

Riverton Yesterdays



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A Monthly Newsletter of Oldtime Stuff about Riverton, Utah

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"I Drove a School Bus": Elias Butterfield

[Note: This is an edited transcript of a Riverton Historical Society program held on the evening of 3 December 1986 at the Riverton City Hall. Elias passed away on 4 March 2002 (see death notices on page 9).]

It seems like our family was a stage-driving family. Joe drove. Then my brother Arnold drove. Prior to that, my dad had driven. Then my brother, Almon, got a job driving the year he was a junior. He drove for two years. He graduated in 1927. I had the job all signed up with Clarence Nelson to start driving in the fall of 1927. I went to talk to Nick about it.

He said, "Well, we're sorry. They've changed the law. You have to be sixteen now to get a chauffeur's license, so we can't hire you."

So I said, "Alright." So I went back home.

The next year come along. It come time to drive a bus again. So I went over to Nick and I said, "What about my bus job?"

"Well," he said, "as long as they don't change the law, it will be alright." Well, a few weeks after, he got in touch with me and said they'd changed the law. "You've got to be seventeen to have a chauffeur's licence. You can't drive this year either."

So I had to wait till I was a senior to drive the school stage. I drove number nine. Now number nine was the littlest bus on the whole route. It held about twelve people if you crowded them in good and tight. That year that I drove, we had four buses coming out of Riverton. Gale Peterson drove the Bluffdale route. Ron Page went straight down Redwood Road to 90th South. Glen Seal drove the Lower Road, 1300 [West]. I took the Pole Line Road [2700 West]; went up on Herriman Road [12600 South] to Pole Line Road. I didn't have a flat tire the whole year I drove on the Pole Line Road. So Ceece [Crane] must have got all of those. We got a \$1.20 a day. We didn't have to go to school the first period because during that period, we washed the bus and filled the tires and put gas in the bus and checked the oil and all that sort of thing. So we got one period out of school and we got \$1.20 a day to drive bus. And if you don't think that was a lot of money! That was a lot for a kid to have in those days! Bus might not remember this. Do you remember, Bus, when your wages got cut? [Yes. I'll say I do.] Yes. Bus's wages got cut a little later. They didn't pay \$1.20 all the time. They changed that. [They paid a dollar.] It was a good job. We drove to the various events, the plays and anything they had at night — all those things. I only had one tough experience. I was going down 106th South and almost to the river and found Glen Seal was parked down there in the middle of a snow drift. He

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couldn't go forward and he couldn't go back. So I drove up behind him and we couldn't push him out or anything. We decided we could back him around and get him turned around and have him go back where he had already come. So we took him around and then we went around through Midvale. We were scared to go across 90th South for fear it would be snowed in so we went around through Midvale and got to school. Of course, we were all there late.

When we got there, Lee Butler got ahold of me and said, "What in the world's the matter with you?"

I said, "What do you mean 'What's the matter with me'?"

He said "Why didn't you drive around? He would come on over then he could have followed you."

My bus had wheels about that high off the ground and I could have gone through most of the snow drifts with that big old thing. That time, Ron Page drove the new bus. That was number twenty-three. That held maybe about twenty-four or twenty-six people. Glen Seal drove number thirteen and that held about eighteen

— maybe twenty people. My bus would crowd twelve in it if I crowded them real tight. Mine was a four-cylinder Reo. It had an Armstrong starter. I used to go up to the school house and crank it up. I'd get it going and go over and fill it with water. I'd get it warmed up good and warm. We didn't have heaters in them. We'd get the motor warm and then we'd head out for school. My route went along the Pole Line Road down 104th and then back to 106th, and east of the State Highway, and then over to Jordan. Then I turned around and came back to Crescent; picked up the Crescent kids. I drove that route where Slim Silcox was killed where he went over that railroad track. I drove that railroad track for one year. Crossed on that very crossing every day for the school year, went across that crossing to get the Crescent kids and take them back to school.

Joe Frankham drove the river route. One morning he got up an hour early for some reason. He got over to school and he couldn't figure out why nobody was out waiting for the bus until he got down the road aways.

Following my experience of driving the bus, when Valoy became seventeen, he drove the bus when he was a senior in high school. That's the year that Bus can tell you about that they cut their wages and they started the school year and layed them off a little early. But it was kind of fun. We didn't have any problems; we didn't have any trouble. The buses ran good. I didn't ever have to stop. One snow drift problem was the only problem I had. If Glen had been behind me instead of me behind him, we'd have both made it to school that morning.

**"When That Thing Happened in My Life":
Lovell and Mildred Densley**

[Note: Laurel Bills interviewed Lovell and Mildred Densley on 31 August 1986. This is an edited transcript.]

