic follows: Mr. Critchfield, the carpenter who built the two-room addition to the house in 1930, stayed in the Thompson home Monday through Friday. At first he began his workday after breakfast at 7 A.M. Then he learned that Merwin had been up working two hours before that. Soon he began working on the house before breakfast. Harold remembers Mr. Critchfield's comment, "I should not work less than the man I work for".

The mortgage on the farm was paid off about 1942. In 1952 Merwin turned the farm over to Harold to manage, particularly the row crops and feed crops. The cows were on a share arrangement with Byron Thompson, Merwin's nephew. They split the milk check. Byron provided the operating expenses for maintaining the farm machinery and the labor. They shared the feed expense for the grain, which was used in the off season to feed the cows. They raised most of the feed for the herd. When Byron joined in the dairy project there were twenty-one cows. Slowly they increased to a fifty-head herd.

Merwin loved the farm. He took great pride in it. He appreciated all that Harold and Byron were doing. He loved Byron like a son.

FATHERHOOD & OTHER INTERESTS

LauRene stated, "Dad was a patient teacher. I loved to have him help me with my schoolwork. He was very good with math and seemed to like being involved with those problems. When he was teaching me how to hoe sugar beets, he worked right along with me showing me how. Then he would take two rows by himself and reach over to get a double beet I had missed. He had a standard of work he wanted to teach me. He loved playing card games like Pit and checkers. He taught well, but he also didn't mind showing us how to win. He liked winning and was not condescending to us.

"Our father was a loving father. He was complimentary and encouraging. He loved to tease and josh. He was very affectionate with our mother, hugging and kissing her in front of us. He loved little children. He was respectful of older people. He was patriotic to our country. He was willing to help others and thoughtful and kind. He had a temper, but it seems when it showed it was due to righteous indignation. We were proud to be the children of Merwin and Martha Thompson and tried to live up to our good name."

In Merwin's words, "I married Martha Hansen and we had four children, of course you know, two daughters and two sons. They have given me 25 grandchildren. And the great grandchildren last count I believe was 51. If I figured it right there's a total of about 80. They are all with us, all but your grandmother and the little girl that came from Suffocks, Sudbury, Massachusetts - a couple of years ago and she's down in the Warren Cemetery. All the rest have strong, healthy bodies and alert minds and it's something that I'm very proud of. I never get tired of bragging about my family and I think anybody would admit that. Anybody would wonder why a guy like me would have a family like this. I'd have to answer that by telling you a little story that happened up here on the square at one of our Dairy Days. It was just after Harold had been put in president of the stake. The men at the ringside were congratulating me on having a son that was capable and religious enough to have that position and I guess I was maybe showing that I was taking too much of the glory. One of my old friends, Leon Gordon from up in Honeyville said, "Hold on there fellows. I want you to know that guy (meaning Harold) had a damn good mother so that's the answer for that."

Merwin loved music. He whistled and hummed his favorite songs wherever he was shaving, doing chores, dressing, riding in the car, working in the field, whatever.

Grandchildren could always tell when he had arrived at their home even if they didn't see him or hear his car; he was whistling. Herbert Isakson, who helped with some of the surveying of the land and who is the father-in-law of granddaughter Marne, could always find Merwin on the farm by listening for his whistle. Indeed, whistling was one of Merwin's trademarks. It was his cheerful way to deal with life.

He loved to do many things. He loved to dance. Sometimes, at home he would take Martha in his arms and swing her around and dance in the kitchen. He loved to read. He kept up with the world scene through reading newspapers, magazines, and broadcasts. He felt strongly that bills should be paid on time, that borrowed items must be returned in good condition, and that one should pay more than his share of any plan. He had the reputation of being a very honest man.

He liked to talk about his beloved country and the political scene. Those discussions often ended with him raising his voice a bit, speaking rapidly and with gusto. A funny story concerned his strong ties to the Republican Party. LauRene heard this story many times growing up. On one occasion about 1934 after the Democrats had taken over the country, Merwin came into Rol Etherington's garage.

Rol said, "Mer, I understand there are only two Republicans left, you and Herbert Hoover." Merwin answered, "Well, I don't know about old Herb, but you can be damn sure I

Merwin had good health, generally. He was robust and strong, ambitious and industrious. He ate nutritious food. Some of his favorites were whole wheat bread, honey, butter (no substitutes), cracked wheat cereal, fish, roast beef, potatoes, and tomatoes. He especially liked halibut, salmon steaks and canned salmon. He had prunes in some form nearly every day of his life, either stewed or juice. He really worked at being a regular fella.' He loved ice cream, pies, cakes, and cookies but insisted on eating them sparingly. In his later years when asked if he would like some dessert he would answer, "I would like some, yes indeed, but I'm not going to have any." He also demonstrated his exercise method for sure weight control - "Push yourself away from the table".

COMMUNITY AND CHURCH JOBS

Merwin was supportive of community projects and was involved in church service. He served on many community committees: Black and White Days, the "17th of March" Homecoming Celebration Committee, and the Dance Committee. He was a member of the Weber County Farm Bureau throughout his farming career, an active member of the Republican Party, and a charter

board member of the Weber Central Dairy later named Cream O' Weber Dairy and then Federated Milk. He and Martha were members of the Old Folks Committee for the Plain City Ward. He was chairman of the finance committee promoting projects to raise money for the new church. He was a charter member of the Plain City Lion's Club and helped renovate the old Episcopal Church two blocks north of the town square to become the clubhouse. He was also a board member of the Aultorest Mortuary.

Other organizations to which he belonged include the following: He served on the board of the National Farm Loan Association acting as Secretary-Treasurer and conducted business from his home from 1916-1937. He became a director when it merged with the Federal Land Bank in 1937. He was a delegate to the National Holstein annual meeting in Brattleboro, Vermont, the same year he was delegate to the 1952 Republican National Convention in Chicago, Illinois. He was a member of the Utah Beet Growers Association and the Holstein-Friesian Association. He was an agent for the Bear River Mutual Insurance Company working out of his home to provide fire insurance for homes in Plain City, Farr West and Warren for about fifty years.

His committee assignments are now described in more detail.

The Dance Committee took charge of preparing the dance hall for all dances held there. The Dance Hall was built about 1920 south of the church house. It was originally an open-air pavilion. Heber J. Grant, the President of the LDS Church, requested the communities to build such buildings so young people "won't have to go to sinful places to dance." (That was Merwin's explanation.) Later the hall was enclosed so winter dances could be held there. Screened openings allowed for air and light in the summer. Wood panels on pulleys covered these openings in the winter. Two big coal-burning, pot-bellied stoves on each end of the hall kept the building fairly warm in the winter. Weekly Saturday night dances were held in the fall and winter and on holidays. There was never a holiday without a dance. Everybody traded dances so a person could have many partners during the evening. The adults danced with young people and children so everyone had a good time. At some time during the dance, group dancing was encouraged, and the band played music for the Virginia reel, the Schottische, Vasuvian, and Polka. As the evening progressed, small children were made comfortable on benches turned to surround the stove at the west end of the hall. The little ones were covered with coats and encouraged to go to sleep until the dance was over. People from other communities came to join the fun.

Merwin served on the Dance Committee for years. The committee's job was to arrange for the dance band, make fires in the coal stoves, sell tickets, check coats, and sprinkle cornmeal on the floors to help make the floor slick enough

for good dancing. The floor was hardwood and built on springs so the floor would be easier to dance on. There was a coat checkroom near the entrance. It was a money-maker at ten cents a coat.

Opposite the entrance was a bandstand with a permanent piano in place. It also had a girls' restroom. Dances were a fun time for all involved and great effort was made to encourage attendance and to provide comfort. "Dad was adamant about dancing for when he was a boy in Scipio, dancing was a part of life", tells LauRene. "Aunt Bessie loved to dance, Uncle Gordie loved to dance. This went down through the generations, too. Harold loved to dance; Evelyn, Norm, and I loved to dance. Dad taught us to dance early on."

