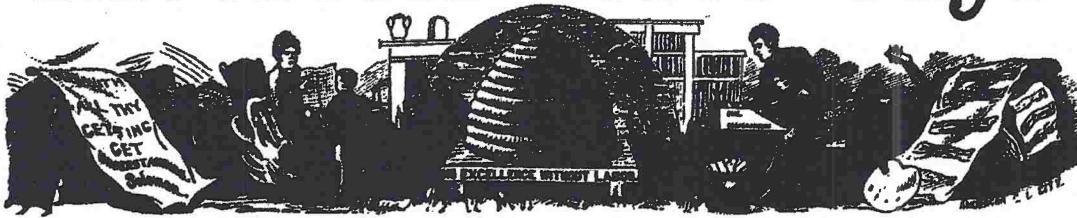


Riverton Yesterdays



Volume 1, No. 2

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A Monthly Newsletter of Oldtime Stuff about Riverton, Utah

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Meredith and Maurine Page**

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Childhood Memories of the Park Sisters (Part 2)

[Note: These reminiscences of Margaret Park Peterson and Beth Park Bone were recorded 15 September 1988 at a Riverton Historical Society lecture program.]

Margaret: If we wanted anything, we had to work a little bit for it. . . . Girls start with baby sitting. . . . We progressed up to thinning beets. I hated that. That was a boring, boring job! Hard as could be! We picked berries or whatever we could, mostly currants. If I picked two buckets, I'd give one to whoever owned the currant bush for having raised them. We just brought those home for mother. Later on, when we were very tiny, berry pickers would come up from Orem and get a lot of girls to go down and pick the berries. They'd have little living quarters for you like maybe a basement or a little bunkhouse of some kind. We had lots of fun there with that. But I can still hear in my dreams, "The dew is off the berries, girls." That was your first call to get up in the morning. It was quite early in the morning. We did try to earn a little bit of money.

They asked me to talk about memorable characters in Riverton. I'll bet every one of us has got a different one.

Remember Joe Newman used to sit down there on

the corner? When I was growing up, I thought he owned all of Riverton. He sat there with something in his hand. I don't know whether he whittled or what. I can't remember that. [Comment from audience: "Do you remember we called him Mayor?"] Oh is that what it was? I thought he owned Riverton because he sat down on the corner and he commanded quite a bit of territory as we went around him to go to school. And then, the old tinker man. Remember him? Scared to death! This tinker man — we must never get too close to him. I don't know whether he was dangerous or not when I look back on it now. I think he lived somewhere back behind Gaylord Johnson's, didn't he? [Comments from audience: "At Horace Nokes's most of the time." "Above the canal. That's where I remember him."] But anyway, we were never allowed to go near him. And then, Lionel Myers. I thought he was a character. He would get up in church. The minute he would get up, my palms would start to sweat. I was almost hysterical because I knew what we were in for. One time he was

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Lionel Myers One time he was talking so loud he blew out his false teeth. Never missed a stride; he just put 'em back in and went right on talking.

talking so loud he blew out his false teeth. Never missed a stride; he just put 'em back in and went right on talking. And then Hen Bills. Does anyone remember Hen Bills? He was such a wonderful speaker, wasn't he? He'd go on a mission and then he'd come home and be an alcoholic. Then they'd recruit him again and he'd go on another mission. But eventually, it got him. He was quite a character around town at the time. Lance Bills, in and of himself, was a

character. I had been in their home so many times. He wore the same suit to a funeral that he wore down there to the store. Everybody thought he didn't have anything, but I had been in his home and his wife had had a suit pressed for him, beautifully hung with everything there right by the bathroom door as he got out of the bathtub. And he'd say, "Oh, hon, this is just fine." He'd put on his old clothes again. George Dansie was part of my growing up life because we used to go over there to get milk. He was always a happy-go-lucky sort of fellow. Squirting the milk into the cat's mouth as he'd milk the cow. I thought he was a good one. . . .

Beth: One of the things that was good about the old days was we didn't have to lock our doors. I don't think there was a person in Riverton that locked their doors. We was able to let our kids go to school walking. We walked to school. We didn't have to fear anything, did we?

