

*History of Matilda Curtis Boulden*  
*Wife of Joseph Lewis Boulden*

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I am very proud of my pioneer heritage. I wonder if I would have had the courage to leave everything I owned to travel to a new undeveloped area with so many unknown factors...so much danger. Many times they left all of their family behind so there would not even be any support from family members. They were brave and very courageous people and I think they must have had a thirst for adventure (at least the men did). However, we all know that it was to be able to better themselves . To be able to acquire land and build and develop it.

I would like to talk about my ancestors, the pioneers that settled Castle Valley.

We have to ask ourselves WHY DID THEY COME? WHY DID THEY LEAVE FAMILY AND HOME TO COME TO THE UNKNOWN?

\*\*\*On Aug. 22,1877 Brigham Young sent a letter to Sanpete Co. Stake Pres. Canute Peterson with what may have been considered as the founding document of Emery Co.

**Document....**

“Inasmuch as it is probable that quite a number of the brethren, who have sold out in Thistle Valley to facilitate its occupancy by the Lamanites, will not desire to settle in Castle Valley, however, we should like as many as possible to do so, as we are anxious to see a good, strong settlement of LDS established in the last named valley, we should be pleased to have you make inquiry and find out what brethren in the Stake over which you preside would like to settle there.

2.

There are brethren in different portions of Sanpete Co. who have not an abundant supply of water for their land, who would, no doubt, be happy to remove to a valley where the water is abundant and the soil good. We should like to have at least fifty families locate in Castle Valley this fall; but if some of the brethren cannot take their families this year, it would be well for them to go themselves, secure their locations and commence work. In making your selection, choose good, energetic God fearing young men, whether single or with families, and others who can be spared without interfering with the interest of the settlements in which they now reside, such ones as will be a strength to the new settlement and an aid to its growth in all that we, as LDS desire to see increase upon the earth.

This was one of the last directive given by Pres. Young.... Just one week later the great colonizer died.

So most of the pioneers came over the mountain from Sanpete County. Some came on horseback, some on foot and some were lucky enough to have wagons. Also, another deciding factor was the **Homestead Act that was in effect, which would give each settler 160 acres of their own land.** And, there would be more water available from the streams in the valley.

However, they suffered the hardship of cold and hunger and loneliness. Many had already endured the great Utah immigration of 1847. But these hardy pioneers had the spirit of cooperation, they worked together, they planted their crops and harvested them, helping one another. They build homes, roads, canals, schools and churches. They wanted to have some culture in their lives...some normalcy. They craved education and religious activity and most of all they needed personal uplift in order to maintain their optimism through such a strenuous and difficult time.

3.

Their trials and sorrows strengthened their character and the sincerity of their purpose has affected our present generation as well as those in the future.

Today I would like to tell you about my great grandmother "*Matilda Caroline Curtis Boulden*".

She was born September 10, 1853 in Parowan, Iron County to Erastus & Caroline Barton Curtis. She married *Joseph Lewis Boulden* at the age of 15 in Ogden on June 11, 1869. She and Joe moved with her folks to Sanpete County, where they lived for several years.

Joe traveled with Bp. Orange Seeley to Castle Valley. They lived in a dug-out during the winter of 1878, making preparations for their wives and families to settle there the following summer.

Joe and Matilda came to Orangeville in 1878. On the journey from Moroni by ox team their five month old baby boy, Erastus Curtis Boulden dies. They were but a day's travel from their destination. A friend, Bessie Wilson, who was traveling with the Boulden's assisted in caring for the child. Matilda, with her sick baby in her arms, was seated near the campfire with a quilt wrapped around both of them. It was so very, very cold. The baby was doctored for earache, colic and everything that could be thought of, but to no avail.

A man was sent on horseback to the valley with the news and to make burial arrangements. Another man who was working at Horse Shoe Bend took Joe and Matilda and the body of their baby down to the settlement in a wagon. There was no loose lumber available so boards from a cupboard in the wagon were used to make the box in which the body was carried. Upon their arrival, they found a nice casket had been made ready for the baby. At that time, it was the custom to paint or cover a casket in black. One of the dear sisters had taken the flounce

4.

from her black dress to cover the casket. It was lined on the inside with a white pillow case, and on the lid over the black cloth the initials of the baby were put on with bright headed tacks (E.C.B.) for Erastus Curtis Boulden.

Joe and Matilda were comforted and so grateful for this out-pouring of love and caring in order for them to put their baby to rest in such a nice casket prepared by the loving hands of their friends. The baby was at first buried in Orangeville on Grandfather Curtis's farm but was later moved to the Castle Dale Cemetery and was one of the first to be buried in the Castle Dale Cemetery.

The story of Joe and Matilda and the loss of their baby is told in the story of the "Castle Valley Pageant".

Joe was one of the finest blacksmith's in the country and was called to Castle Valley because of his trade. It was very important to have a good blacksmith to make horse shoes, to repair farm implements and to make them as well.

The land was harsh and the men were often off cutting timber, clearing land. So the women were very often left alone for days and weeks at a time. This meant that Matilda was left alone at home a great deal of the time. She would have to leave a young child at home alone while she waded the creek with a basket of eggs to go to John Reid's store for supplies. One time a gallant stranger place her on his horse, waded the stream carrying her basket of eggs and led the horse across the creek. She never knew who he was and never saw him again. This was a kindness that was so often exhibited in those early days. It was important that everyone looked out for one another in order to survive.