As co-chairmen of the Old Folks Committee, Merwin and Martha's responsibilities included arranging rides for widows and widowers to Lorin Farr Park in Ogden for the annual Old Folks Day and helping plan and prepare food for the ward group. They seemed to enjoy being leaders and being involved until Merwin had his 70th birthday.

When asked if he was going as a guest, his answer was, "No, I'm not going. They're not pinning a posy on me!" It was evident he didn't want to admit his age.

Merwin and Martha were co-chairs of the Plain City Homecoming Invitation Committee for about fifteen years. Other members of the committee were Mr. and Mrs. Wheatley Taylor and Mr. and Mrs. Albert Sharp. Updating addresses of former townspeople was part of the assignment and then sending cards to all those people to officially invite them to the celebration. They were very conscientious with this assignment. Of course, the invitations, sometimes more than a hundred, were handwritten for years. Merwin was an excellent penman. He practiced his handwriting like others practice a musical instrument. (He did this right up to his goth year. Martha had distinguished handwriting also. It was neat and precise.)

When fund-raising events were held, especially dinners, Merwin had his children and their spouses attend. He paid for their tickets and gave full loyal support to church and community projects. Loyalty was a prime characteristic of Merwin's, for he was loyal to his family, to his work, and to any organization to which he belonged.

Merwin was Elders Quorum President when his children were small. He sent his boys faithfully to Priesthood meetings. He sometimes missed church meetings because of milking or irrigating responsibilities.

The following is a short article, which was in the Ogden Standard-Examiner

newspaper in October 1984 under the title "50 Years Ago". "Merwin Thompson was elected President of the Plain City Parent-Teacher Association in October 1934. Other

officers were Principal John M. Reese, Vice President and Nellie Maw as Secretary. The retiring officers were Ralph Robson, Elmer Carver and Rulon Jenkins."

WORKING FOR NORM

Merwin went to work for Norm as a bookkeeper in 1950 at the Warren location of the Thompson Lumber & Hardware Company. Later when the business was moved to Wilson Lane, Merwin became a part-time bookkeeper. Often, he would go in the early evening taking Martha with him for company so he could work when the building was quiet and he could do book work without interruption. She would mend, do handwork, and read. Quoting Norm, "When Dad came to work for me as an accountant at the lumberyard, he came as a stranger not knowing the work. Within a week he was the most important guy on the job. He would check over all the sales tickets. When he found a mistake, he would tacffully say, Maybe you can help me with this. I do not have the same answer as you do'. No one was afraid to talk to him about any mistake. He was pleasant to be around. One day when he was in his seventies (about 1955), he decided to completely retire. He was missed.

SOCIAL GROUP

Merwin and Martha met often with a social group in Plain City for card playing, dancing, picnicking, Bunco games, etc. This group gathered after a dance at one of the couples' homes for oyster stew, or wieners and sauerkraut, or cake and homemade ice cream. The people in this group were Cen and Rill Palmer, Os and Mary Richardson, Charles and Lula Telford, Earl and Liz Hadley, Byron and Bernice Carver, Tulley and Ina Poulsen, Fred and Vic Hunt, Frank and Marybelle Stewart, Orson and Myrtle Knight.

If Merwin was so busy with his irrigating or other chores that he and Martha could not go to the dance, they knew that most likely the entire group would come to their house afterward to eat and socialize. LauRene remembers being awakened from sleep in the front bedroom hearing all the "uninvited" guests knocking on the door and coming in to awaken her father and mother to join the fun and serve them Martha's delicious oyster stew. This would happen to anyone missing a dance. This process they called "having a Chivaree". The dictionary dehnes chivaree as "a noisy mock serenade to newly weds" or in other words, "dirty tricks" on the new couple but in regards to the Social Club,

it meant "ready or not", the group of friends is coming to your house to be fed and entertained because you missed the main event.

They had relatives who were also good friends. His cousin Clint Robins and wife Lucy were frequent visitors from Eden, Utah. Occasionally cousins from Scipio found their way to Plain City and were also welcome. Harold Robinson, the cousin Merwin lived with while attending LDS Business College in Salt Lake City, visited from Los Angeles. He was a physician there. Martha's cousin, Norman Bingham and wife Ella, visited from Ogden. Perhaps their admiration for these two cousins explains the choice of names for Harold and Norman.

ESTABLISHING THE MERWINDALE FAMILY TRUST

On March 8, 1965, Merwin met with his children and a lawyer to organize a trust for the family. He had already named his dairy Merwindale when he had established the Farm Certificate of Incorporation on November 22, 1963. He gave each of the children shares in the farm. He worked and planned diligently to create a fair plan assuming that he would die first. Unfortunately, Evelyn died before he did. This caused him concern.

Through the years, they held monthly farm board meetings (spouses included) so he could involve them in the plans for the farm planting, harvest, dairy care and production. First they met in the old home where they were graciously cared for by Martha who served refreshments and made everyone feel comfortable. After Merwin married Aunt Lula, they met in her living room. At these meetings he showed them his bookkeeping and records, asked for advice and explained his point of view on farm management. This was a great way to share with their father and keep in touch with each other. Although Norm was in Alaska much of the time, meetings were held so he could attend as often as possible.

Each of the children had known through the years of their dad's love for the farm and for each of them. LauRene recalls, "It was an impressive experience to sit in those meetings with all of us present with our spouses and everyone being allowed to give suggestions, opinions and votes of confidence. Of course, we had treats after the meeting. Aunt Lula cared for us like a mother hen. How we loved and appreciated her!"

CARING FOR EXTENDED FAMILY

Merwin and Martha provided a home for other family members at different times. Dale Hansen, Martha's nephew, stayed with the family during his junior and senior years at high school. Dale's parents, Earl and Ella Hansen, lived in California. This was during the Great Depression. By working on the farm, Dale

could have a job and attend a good high school. Leland, Merwin's brother, came to work during World War ll at the Defense Depot Ogden as a security guard and stayed in their home. Others who stayed with them were Stanley Thompson (Merwin's cousin) and Robert Pratt. It was a family thing to do.

Merwin was a dutiful and caring son to his parents. When they became unable to care for themselves, they came to Merwin's home to live. After his mother died in 1938, his father stayed on. Other members of the family took their turns having Henry in their homes. He died at Sterling's home in 1941.

After Shelby's death, 18 December 1928, Merwin gave great care to Shelby's wife, Glendora (lovingly called Aunt Glen), and to her five children throughout the years that followed. Ster and Gordie were caring and helpful, also. The three brothers provided hundred-pound sacks of potatoes, other produce, and meat. They hired "Glen" and her children to help on the farm and included them in family get-togethers. Uncle Gordie, undoubtedly, saw to it that her car worked well.

Grandchildren were always welcome in Merwin and Martha's home. Evelyn's children often came to stay a few days or a week. As they became teenagers, they came to help Grandpa on the farm. Jay Weenig stayed a summer and worked at Norm's lumber company. Harold's boys came for a day or overnight to help as needed in the dairy and on the farm. Paul (Harold's oldest) and Darrell (Gordie's son) were employed at the milking parlor. They could tell some of their experiences with animals, broken bones and harrowing accidents. The granddaughters liked to come to visit and play house with Grandma Thompson. As they grew older, she had them come to do housework for her. Every grandchild will remember the homemade whole wheat bread that Grandma was famous for as well as her pies, cookies, and cinnamon rolls.

50th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY & FAMILY REUNIONS

In 1959 Martha and Merwin celebrated their Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary at the Plain City church house. Before the guests arrived, photos were taken of the immediate family and all the grandchildren. Of the twenty-five grandchildren, only three were missing - Max Weenig and Paul Thompson who were on missions to Texas and England, respectively; and Blair Buswell who was with a babysitter. Although he was in attendance, Vearl, age 5, chose not to be in the photograph with the other grandchildren.