Our father and mother had pigs, chickens, and cows and sheep. A regular little farm. A garden. Now to me, those are the things that start people off on a good life, just to have all those things around you that are just part of growing up instead of store-bought toys and stuff like that. Our dad did discipline us and so did our mother. Dad was very strict; strict with the boys. They were never allowed to do anything in the house that the church wouldn't allow you to do. Our father was not LDS, but he seen to it that we children all of us was LDS. Mother never had no trouble with him. He took us to church and we done all that. We had dogs and cats and things that some kids aren't allowed to ever have because the mothers and fathers don't want them in their house. Well, I don't know as mother and dad wanted them in their house or not, but I remember the different times that they

killed a pig or something like that for us to eat. Marg and I would climb behind the stove in the wood box and put our hands up over our ears so we couldn't hear the squealing. We felt so bad because we got so close to all the animals.

We swam in the canal and loved it. We'd go down there all the time. Our parents weren't with us. We didn't have to be watched or, at least, we didn't think we did. We played out on the ditch bank after we'd irrigated. We would make little mud houses and things.

That's when we were little kids. Our mother would give us an egg to go up to town and buy some candy. It would buy us five cents worth of candy. We got some candy by doing that. We'd have to go get the egg and take it up town.

You talk about George Dansie. To me it was Elvoy. He would squirt the milk at us and squirt it into bottles. He was just the best neighbor. He was a good friend to all our brothers and he was a good neighbor to us little kids. We played every game that there was in his barn. They let us. Some of my girl friends were Lois Miller, Ruth Hamilton, Ruby Bills, and Edna Bowles. In those days we had these little books that we used to write little things in like: "Don't it make you mad, don't it get your goat, when you get in the bathtub and ain't got no soap."

Remember the old drug store sitting next to the show house? There was a little drug store. Finally the old post office went over there. Dad was postmaster over there. The winters were real cold. We'd walk to school and our coats would just be flying open and we'd come to a store and we'd stop there for awhile. Then we'd run up to the post office where Dad was and we'd stop in there just in the foyer and then on up to school. We'd freeze.

Some of the best times I had was roller skating in that old Commercial Building — and the ball games and the dances and the shows. All our road shows was on that old Commercial Building stage for years. They were good. We missed that old building! Of two buildings that were in this town, that Commercial Building and the old round church should have been left standing. That

Our mother would give us an egg to go up to town and buy some candy. It would buy us five cents worth of candy.

was a unique, different kind of building. I don't know why they tore that down.

We just had old phonographs to listen to and player pianos. Our dad was really a popcorn fiend. We had to butter his popcorn extra well. We would shop in Salt Lake. We'd have to go in to Kresses and Auerbachs. Our father always decorated Christmas Eve; never before.

We lived in Lark part of the time. Our mother and father would come down to Riverton in a horse and buggy and do their shopping — spend the night and then come back the next day — every time he got paid. We lived in Lark in the winter and Riverton in the summer.

I remember all the dances when we were kids. The dances in those days was so much more fun than I really think they have nowadays because we could dance with different ones. If we didn't like someone, we didn't have to dance with him all night long. We had programs and stuff like that.

The characters that I remember — Dean Dansie. She could swear like a trooper, but she was such a beautiful quilter and such a good cook. She was just a good person to be around. And Carl Madsen — he'd come flying out of his driveway and never look either way. Everybody had to watch out at that point in Riverton. And he did get hit once, didn't he? Yes, he did. [Comment from Margaret Peterson: "He said, 'I thought everybody knew I lived here. I didn't signal because everybody knows I live here.'"]

Dean Dansie . . . could swear like a trooper, but she was such a beautiful quilter and such a good cook.

My brothers had one bad fault. They would go up with ladies from Lehi and American Fork. Dad would let them take the car and they would put just enough gas in to make it to the top of the Camp Williams road and then they would push it all the way home. They would get in trouble the next morning because the car was out of gas. They did this a lot of times.

Some of the things we had to do when we were children around the house was churn butter and help make bread. Mother and my sisters always put up 8 to 10 bushels of peaches and more than that of tomatoes and pears. We always had to carry that down to the basement and we had to scrub cupboards and mother

really made us scrub them with lye.