Another time, Matilda and her small baby were alone in her cabin. Her closest neighbors were at least a mile away. A band of Indians came

5.

shouting while they rode around her house. She was so frightened for her and her child. But they didn't harm her. However, she was very afraid to stay in the house alone that night for fear they would return and burn her house down, or even worse. She gathered up her baby and they walked up the creek to Boulden Wash to a cave in the bank. Placing a blanket in the cave, she and the baby crawled in and remained there all night. The next morning a dispatch came warning people to beware of sixteen Indians who were on the warpath. Her house had not been harmed and the Indians did not return. Her fervent prayers had indeed been answered one more time..

Joseph and Matilda were very active in the community. They were involved with the first theatrical production in Castle Valley. They both had parts in the play "The Lost Ship" which was a Christmas play in the little log school house in Orangeville in 1880. They loved to sing and dance.

Their home in Castle Dale was located on the lot where Magnuson Lumber is located. For some time, their home was also used as the Post Office and Emma Dickson was the Post Mistress.

Joe and Matilda raised eight children: Joseph L., William B., Erastus, Tillie Belle, Mary M., Douglas Lavern (my grandfather), Gladys G. And Oriole.

Both remained active in the community throughout their lives. Joseph served as a "Selectman" from 1892 to 1894, which was like a County Commissioner today. He was a very close friend to Bp. Orange Seeley.

While I was working in the court house, I was asked to help identify some names that were to be on a "Memory Wall" of Commissioner's and Select Men" I immediately saw the name of "Joseph Lewis Boulden" and remembered a funny picture that my mother had and just knew that

6.

it had to be my great grand-father Joseph Lewis Boulden because she had told me that he wore a long beard and a funny little bolo hat, and sure enough, when I called my aunt she verified that I had found the picture of my Great Grandfather. He served the county from 1892 - 1894.

\*\*Picture

Joseph passed away on June 13, 1913 leaving Matilda a widow for many years. She passed away on January 24, 1942 in Castle Dale.

I am proud of my pioneer heritage...of their strength of character, their perseverance and the dedication they had in order to make a beautiful, productive valley... that we can enjoy and be proud of. I look at all the modern conveniences that we enjoy today...the new irrigation system that has made this valley even more green and beautiful and productive.

It seems like providence has led me in the direction of becoming better acquainted with this line of my ancestors. I am proud that they were fine up-standing, and enduring pioneers and proud that I am part of their heritage.

It is so important to keep records and to write stories and histories. I was thrilled when a friend, and I found out later, a relative, had found papers of my Great Grandmother trying to secure her pension after the death of her husband. Joseph L. Boulden served in the Civil War in New Mexico. There is something very personal when you see documents in their own hand-writing.... it lets you see more of their personality and you can really feel a connection.

There was a letter from Orange Seeley when he was 70 years old that told of their acquaintances for many years. Mr. Seeley wrote a letter on Matilda's behalf, to the army in order for her to get her husband's pension from the war.... telling about his relationship with Joseph L. Boulden in order for Matilda to receive his pension due her from the

7.

time he served in the Civil war in New Mexico after his death.

He related that he knew Joseph L. In 1867 on the railroad construction in Echo Canyon in No. Utah. They became good friends. He knew when he married Matilda in 1869. He told how they met frequently and worked together and traveled together. During the winter of 1878 -79 they lived together in a dugout while preparing homes in Emery County for their families, which was then unsettled. They cooked and ate together from the same dishes and occupied the same bed. They were close, congenial friends. They talked about their former lives and youthful pranks and were freely and liberally discussed so much so that I am certain and positive of his former life.

He also stated that in 1892, while he was the Probate Judge of Emery County, Joseph L. Boulden was at the same time an elected County Select-man and resided in a remote part of Emery Co. During the sessions of said court, he would board at my home and later he worked in my black-smith shop for six years. We would converse daily enjoying each others friend-ship.

What a blessing that people have the vision and skill to write histories and prepare pageants honoring our early settlers. I owe a debt of gratitude to Montel Seeley for having the fortitude to study and write and produce the Castle Valley Pageant. What a wonderful tribute to all those who endured great hardships to settle this valley. This was truly a labor of love, we owe him much, along with all the many others who work so diligently to continually make it a success.

There are so many of these early pioneer stories that can be told. It is important for each of us to search out our ancestors and find out about them and to become acquainted with them. However, there is a lesson to be learned here...be diligent in writing down your stories, if only in a plain old note book, write down your daily activities..... my grandfather

8.

Boulden would do this and I remember reading it and seeing where my grandmother had made a bargain with my grandfather that if he would help her make her lye soap that morning, she would make him a peach pie in the afternoon. There were many more stories. Not anything fancy, just little notes that help us get to know their personalities a bit better.

\*\*A note from Matilda to Joe:

A little home among the Trees..A warming sun & cooling breeze,  
A childish voice, a welcome light..A man that whistles home at  
night..A cherry fire...a savory dish.

What more could any mortal wish...A feeling that you'll never  
roam..these are the things that make a home.