Merwin and Martha greeted approximately five hundred guests. A program entertained the guests. Paul and Jeannine Thompson sang a duet that Nelson Eddy and Jeannette MacDonald made famous, "Springtime". Paul's voice was recorded because he was in England on a mission at the time. Nellie Neal, a

close family friend, researched details of their married life and then recited it poetically as part of the program (The poem is included in the Appendix.) Other program numbers included a vocal solo by Jay Weenig entitled "Oh Promise Me," a favorite romantic song of theirs; a reading by Ann Thompson entitled "The Dance"; and a piano solo by Marne Buswell called "Meditation," one of Merwin's favorites.

After the program Merwin and Martha danced together and invited first family members then the guests to join in the dancing. It was a gala evening.

Family reunions were cherished events for Merwin and Martha over the years. Merwin's brothers and sisters set aside time for family reunions. This required planning ahead because Bessie and Leland lived in California and Ethel in Oregon.

In 1952 a two-day reunion was held in the summer in Scipio, Utah, the town where Merwin and his siblings were born. All of them came - so did many of their children with their spouses, grandchildren plus spouses, and some of the townspeople who were relatives. Accommodations were arranged at the old-fashioned Antler Hotel and a small motel nearby.

One major event of this reunion was a program held in the recreation hall at the church. Bessie played the piano in her special way while the audience sang the old songs: romantic, comical, ethnic, all the family favorites. A fashion show sponsored by Wanda Hansen Goodfellow with the help of her sisters and brothers-in-law commanded rapt attention of all present. The vintage costumes were of the late 1800's and early 1900's. The women wore picture hats, long ornate dresses, shoes (mid-calf, laced-up, pointed-toed), and beaded handbags. The men wore flat top straw hats, suspenders on their pants, spats over their shoes, bow ties and flashy sport coats. Wanda and her husband Udell belonged to an antique car club so were able to get the costumes. What a fashion show- particularly for Merwin and his brothers and sisters who remembered well these fashions. After the program good food was served. Dancing was the activity for the evening with lots of visiting in between. A trip to Fillmore the next day an hour away by car allowed everyone to observe family and Utah history by viewing artifacts and memorabilia at the museum there. Merwin was the organizer of the Henry Thompson reunions held for twenty-five years at the North Ogden Park on the twenty-fourth of July. He made an effort to attend family reunions held in Richmond, Salt Lake City. and Provo for the Thompson and Yates families.

A memorable reunion for the Henry Thompson family was held in 1974 at Maple Grove, eighteen miles south of Scipio. Campers and tents provided housing. Picnic tables and benches made mealtime and visiting time easy.

Games and contests kept everyone involved along with singing and entertainment. Henry Thompson's children desired to return to their childhood locations. Wells Robins, a cousin of Merwin's came on invitation to tell about the cattle catastrophe in the late 1800's and other stories of Scipio and family memories. This was more of a discussion than a lecture. Merwin was 88 years old and enjoyed the reunion as much as anyone. Norm had rented a motor home for his father's comfort.

TRAVELS

After Merwin turned the farm over to Harold to manage and the cows to Byron to manage in 1950, he and Martha began traveling a bit. For years, farming had kept them from doing much traveling. During many of those farming years, he had gone by train annually to Berkeley, California, for Federal Land Bank meetings. On one such trip he met a man whom he came to admire very much, a Mr. Mathis from Arizona who was also a farmer and thus rarely had opportunity or time to travel. Everyone was grumbling about the heat of crossing the Nevada desert by train, but Mr. Mathis sat by the window and with a very positive attitude told those around him about the wonders of the desert, the animals, the plants, the beauty. Merwin was very impressed and knew this was a man and an attitude he wanted to emulate.

Though farming bound him to duties at home, Merwin insisted that Martha go to California with relatives who had been visiting in Utah. Evelyn and LauRene would take care of the meals and housekeeping chores so their mother could have a vacation. Martha would either return by train or with relatives coming to Utah.

After his semi-retirement, he and Martha traveled as a couple to Los Angeles to visit his sister Bessie and her husband, Lorin, and his brother, Leland, and his family. He proudly took Martha to the 1952 Republican National Convention in Chicago. After the convention they left immediately by train to attend the International Lion's Convention in Mexico City, Mexico. That was their first experience in a foreign country. It was both exciting and frustrating. Understanding another language was probably their greatest barrier. (While they were gone, Norm supervised the remodeling of the kitchen, changing from wooden cabinets to metal and putting in new linoleum.) Another time, Gordon and Margaret accompanied them on an auto trip to the East Coast and on to Tennessee to find where their father Henry had had an eventful mission. While Don and LauRene were in Portland, Oregon, for dental school, Merwin and Martha visited them several times, and while there, they also visited his sister Ethel and husband Ralph Taylor on their farm in Clackamas, Oregon.

Martha liked to go places but found traveling difficult. She'd had rheumatic fever as a young girl and did not have good circulation in her legs, so walking, dancing and traveling were a struggle for her. She often expressed her concern that because of her physical limitations, she hampered Merwin's opportunities to dance, swim and travel. This was a sadness to her. She rallied and went often as she could. He never complained.

As Martha's health declined, Merwin took to housekeeping as never before, fixing simple meals and cleaning up afterwards. They enjoyed leisure hours together in their home reading or listening to radio programs, visiting friends and family, and going for rides. Through the years their relationship was affectionate and respectful of one another. A hug or a stolen kiss or a dance whirl around the kitchen is a memory the children have of their parents. They had terms of endearment for each other: "honey" and "sweetheart". There were no verbal attacks on each other. They truly loved each other in this happy relationship.

Martha passed away on April 8, 1963. It was so hard for Merwin to live without his companion of fifty-four years.

AFTER MARTHA'S DEATH

After about three months of nightmares and difficult days living alone, Merwin invited his sister Bessie (a widow) to come to live with him. They had always had a good relationship and had many common interests. He began dating one of Bessie's friends, Ruby Almquist. He married Ruby in December of 1963. He went to live in her home in Ogden on Twenty-Seventh Street. She died of complications from diabetes in December of 1964. During the remainder of that winter he lived with LauRene's family in North Ogden. Then when the weather broke in the spring, he went back to his home in Plain City. His daughter Evelyn and her husband Harry came to live with him that summer. They sold their home on Second Street in Ogden. (Aunt Bessie moved to an apartment in Salt Lake City, so she could do temple work at the Salt Lake Temple.)

The summer of 1965, Merwin convinced Evelyn and Val, her son, to go with him to Alaska to visit Jay Weenig and his family. Val was the chauffeur on that very long drive to Anchorage. It was a hardship for Evelyn to travel so far and sit so long. She was in bed for most of the time in Jay's home. Val was an excellent driver and travel guide. Merwin was ecstatic about the trip. The scenery was beautiful, and the Weenig family was so pleased to see them and have time to visit and sightsee.

80th BIRTHDAY PARTY CELEBRATION

To acknowledge Merwin's 80th birthday in 1965, a party was held at the Plain City Lions' Club. An account concerning an honored guest follows: In 1913 Merwin had hired Ernest Wilkinson, a fourteen-year-old boy from Ogden, as a farmhand for summer work. He also worked for Merwin for several summers thereafter. They built a fine relationship. Ernie, as Merwin called him, studied law in the East and practiced in Washington D.C. They had a few contacts through the years. When Ernest became President of Brigham Young University, he and Merwin renewed their acquaintance mostly through Merwin's grandchildren as they attended the university during his tenure as President: Jeannine Thompson, Kay and Ann Thompson, Jay and Val Weenig, Marne and Karen Buswell.