We were definitely ball fiends in our home. All of us played ball. In fact, my first job I got was because I could play ball. My dad was so interested in all of us. Mother would always cook up a great big batch of spaghetti and we would come home and talk over this ball game two or three times at the table. They'd go over it. One time I caught the ball and I was supposed to throw it to home because there was a run coming in. Instead of that, I throwed it to first base. I'll never forget it because my Dad really made me just crawl.

My girlfriend, Lois Miller, and I were very close. I'd walk halfway home with her and then we wouldn't turn. We made a thing between us. She would walk backwards to her home and I would walk backwards to mine until we got there.

Death Notices

VeLoy Hansen Butterfield (87); husband of Ruth Tebbs; parents were Joseph James and Caroline Petersen Butterfield; father of VeLoy H., Jr., "Vee" Diane, Jill, Pat, Carolyn, Valerie; purchasing agent, loan officer/manager for Small Business Administration.

Claude W. Densley (77); husband of Ruth Brown; parents were Joseph A. and Aurelia Wilson Densley; father of Daun, Tom, Ray, Toni, Craig.

Eldred Beckstead (88); died in Sandy; husband of Laura B. Rindlisbach; parents were Alfred Ray and Sarah Jane Webb Beckstead; father of Loren, Erma, Carolyn.

Dennis E. Seal (53); died in Murray; husband of Allison Densley; parents were Deno E. and Venda Glenn Seal; father of Shawnie, Paulette, Patricia, Adreann.

Letters

If anything in this newsletter sparks your memory of an event, person, or place from your past in Riverton, please drop us a note. Let us know who you think were some of Riverton's memorable characters and why. Memories are so fleeting, but if you write them down and send it to us — this is how history is preserved and shared. We want to make this newsletter a fun and "living" thing. We hope you are enjoying it.

Page-Hansen Store 1891-2001

In August 2001, the Page-Hansen Store was demolished to permit construction of an aligned continuation of 12800 South west of Redwood Road. Ever-increasing volumes of traffic necessitated making some difficult decisions regarding some of the old landmarks in the central business district. The Page-Hansen Store was established in 1891 and, in its day, was recognized as the largest mercantile establishment outside of Salt Lake City in the county. Thomas P. Page was the founder. One of his sons, Meredith, lived with his wife, Maurine, in the north side of the old store until their passing. Meredith died in 1987 and Maurine in 1995. Mel Bashore interviewed them in 1985. In edited excerpts from one of these interviews (9 February 1985), they talked about the old store.

Mel: Is this part of the old Page-Hansen Store? [They lived on the upper floor on the north side of the store.]

Meredith: Yes. Father built it in 1896.

Mel: Did he build the entire building in 1896?

Meredith: No. He built on it two or three times. Father had seventeen clerks, which is quite a payroll and you could get just about most anything you wanted here. He was a great traveler himself. He went across the Atlantic Ocean 18 times, which is quite a few times. Mother had eleven children, six boys and five girls. They're all dead now but me. I'm still around and I hope I'll be around for awhile. I have good health. I'm 83 years old. People don't believe it, but I am. Father lived to be 82 years old. He was a well educated man. Mother was from England, so was Father. Father was the bookkeeper for the Union Pacific up at Scofield. They had a company store and my father run the store. Then Father had a man came here and homesteaded this land here where we're at. Then Mother came with the kids. They loaded the kids on the train with some livestock, a bull and three cows. They come down in this boxcar to the D&RG road and they stopped and unloaded the cows and the sheep and the pigs. Father planted a big orchard — twenty acres. He had, really, a fine orchard. People liked to hear my Father talk about the faraway places. For example, he brought everyone in the town the star of Bethlehem. He give each one of the people in the town of Riverton a star as a keepsake of where he went. Each Christmas, he give each widow a ton of coal

and a sack of flour. It was quite a noble act, I think. Then they used to have a *Christmas* tree. There was seventeen clerks in the store and they had a big *Christmas* tree. The day after *Christmas* he gave all the *Christmas* presents that was left over. You come through a chute, then you drawed what number you got would be corresponding to the *Christmas* presents. It was a big day for the mothers, fathers, and the kids. The kids thought that was really something. I remember when I was a little boy, I drawed and got a little family of monkeys — a mother monkey and six little monkeys.

Maurine: I got the big doll one time. I was about three years old. Mother put it up on the dresser and I couldn't play with it, but I could step on a chair and look at it.