When any one of them would introduce themselves to President Wilkinson and say they were a grandchild of Merwin, he would give them a hug and ask them to tell him about Merwin's condition. In 1965 when Val Weenig was attending BYU, Merwin asked if he would make a personal invitation to President Wilkinson to attend his (Merwin's) eightieth birthday party in Plain City. Val gives the following account.

"I would like to recount that in [1965], there was a plan to celebrate Granddad's 80th birthday. I was going to BYU to finish up my senior year. Before I left for school, Granddad pulled into our driveway and asked me a favor, I want you to go to President Wilkinson and ask him to attend my birthday party to be held in November at the Plain City Lions' Club. Tell him you are the grandson of Mer Thompson. I hope his schedule will allow him to be there.'

"After I got my classes lined up and was settled at school, I mustered up enough courage to go into President Wilkinson's office. There I encountered his secretary, Miss Middlemiss. This woman was very direct and to the point. Do you have an appointment?' she asked.

"'No' was my reply.

"Then you cannot see President Wilkinson, for he is a very busy man.'

"I replied, Yes, I understand that, but will you please tell him that the grandson of Mer Thompson is here with a special message for him.'

"Her answer, Then give me that message and I will be glad to give it to him.'

"I looked her right in the eye and said, My grandfather told me to give the message to the president personally. If you will be kind enough to tell him I am here, I won't take any more time than just to deliver the message."

"She went into his office and closed the door. She had shown her disgust with my insistence and me. Soon the door opened a crack, and she announced that he would be with me in a minute. When he came, he shook my hand, So you're Mer Thompson's grandson. What is the message?'

"When I told him, he turned to his secretary and asked, What will I be doing that day?"

"Her answer, You are to be at Utah State at 1:30 in the afternoon for a seminar. You will be finished about 4 o'clock.'

"He said, This activity starts at 7 p.m., so please tell my driver to plan to stop off at Plain City. I want to be there for Mer's party.'

"No doubt Miss Middlemiss was surprised at the relationship that had been established years before when Ernie worked as a farmhand for Merwin. Granddad was thrilled to death that President Wilkinson would take time to come and pay homage to him."

LIFE WITH LULA

As time went on, he began courting Lula Telford, Martha's double cousin and a long time neighbor and friend living on the same country road in southwest Plain City. Martha's mother Jane Bingham was a sister to Joseph Bingham, Lula's father. Martha's father, Hans Christian Hansen was a brother to Annie Hansen, Lula's mother. They were good friends as well as cousins. They belonged to the same social group in town. Their husbands had exchanged helping each other. Their children were similar in age - Evelyn and Eunice, Harold and Carl, Norman and Paul, Ann and LauRene.

Merwin and Lula were married in the Salt Lake Temple for time on June 6, 1968. He was 83 years old, and she was 77. People were impressed that the newly married couple walked a few blocks to the wedding breakfast at Harmon's restaurant. They went to Hawaii for their honeymoon. Merrill Christofferson was their caring travel agent (a brother-in-law to daughter Evelyn). One of the delights of the trip for Merwin was swimming in the ocean. It was Lula's first plane trip, a high adventure. The family members were pleased to have "Aunt Lula" as a mother and grandmother. She filled their lives with her love and caring for the next twenty years. Merwin and Lula lived in her comfortable home one block east of his own home. He made a great

effort to improve her home in any way to make it more pleasant for her. He had carpet put down throughout her home. It was difficult for Lula to give up her beautiful Monarch coal kitchen range for a gas stove. Her pantry was changed into a wash room with washer and dryer installed.

In Merwin's words, "I married Lula and I have never done anything. First I was Henry and Lizie Y.'s kid, then I was Martha Hansen's husband and Evelyn's and Harold's and Norm's and LauRene's dad. And now I'm Lula's poor excuse for a husband. That is my life."

Merwin was happy to have Lula accompany him on more trips. They flew with Harold and Elda to Boston, Massachusetts, for Paul's graduation from Harvard. Paul and Carolyn had a most interesting big home in a forested area that intrigued visitors, for each room was an authentic restoration of rooms from pre-Revolutionary War homes. Paul recalls, "Grandpa didn't like all the old things in the house. He said, I have a new filing cabinet."

After leaving Boston, they traveled by car to Tennessee to find more information about Henry Thompson's mission experiences and locations. (Harold compiled a detailed account of the Tennessee Massacre. It is available to family members.)

Another trip they had with Harold and Elda was to Eureka, California, to visit Mary and Runar Anderson (Harold's daughter and son-in-law).

Aunt Lula and Merwin enjoyed their life together. He checked on his farm and helped her with dishes. They went to church and community activities together, enjoyed good music and special television programs, and visited with friends and relatives. Her family was very accepting of Merwin as her second husband. Anne Burnett, Jean Ellis, and Carl Telford came often to help and visit. Paul and his boys visited yearly from California. Lula outlived Merwin by 12 years, dying in 1988. She was 99 years old when she died.

HIS HEALTH CHANGES

Merwin was a vigorous man who walked briskly, worked hard in the fields and the dairy, and handled horses and tractors with competence. When he was 81 years old, he still drove a huge caterpillar, leveling ground that had been cleared of trees and was over the canal bridge south of Sunshine near the Weber River.

Merwin's automobile license issued December 22, 1969, gives this information: height 5 ft 8 in, weight 165 Ibs., eyes blue. His photo shows him wearing

glasses. His hair was white, and he had a lot of it. When he was younger, his hair was brown with reddish highlights.

In March of 1975 Merwin's health changed. He'd had cataracts removed from both eyes, three months apart. Soon his walking gait was more of a shuffle. His eyesight was limited; he could not read the daily paper and weekly magazines, as he had always loved to do. A weakness gradually developed in his body, and he was on the couch and bed a lot. Aunt Lula gave him tender loving care, but her energy was waning, too. Harold and LauRene soon realized that they needed to take turns spending the night. By October it was evident that his care was taking its toll on Aunt Lula's health, so LauRene took him to her home in North Ogden.

Merwin was in bed most of the time, but he exercised daily by using the walker and trying to go a little farther than he had the day before. In the night he would ring his old sheep bell to summon aid if needed. He kept a positive attitude and was very cooperative in doing anything asked of him. His mind was bright and clear. The children loved to discuss politics, history, or literature with him. Kit Greenwell, Norm's daughter, came every Wednesday to be with him for a few hours while LauRene went on errands. Kit's boys occasionally came with her and would read stories to him. Several family members discussed one of his favorite books with him, Men to Match My Mountains by Irving Stone. He liked having newspaper articles read to him. Keith, LauRene's son, had a special experience talking with his grandfather about Shakespeare, a class Keith had loved. He was surprised that his grandfather could quote so many lines that had been memorized years before in David O. McKay's class. For example, Merwin quoted one of Hamlet's soliloquies, 16 to 20 lines, perfectly. Keith was in awe of his 90-year-old grandfather's memory.

The Buswell's took him for rides in the car several times a week. When asked where he would like to go, without fail he always answered, "Take me to Plain City and the farm." One of the big problems on the farm was leveling the ground. Because of his repeated leveling experiences through the years, Merwin had developed a keen eye for determining the correct lay of the land. This ability is important in flood irrigation so that water gets to all parts of a field. One October day in his ninetieth year, LauRene drove him down the lane of the farm to see what was happening with a leveling project on the newly prepared ground south of Sunshine. Big trees had been felled and removed so a huge caterpillar scraper could work the soil. Harold and Byron were supervising the driver of this large piece of equipment. There were sticks in the ground at strategic locations to indicate where the ground needed to be changed.

After watching the process for a while, Merwin said, "It is not being done right." He watched from the car for some time then said, "If only I could get down on my knees and get an eye level look, I could tell them where to make any changes."

Harold came over to the car, and Merwin repeated what he had just said. Harold explained that a surveyor from the county had marked the land and the caterpillar operator was following those markings. "Well, it is still wrong. You should cut here and put the fill here" was Merwin's answer as he motioned the directions with his hands.

Many years later Harold admitted that they were still having trouble watering that piece of land. It needs to be worked over some day, perhaps the way Merwin had recommended back in 1975.

Merwin celebrated his 90th birthday on November 1, 1975, at a party at LauRene's home. Many friends and family members came to visit him. One remark he made that day was, "If you think being 90 years old is great, you've got another think a'comin!"

He died in the McKay Dee Hospital on January 5, 1976. He had been taken the evening before by ambulance. His doctor warned the family that he would not live long. In the last conversation he had with Norman, he said, "Norm, I'm going to die. I know I'm going to die." He passed away peacefully. His funeral was held in the Plain City chapel, and he was buried in the Plain City cemetery.

Merwin Thompson's life is fully deserving of the hard work it has taken to research and write his story. His competence, hard work, caring, honesty, and vision for a better tomorrow contributed to the quality of life of his family and his community. May his life inspire all of us to nobler deeds, more resolute effort, higher purpose, lifelong learning, and better living.

Reference and Research Information Sources for Henry Merwin Thompson

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Biography of Elizabeth Francis Yates by son Thomas Jarvis Yates.
Also in Relief Society Magazine, July 1930 Vol XVII and Ensign July 1979, pg. 62-63.
Sacrament Meeting personalized life history by Shirley Taylor Watkins about life of Elizabeth F.
Yates, July 26, 1998.

Biography of Daniel Thompson by daughter Elizabeth Thompson.

Biography of Lorenda Bronson Thompson by daughter Elizabeth Thompson.

Biography of Louise Yates Robinson by her and her daughter.

Biography of Thomas Yates by son Thomas Jarvis Yates.

Interviews with Byron Thompson, nephew in 1996, 1999, 2000 and 2001.

Interview with grandson Jay Weenig, Spring 1991, in Colorado Springs, CO.

Interview with Harold, Spring 1991, at North Ogden Library (approximately 5 hours - he missed a ball game) Consulted with Harold many times during next 6 years. Last lengthy interview, June 1997.

Interview with Leo Robins, grandson of Wells Robins in Scipio, Utah, Summer 1998.

Interview with Merwin, by LauRene, Fall of 1975.

Interview with Norman, in San Deigo, May 1996 and January 1997.

Letters and reflections from sons, son-in-law, nephews and grandsons.

Publication The Sugarbeet 1974 issue.

Taped interviews with brothers, Sterling and Gordon Thompson.

Tape recording about Merwin by Val Weenig, May 1996.

Tape recording of Interview with Merwin by Layne Thompson, Bob Buswell and Sue Thompson 1970 -71, typed by Paulette Black

Weber State University Alumni Records in Special Records department. Researched Acorn yearbooks of 1906 and 1907.

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Memories of Merwin

Harold (son)

Harold remembers a lesson in honesty. "We were digging potatoes and preparing for the truckers to come pick them up. One of the truckers who had contracted for the crop had brought hanks of string to use in sewing the potato sacks when they were filled. When we were finished and the sacks of potatoes were loaded on the wagons ready to load on trucks or railroad cars, Dad handed me the excess 15 out of 50 hanks of string with the directive to take them back to the contractor."

Some other thoughts: "I had the good fortune of working side by side with my father for 62 years. He taught me so many things, good things, valuable things. When he left, I missed him so; I still miss him. I never remember being rankled by advice he gave me. I could take his suggestions easily like how to irrigate, or hoe or do scraping. I valued his opinion. It seems like he had a way with him in giving advice."

Norman (son)

"My dad was the best teacher I ever had especially in math and English. Dad could help me with any problem in my school subjects. Often he would sit with me after coming from chores in the barn maybe as late as nine or ten o'clock at night. He seemed to enjoy the challenge of finding the answers. He would say, Let me see your school book." Then he would go back a few pages and read the directions. I can't ever remember him being wrong.

"When we were working together on the farm, he would allow me the opportunity to help make decisions. He would make a plan as though I had come up with the idea. He made me feel that my judgement was worth listening to. He allowed me an opinion on whatever we were working on.

"Dad made me the boss of the weeding crew. I was to see if weeds were missed. That person was to go back and do it over. My cousin Lyle went home and complained to his dad that he didn't like being nagged at all day. My dad talked to me alone about this. He told me that it was a tough job to supervise workers, that you either teach them how to do the job or do it yourself."

Don Buswell (son-in-law)

"While we were in Portland, Oregon (1946-49) where I was attending dental school, Grandpa and Grandma came to visit us. One of the main purposes of this trip was to attend the International Dairy Show at the coliseum. One of his prize bulls had been selected to be part of the Utah herd, all classes which included mature cows to young stock. His was a yearling bull, well bred with a pedigree of good record from both dam and bull. There were thirty or more

bulls in that class from all over the country particularly Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois. They were top Holsteins. His bull placed second in the Holstein section. The Carnation Dairy Farm's bull placed first. A South American organization bought it for $150,000.

Others showed interest in Grandpa's bull. When they approached him about selling the bull, his answer was No, I can't sell it. Before I came here, I promised a man from an Arizona breeding station that he could have it.

We shook hands on that promise.' That was before Merwin's bull had been selected for the Utah herd. He had agreed to sell the bull for $700.

"My feelings were that the man from Arizona would surely have understood had Merwin reneged on his promise. I think this is a significant example of Merwin's honesty and integrity. Those men from South America were probably from breeding stations whose commitment was to buy the best bulls available. Merwin's bull could have been one of them."

Byron Thompson (dairy partner for 28 years and nephew)

"Uncle Mer always whistled while he worked. When we were building the upright silo, one of the workers was really impressed with his whistle and suggested to him that he ought to put it down on paper and send it to the Hit Parade.

"I always had a good time going with Uncle Mer to the dairy shows in Richmond. He knew everybody. On the noon break we sometimes visited Thompson relatives there.

"When we were irrigating together after setting the water, we often would sit on the ditch banks to rest and wait for the water to come to the end of the row. Those were the times when Uncle Mer told me his experiences as a small boy in Scipio, or he would relate the conditions of the farm when they first began farming. Evidently the farm had many swells and deep holes to try to level out. He told me that some of the holes were deep enough to hide a horse. In Rye Patch there was one 12 feet deep. They kept scraping and leveling every year until those holes were filled up.

"One area was Old Black Ground (also called Gumbo) that was full of big clods and hard patches. They planned to work it so that they could plant sugar beets there. Their neighbor Bill Hodson told them that there was no way that would ever be workable. Uncle Mer took that as a challenge and involved his brothers with hammers and axes and hard labor to break up the soil. The weather turned for good, and the ground did become softened by letting water from

the ditch seep and soak. Gradually the ground was prepared, and it yielded one of the best crops of sugar beets ever grown on the farm and on the first year.

"Digging potatoes was a combined family project. Uncle Mer worked the digger with a team of horses, and my dad ran the sorter and sewed the sacks. The kids in the two families picked up the spuds in buckets and dumped them on the sorter. We were happy when the potato harvest was over. I remember Uncle Mer would promise to provide a railroad car load for one order. That was a lot of potatoes.

"Uncle Mer grew a beard at the request of Harmon Peery, Mayor of Ogden, to show support for the first Pioneer Day Celebration. That was about 1935. Working in the fields on hot summer days caused a man to sweat, and Uncle Mer's beard became a hardship. He scratched away at it complaining plenty. Many of the men in our town and others in the county grew beards for the 24th of July celebration parade and rodeo.

"Asthma and eczema were problems for Uncle Mer. His nose plugged up, his eyes watered, and he sneezed and coughed and had a hard time breathing. Working in the grain and harvesting hay were tough times for him. Then his skin would break out with redness and itchiness. There were times that farming was difficult for him. He was a hard worker; he kept going even when he had reason to stop. I remember how hard he worked to clear the trees from The Island down by the river so that area could be used for farming.