Meredith: Father's store was like a ZCMI on the south end of the valley.

Maurine: They'd bring in wheat to the loading dock and then trade it out. There was an elevator. They'd take this elevator up to the top of the building and dump it.

Meredith: There was three bins there. We made it into bedrooms.

Mel: Was there much talk of trading goods rather than paying in cash?

Maurine: Oh, yes. Butter and eggs. Mother [Mary Ann Steadman] used to sell butter and eggs. Father would take the grain to the mill when we needed flour. They had how many mills was it?

Meredith: Well, there was the West Jordan mill and the South Jordan mill and then that German boy, he built one down in West Jordan. So that's three.

Maurine: He'd hitch up the team and load it up and take the wheat to the mill to be milled.

Meredith: They traded for flour. They'd trade the raw product — wheat — for flour.

Mel: So the store dealt in all kinds of goods?

Meredith: Oh, yeah. Shoes, cheese, butter

Maurine: Clothing and all kinds of goods. The ceiling was tall and they had ladders that went up and they'd roll 'em back and forth and you'd have to climb these ladders to get whatever they wanted off the shelf. Shelves went all the way down from the ceiling.

Meredith: You'd get so much credit, have so many dollars in credit. Then you'd trade it for shoes and the cloth. Oh, the big rolls of cloth! Many, many rolls of cloth.

Maurine: Shoes and overshoes. Oh, everything! Stockings, sweaters. They had the post office in here and a bank.

Meredith: Maurine worked in the post office when she was a young lady. Geneva Garside was the postmaster. She had two sons. She was a widow. There used to be a lot of quarreling between the sheep men and the cattle men. Her husband was a sheep man and the cattlemen killed him up in Pocatello. He got killed trying to protect his sheep.

Mel: Did you work in the store, too?

Meredith: Yes. Well, we had that big farm and he had the big store. You'd take you choice. No getting around it. You had to work. Start at seven and close at eight. Every day. You'd go to school and then you'd work after school. Then in the summer time, from seven till eight. You'd come down those stairs and there was a clock there. You had to have those chores done and set down at the table at seven o'clock, not ten after seven, but seven! If you was ten minutes late or even five minutes late, then Father would cuss like he was going to raise the ceiling! He'd roar like a lion!

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Next Issue

Childhood Memories of a Brother and Sister: Violet Page Hamilton and Delbert Page

Nicknames

Match the name with the nickname (answers below).

1. Dale Butterfield	19. Elding Peterson
2. Rulon Dansie	20. Elbon Brown
3. Mark Wardle	21. Clarence Crane
4. Jack Park	22. Karen Bashore
5. Dave Carroll	23. Lovell Densley
6. Lavar Park	24. Everell Densley
7. Paul Mortensen	25. Earl Park
8. Arch Park	26. Ronald Bergstrom
9. Devon Park	27. Neal Bergstrom
10. Darrell Bills	28. Milton Mousley
11. Ether Butterfield	29. Melvin Weenig
12. Albert Hamilton	30. LeGrand Tea
13. Melva Butterfield	31. Neils Madsen
14. Elias Butterfield	32. Clarence Giles
15. Valoy Butterfield	33. J. R. Park
16. Errol Myers	34. Laury Newman
17. Laughton Myers	35. Kevin Bergstrom
18. Almon Miller	

(a) Bolly	(b) Pete	(c) Tony	(d) Germ	(e) Love
(f) Kay	(g) Zeke	(h) Butch	(i) One Eye	(j) Buss
(k) Skeezix	(L) Swede	(m) Stud	(n) Perk	(o) Squirrly
(p) Shug	(q) Hot Dog	(r) Welby	(s) Stranger	(t) Smiley
(u) Erd	(v) Coffee	(w) Beano	(x) Socks	(y) Johnny
(z) Spud	(A) Ashes	(B) Tank	(C) Pinkie/Red	(D) Bard/Plank
(E) Bill	(F) Jay	(G) Sam		

Answers: 1-z; 2-m; 3-r; 4-p; 5-g; 6-d; 7-a; 8-e; 9-g; 10-j; 11-x;	21-y; 22-b; 23-e; 24-o; 25-u; 26-i; 27-d; 28-f; 29-q; 30-w;
	31-h; 32-a; 33-t; 34-b; 35-e

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