"Uncle Mer had a favorite cow that had just freshened (had a calfl. He had put her into the maternity stall. He knew she was sick but did not realize how sick. He walked into the stall to care for her. She was out of her head. When she saw him, she turned and pinned him to the wall, then promptly laid down and died. He was hurt. He called for help. Luckily, I was nearby and helped him out of the stall by dropping the wooden door down. Uncle Mer was shocked that this gentlest of cows would turn on him. He was laid up for some time with his injured leg." (Jay Weenig adds this to the story: "One of his legs was pinned for some long time before he could remove himself from the stall. As Grandpa related this experience later, he told his listeners of some of his thoughts realizing that he may not get out alive, and if he did, he would probably have a mangled leg. His one strong realization was Gosh darn, I probably will never be able to dance again.' How he loved to dance.")

Byron continued, "Uncle Mer and I had different ways to accomplish a job. A pile of gravel needed to be spread out on the other side of the canal. When I came down the field with a tractor and blade to do the job, Uncle Mer was using a shovel to spread the gravel.

"I loved and respected Uncle Mer. He was a great guy. He was totally honest and fair. He never beat a soul out of a nickel.

"When you are a dairymen, you are tied to those cows twice every day. From the time I started working with the dairy, I went without a vacation for seven and a half years. Whenever there was something special to go to and I decided to go, the chores and milking had to be done before I could leave. Eventually, Darrell (Byron's brother) came to help, so I could get a day or two off. As the herd got bigger, I hired a boy to help."

Grant Thompson (nephew)

"I have many fond memories of my association with Uncle Mer. Because we lived on the farm directly east of his, I saw him frequently both when I worked for him as I often did in the summer or incidentally when, for instance, he would stop by to talk to Dad.

"Uncle Mer hired me when I was fifteen to drive a team and wagon during the threshing season. I was really flattered that he would ask me for at least two reasons.

First, all the other drivers were grown men and that made me think that Uncle Mer thought I was pretty grown up. Secondly, I had not had all that much experience driving a team and wagon because my older brothers did most of that, so it meant that Uncle Mer trusted me.

"I not only drove the team and wagon during the threshing of Uncle Mer's grain, but I went and helped all the neighbors who helped Uncle Mer. I really thought I had arrived.

"My work began as I drove the wagon into the field to get a load of barley. There would be two men on each side of the wagon who pitched the individual bundles of grain on the wagon while I drove back up to the barn where the thresher was threshing the grain. I would drive the loaded wagon along side the thresher and then pitch the bundles into the thresher.

"The barley was short and dry. The thresher had an enormous appetite since Ernest Cordon who owned the thresher was paid by the bushel of grain threshed, and he wanted maximum output from the thresher. He frequently stopped by to tell me to pitch the bundles in faster. This hurt my pride because I was working as hard and fast as I could.

"That night after we finished for the day, I talked to Uncle Mer. He told me to tell Ernest Cordon that I had two speeds: the one I was using and one slower and then ask him which one he wanted me to use.

"That made me feel much better because I thought Uncle Mer felt I was working hard enough for my pay.

"I had my revenge when we started threshing the oats. They were tall and perhaps not nearly so dry. The thresher was laboring mightily, and Mr. Cordon had to frequently tell me to slow down.

Jay Weeniq (Grandson)

"I have fond memories of being in the living room at the old home when Grandpa Thompson and his brothers and sisters surrounded the piano for singing. Aunt Bessie was at the piano leading the group in whatever song was requested. She had an uncanny talent of playing by ear almost anything anyone suggested. Those songs she did not know, she simply asked someone to hum the tune and in no time the melody of the song would ring out on the piano. All of the Thompson brothers and sisters had good singing voices, and best of all, they loved to sing together on and on. Many of the songs were silly, nonsensical, some were Scandinavian, some were Negro spirituals and a lot of them were popular songs of days gone by. It was a great time of togetherness and bonding. Children and grandchildren often joined in the activity.

"I remember Grandpa being a strong individual. He took pride in a job well done and tried to teach his grandchildren who came to play or to help to perform with a high standard of excellence. He disciplined the Weenig kids effectively by having them sit in the corner on a chair, go to the cellar stairs by themselves, or re-do what they had been assigned in a better way.

"Grandpa was always the same, he never varied. He was consistent. You knew what he stood for. He never let a wrong go by unnoticed. We got strength from our grandparents. They helped form our characters.

"He was most particular about the way he dressed and groomed himself. When he came to Anchorage to visit us, he was working on his car in old clothes. One of our women neighbors came to get acquainted. He came in the house after meeting her all flustered. If I'd known she was coming, I would have dressed up a bit.'

"He liked good music and better things. He loved the records of Nelson Eddy, the opera and movie star. He also liked good cowboy and western music. He

often would sing along with the music he was hearing. I knew when I visited Grandpa that he would ask me to sing for him. This made me want to perform well.

"Grandpa had a temper. When Bud and I were just little kids, we became the derrick horse riders. After working for some time pulling the huge forks of hay up into the barn loft, the horse simply laid down and would not continue to work. Grandpa Thompson shouted at us to get the horse up. Then in anger, he came at the animal with a pitchfork in hand and jabbed him in the rear. Needless to say, the horse immediately sprang up and was ready to return to work.

"Another time Bud and I were throwing down hay to feed the cows. I quit working. When Grandpa asked why, I replied, Nah, I don't want to do that anymore. Let Bud do it.' Grandpa booted me in the rear, and I quickly returned to work."

Paul Thompson (Grandson)

"My most vivid recollection of Grandpa Thompson came probably in September 1949. I was 11 years old. One evening he came to my home in Warren and went into the house and visited with my parents, and then my Dad came out and invited me into the house. I met with my parents and Grandpa Thompson. He indicated that he would like me to come and work with my cousin Darrell to help milk the cows at his dairy farm. That meant I would live with Grandpa and Grandma. Grandpa had asthma, and he found it was hard for him to work with the cows. Although he had been doing it for many years, it became increasingly difficult for him to do that. So, he invited me to come and live with him and milk the cows. I agreed to do that. Beginning about September 1949, I moved up to live with Grandpa and Grandma and worked there during the week. I only went home on Sunday afternoons to go to church and spend the afternoon with my family and then would go back to Grandpa's in the evening to milk the cows. That was a great experience for me.

"I lived four years with Grandpa and Grandma and I learned a great deal. I am sure they found it difficult to put up with a 11-14 year old boy.

"I have some observations from that experience with my grandfather. First, Grandpa was a very progressive farmer. He was constantly adopting new approaches, better ways of doing things. He was one of the early ones who adopted chopped hay as a more effective way of getting good feed to the cattle. I can remember when he decided that we should build concrete silos for corn, and we put up 40 feet high concrete silos which is a difficult thing to do. But it was a very progressive thing to put up high silos and to feed corn from

those silos; it provided for better corn. He was always adding to and improving his feed mix to increase the production of his cows. He would learn about adding cottonseed meal, bone meal or other things to the mix to improve production.

"Grandpa had a herd of registered Holsteins. He had one of the best herds in the state. He bought the best bulls and tried to improve the herd continually. He would show animals at various dairy shows: Plain City Dairy Days, Richmond Black and White Days and Utah State Fairs. Occasionally, if he had an exceptional animal, he would take it out of state to the Northwest, to Portland or Seattle. He was very proud of this registered herd. It was an outstanding herd of cows and won many honors at the Utah State Fair and Black and White Days.

"I can remember Grandpa devoting a lot of time to record keeping. In order to have a registered herd, he had to submit the registration forms on each calf within a few months after it was born. He was a member of the Dairy Herd Improvement Association, and he kept records on the production of his cows. His herd was one of the top-producing herds in the state.

"Grandpa was a good supervisor. You can imagine that it was very difficult for him to supervise a 12-year-old boy, since he was about 65 at the time, but he spent a lot of time on our training so that Darrell and I understood what we were supposed to do. I can remember a time, probably six months after I had gone to work there, that he invited me to come and have a conversation with him. He gave me a brief performance review and indicated some of the things that he liked about what I was doing and some concerns about what I wasn't doing. He said that he was going to give me a raise. He first started paying me 40 cents an hour and he said that he would like to raise that pay to 50 cents an hour, but would like me to assume more responsibility for what I was doing on the farm. I think he knew that Darrell and I played around quite a bit and in the conversation he said that he wanted me to be more responsible and to do a better job of looking after the cows, calves and so on.

"He was very patient with Darrell and me; remember that I was only 11 years old, soon to turn twelve. Darrell and I would get bored milking cows, and so as we'd get down near the end of the milking string in an evening, we might put a couple of milkers on two cows and go into the hay barn and play basketball (a game of 21). If it was a very close game and was tied a lot, it might take us ten minutes to play a game. It's very bad for cows to leave milkers on for ten minutes. Usually the time was no more than 3 or 4 minutes.

I am sure it wasn't good for the herd, but Grandpa was patient. He would spend time telling me about the things that we needed to do and ways that I could improve my performance.

"While Grandpa was a farmer, he was not a hayseed. You have seen some farmers that really weren't used to dressing up and going to town. That was certainly not true of Grandpa. He had very nice clothes and looked very distinguished in them when he would go to a meeting, church or town. He had a very nice car, as I recall, a three-toned car (red, white and black). This was probably about a 1951 or 1952 Dodge. All dressed up and in his nice car, he was a very impressive sight.

"Grandpa was a good neighbor. I can remember one fall when LaGrand Hadley's father died, probably in September. Grandpa came to inform Darrell and me that we needed to help the neighbors (the Hadleys). So, Saturday, as I recall, we took the tractor and some equipment, perhaps a truck and went over to the Hadleys with some of the neighbors. We spent a full day, or perhaps more, helping them harvest corn. We worked a lot with Uncle Gordy and Uncle Ster sharing equipment and working together to get the work done on the farm.

"I feel fortunate to have spent four years with my grandparents living with them and working with them. I am grateful for all that my grandfather taught me. He was an excellent farmer; he knew a great deal about cattle and about land, and he was patient and tried to teach me a lot. Those memories are very important to me. I am sure he helped me to gain a little maturity."

Val Weenig (Grandson)

"When Clair and I were six and eight years old, we were at Granddad's farm in the summer and decided to help in the barn by throwing hay from the loft to the manger below. Suddenly up the ladder came Granddad with his little cow stick that he used to whack the cows to get them to move. I jumped out of the loft, but Clair was caught mid-air by the paddle. He was so scared he wet his pants. I spent the rest of the afternoon in the outhouse hiding. It wasn't a pleasant place to be. Later, we learned from Granddad that the evening feeding for the cows was to have been grain and molasses and not hay as we had supposed. A great lesson was taught me that there is a right time to do things and in the right place. I probably didn't learn such a lesson that early, but it was put into my mind and my character.

After returning from my mission to the Central States in 1965, Granddad asked if I would drive him and my mother to Anchorage, Alaska, to see Jay and Annette, who were stationed at Ellendorf Air Force Base. About mid-

August we loaded up Granddad's brand new Dodge and made our way northward through Idaho, Montana into Alberta, Canada.

One incident that happened in route was that while Granddad was driving, he went onto the shoulder of the road which was gravel several inches thick. In this case, the car gradually turned on its side, but not completely over. I was in the passenger side, and Mom was in the back. After finding that everyone was all right, I changed places with Granddad so I could climb out of the car to get help. About the time I got out, I was met by two or three neighbors who had seen the car slide over. The men were about my size, so we pushed the car back onto its four wheels with very little damage done except the right fender was bent a little but not disabled. We thanked the people for their help. Then Granddad proceeded to ask one of the ladies watching to call the Canadian Royal Mounted police so he could report the accident.

I said, Granddad there is no reason to report the accident as there is very little damage and no one is hurt.'

But he insisted, It was my fault, and I want to report it.'

About an hour or so later, the patrolman arrived and tried to talk Granddad out of reporting it because he would be cited for careless driving. Granddad asked how he could proceed, and the policeman directed him to the next town where he could pay the fine and go on his way. This shows Granddad's personal integrity and his taking responsibility for what had occurred. He made things right.

We went through the most beautiful part of Canada in the Canadian Rockies over those high passes and on to Prince Rupert. It was a two-day journey on the ferry up the Inland Passage. We stopped at several cities along the way including Juneau and Sitka then on to Tok where we disembarked. Road signs revealed that it was about six hundred miles to Anchorage.

This was a particularly long trip for my mother who was not too well. We drove through two Eskimo villages and were fascinated by the Totem poles. Granddad talked about the craftsmanship of the Eskimos in carving those poles. We did stop overnight in the Mananuska Valley, which is a big farming district. We saw watermelons larger than anything we had ever seen. I could not lift them. They probably weighed two hundred pounds. We saw strawberries as big as a softballs and cabbages and carrots that were gigantic. All these fruits and vegetables were edible, wonderful produce.

We continued on to Anchorage and found Annette and family. Jay was not home for a few days as he was out hunting Dahl sheep. Later, we learned he

had been socked in with bad weather and could not be picked up for a few days.

My mother spent a lot of time in bed recuperating from the long car ride. We enjoyed our stay with Jay's family and then had a pleasant return trip. Granddad was a great traveler, however, he would not drive after the accident in Alberta, so I drove close to 2,400 miles on our two-week trip."

Clair Weenig (Grandson)

Memories of Granddad Thompson written in a letter dated February 15, 1976, shortly after Merwin's death.

"Granddad Thompson has left us. Gone are his familiar whistle; his teasing sense of humor; his marvelous head of white hair; his knowing, penetrating, honest and loving eyes; his work-worn, earth-knowing, productive hands; these are a few of the many things he took with him. All who were privileged to love him and to be loved by him know these physical attributes and each of us shall miss them.

"I would rather dwell on the gifts my grandfather has left here. Gifts which time cannot wither, nor weather rust. They are - memories - golden memories of childhood visits to the farm, of cow fetching, milking, haying, mowing, grain grinding, yes even manure spreading. Fresh, homemade cinnamon rolls, lovingly baked and never quite successfully hidden, real butter, a ceramic beehive full of honey, a dish of spoons on the table, a pile of Life magazines, a portrait of Eisenhower, a farmhouse with its own magic smell, fresh perked coffee in the morning. Fortunate was I to have this retreat in which to absorb the true meaning of family, place, soil, somewhere to be 'from'.

"Granddad left also a legacy of how to live and deal with your fellow man. He practiced those time-held principles of which so many only preach. Love, honesty, concern, forgiveness, participation, self-sufficiency, sacrifice, respect for fellow man - these were the very essence of his being.

"His life spanned an incredible epoch. Wars, depressions, recessions, technological revolution - and when his stay here ended, he left a heritage - Thompson - a name untarnished by ninety years use. Thanks Grandpa.

"...I truly loved my grandfather. I wish I had been able to attend the funeral. I somehow feel Granddad understood my absence. My memory of him in October '75, my last visit, is vivid and one I'd prefer to that of a funeral. Please know that in years to come, his memory and example lives on and forms an integral part of me and my life force."

On another occasion, Clair Weenig wrote the following: "Grandfather Thompson was a key person in my life. I credit much of my success in school and in my profession to traits and intellectual curiosity I inherited or learned from him. Persistence, objectivity, addiction to truth, unwillingness to compromise ethical precepts, and willingness to stand apart from the crowd if my viewpoint did not follow the currently popular trend would be among those traits I believe I received from him.

"Much of the credit for my skills at reading and studying I attribute to the 'Life Magazine' subscription he sent to our family as a Christmas present each year. I avidly read every issue that arrived during those many years of my youth.

"He was the only grandfather I ever knew, as my Grandfather Weenig died when my dad was only fourteen."

Layne Thompson (Grandson)

"My favorite experience with Grandpa Thompson was in the summer of 1967 or 1968. I was in high school, and he was in his early 80's. He was single and had a sporty new Dodge car with bucket seats and a gearshift on the floor.

"Bob Buswell and I were at Bob's house in North Ogden, and we needed to go to a ball game at John Affleck Park. We didn't have a car, but Grandpa was there. He said he'd be happy to run us down to the game. He was so spry and dapper in his hat and stylish clothes. We thought he was the coolest Grandpa anybody could have. He asked us what we thought of his car as we hopped in. He showed us all the features and popped it in gear. Then he gave it the gas and spun the tires digging gravel all the way out of the Buswell's driveway (and it's no short driveway, as most of you know.)

"We talked about things that interested teenage boys. He asked us if we had girl friends and how we were doing in the sports we played. Then he told us how he still liked to go sparking' with the ladies. That was about the time he was dating Aunt Lula not long before he got engaged to her.

"He even gave us one of his secrets to success with the opposite sex. Old men shave in the morning, but a young man shaves at night.' Sure enough it was 6:00 p.m., and he was freshly shaven ready for a good time. He may have been 80 plus, but he looked and acted like he was in his prime."

Bob Buswell (Grandson)

Bob tells his experience on the farm as he worked there the summer of 1968 between his junior and senior years at Weber High School. "I came home one night after midnight and found Aunt Evelyn still up. She was concerned because Grandpa Thompson was baling hay using the tractor and baler up on the Jenkins place." [He rented this land because he needed more feed for the cows.] "There were lights on both pieces of equipment, and he told her he might be all night getting the job done. He was 83 years old.

"She said, Bob, will you go relieve him?'

"My answer was, Sure, I can do that. '

"I drove to the field and saw the big floodlight heading toward me. As the tractor got closer to me, I could hear Grandpa whistling his usual tune cycle of five notes repeated over and over. I waved him down. As he stopped, I said, Aunt Evelyn is concerned about you and wants me to takeover for you.'

"He paused and then stated, Hell, Bob, don't you think I'm old enough to take care of myself?' Then he let out the clutch, and the tractor motored northward with lights breaking the darkness. The whistle started again, the usual five notes repeated over and over again." Merwin was a hard worker, determined to finish any job he started.

Bob continues, "Another time Grandpa asked me to help him with the watering which would be early the next morning. Of course, I accepted the job, knowing that even after midnight I would probably be able to sleep until 5 or 6 A.M.

"However, just before 3 A.M., I was awakened by Grandpa's whistle and his voice saying, Bob, it's time for breakfast.'

"Drowsily, I got out of bed, dressed and made my way to the kitchen. The table was set with breakfast already to eat. What a grand breakfast! First was cracked wheat cereal followed by stewed prunes, a hamburger patty, a poached egg on toast, hash-brown potatoes, a small glass of orange juice and a large glass of unpasteurized, unhomogenized milk from the dairy. Grandpa went right to eating then told me where to find the irrigation boots and the shovel. As I remember, we irrigated the fields of grain between his home and Uncle Gordie's from 4 a.m. to lO a.m. Here I was, a young man who was working out for football my senior year at Weber High. To be openly honest, the whole six hours I couldn't keep up with my 83 year old grandfather, and he whistled while he worked!"

Keith Buswell (Grandson)

Keith wrote this poem on February 24, 1979, shortly after a mid-winter Thompson reunion where discussions took place about Merwin's legacy. The poem reflects his fond recollections of his grandfather.

A Countrv Gentleman

The ever present, ever pleasant
Teethy, raspy, cheerful whistle
An articulate welcome
Giving warning and warming his arrival

With white wavy
Full head of hair and
Matching bushy eyebrows
Atop twinkle-spangled eyes

And I, a personal pride
A portion of my blood
His blood and
My curls, his curls

Grateful for greatness
Within him and about him
A grand man
A grand father and friend

A country gentleman
Living in the country
With his wife
And love for life

Other reflections from Keith include the following:

"In June of 1972, two nights before I entered the Mission Home in Salt Lake City prior to departing for my mission in Ohio, Grandpa and Aunt Lula invited me to dinner at their home in Plain City. Aunt Lula prepared a wonderful meal with all the trimmings.

Grandpa told me how important a mission was and how he was confident that I would do well in serving the Lord.

"After I told Grandpa of my respect for all that he had accomplished in his life and of my love for him, he humbly responded by saying 'Oh Keith, I am just a country gentleman living in the country with my wife'."

Another memory from Keith, "Mom allowed me to get out of elementary school and accompany Grandpa Thompson on at least one occasion to invite other dairy farmers to participate in Plain City Dairy Days. The most memorable visit for me was our time spent visiting the monastery up in Huntsville. Only one of the monks was allowed to talk. The others were silent, obeying the vows they had made. They worked in silence with their impressive dairy herd. Grandpa stayed close by the one monk that could communicate. I was proud to be with my handsome grandfather as he made the formal invitation to come to Dairy Days (and I didn't mind missing a few hours of school either). A year or two later, Mom, with some degree of hesitation, got me excused from Wahlquist Junior High to attend Dairy Days as a special 'helper' to Grandpa. The fact is, many of my friends 'sluffed' school to attend the festivities in Plain City but not me; I was on official business as one of the grandsons of the Chairman.

"Some years later, as I was working on a large commercial real estate transaction in the Denver, Colorado area, I re-discovered and re-kindled my respect for Grandpa Thompson. At a particular business meeting as various real estate developers, attorneys, city planning & zoning professionals, brokers and landowners sat around a large conference room table in a high rise building - all with their leather briefcases, shiny leather shoes, heavily starched cotton shirts, colorful silk ties and wool suits. All were anxiously waiting for 'the most powerful man' to walk into the room. He was the secretary of the two local ditch companies that defined the proposed shopping center on two of the four sides of the property. He finally walked into this meeting in his soiled overalls, well- worn boots and 'scunge' hat. Out in the parking lot, next to several flashy sports cars, was his old blue pickup with a few shovels and pitchforks in the bed ready to be used to clean the ditches to keep that water flowing. Before any development could proceed, he had the right to review and approve the scope, timing and impact on the ditch companies' irrigation system. The ditch companies' rights preceded statehood in Colorado. I sat quietly reflecting upon my fine Grandfather, Merwin Thompson, knowing that he served as Secretary for the Pioneer Land and Irrigation Company for about 50 years. In a similar situation, on another day, in another state and county, with his full head of white wavy hair and his distinctive whistle, Grandpa would have been 'the most powerful man' in the room.' The big difference would have been that Grandpa would have shown up for this type of meeting in dapper apparel. Most would have thought he was a prominent banker not a farmer. He was a gentleman and wanted to look the part whenever he left the farm."

"Another distinct memory of my time with Grandpa Thompson, was one particular Saturday late afternoon being with Grandpa in Ogden. He must have had a meeting or banker to talk with but I ended up being his tag along

partner. He was dressed in his finest apparel. After his business was completed, we made a stop in at Tanner's Clothiers just off Washington Blvd. On 24th Street in Ogden. The men in the store knew Grandpa Thompson and greeted him warmly. They discussed the weather, politics and fine clothing. Grandpa tried on several new hats. He was happy to try on their dapper and stylish clothing. Although he made his livelihood as a hard working dairy farmer, he loved to dress like a banker. I quietly sat off in a corner chair as Grandpa got properly fitted in his gentlemanly haberdashery."