Lovell: I was borned in 1909. I don't want to get any older than I am. I was borned in Riverton. My early days was on the farm which my father [Moses Densley] owned; about forty acres [1898 West 13800 South]. We was brought up on a farm. When we was young, we used to go out and do what farming we can. I can remember my mother always used to holler at me to get in the night's coal and wood. We had an old stove that was a coal-burner and a wood-burner. At that time, electricity was out of the question. We had lamps in the house. We had to pump the washing machine by hand. We didn't have any power. I pulled the handle back and forth to wash all our clothes.

Mildred: Dr. Hosmer was their doctor at that time. He went out in the barn and took some of the lumber from the horse barn and made a scaffold over the bed to suspend the leg and to keep it elevated.

Lovell: If I laid down straight, my body was heavier than my leg. The leg would come up and my body would go down. So he had to prop my leg up in the air and let it knit there. He had a scaffold come over the top of the bed. He had flat irons on the other end.

Mother got leafs out of the table to go under because they didn't have no spring in my leg. A lot of people says, "You'll never walk again." I played basketball for years. After that, we moved right into the town of Riverton. We bought Dr. Hardy's place [12714 South 1700 West]. Dr. Hardy left a goat and us kids had the greatest time with this billy goat that we raised up.

Laurel: Where were you born, Mildred?

Mildred: I was born in Riverton. We lived down on the Lower Road where Florence Beratto lives now [13315 South 1300 West]. Niels Peterson lived on one side and Mrs. Battison lived across the street. Dad [Edgar Aylett] was the janitor for Riverton School. I remember the winters that we had. We came up the cemetery road — they were just dirt roads then. The cemetery was drifted completely over. We had a good time walking. We'd go in the cemetery and go clear down to our waist. Once, they had to go to a neighbor and have somebody come and pull me out. I was born 9 August 1910. I was born at home. I am quite certain that it was Dr. Hardy. It would have to be because he was the only doctor here.

Lovell: Dr. Hosmer was in Midvale.

Mildred: I have never been to Dr. Hosmer. I think Lovell has. Did you have Dr. Hosmer see you for your broken leg before Dr. Hardy moved away?

Lovell: No. This was before Dr. Hardy moved away [about 1920]. Dr. Hardy always lived down here; where the Gillette's are now. He had his office there. You had your tonsils taken out there, didn't you? In that back bedroom — he had the office there and we moved the office out and had a bedroom made out of it when dad bought it.

Mildred: We lived down on the Lower Road for many years. There weren't any sidewalks. Page-Hansen was the big store. That was T.P. Page. That was Meredith Page's dad. He had a big family. They had a beautiful confectionary there where

We got an allowance of five cents a week if we did our work.

you could get ice cream cones for a nickel. It had a marble top and high stools. We got an allowance of five cents a week if we did our work. You could spend it any way you wanted to. It was a good childhood. We had family reunions. Aunt Rilda and Uncle Harry would always go down to the Lower Road on Sunday. Very often Mother's other sisters would come in to visit. There were two great big trees. Dad had climbed up and put up swings. It was wonderful. My early childhood memories are happy ones.

Lovell: When I went to grade school, I caught every disease they had and more! Every time I would come home with mumps or chicken pox, Clifton and Mildred would say I got to stay out of school. The year I had my leg broke, I didn't go to school that year. I was out two years before I went over to Jordan. I went over there as a sophomore because they had the ninth grade here at Riverton. I first started school in the Riverton Elementary and then it burnt down. They built another one. That isn't the original school over here. They had an old board swinging gate that you had to go through. It swiveled.

Mildred: My second grade teacher was Miss Swenson. That year, there were too many kids in the second grade. So five of us got put up into the third grade. I went home crying because I didn't want to leave Miss Swenson. I went to Mary Hansen Egbert. She was John Hansen's daughter.

It was a good thing because I was always so large. There were five of us. There was Alene and Vilate Crane — the Cranes were rich. The Cranes lived on the corner where the Evergreen Restaurant is. Their house was just elaborate. He had his money with sheep. All of the Crane girls went in to LDS High School. They didn't go to Jordan. They went to the grade school here. I don't think they were much smarter for going there. I went to ninth grade here and then over to Jordan. At that time, they had the fellows who went to Jordan drive these buses. Many was the day that we would have to get out and push those buses up Tithing Yard Hill.

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[to be continued]

"When I Was Growing Up": Reid Nokes

[Note: Mel Bashore interviewed Reid Nokes on 8 October 1985. This is an edited transcript.]

Reid: I was born on April 6th, 1919, in my grandfather's home. That was the same house that my father was born in — in 1893. My father was Horace. I was born in the home on 13083 South Redwood Road. It's the white stucco house on the hill on the east side of the road. That house was built in two different pieces; the first part about 1885.

Mel: Was the first house that your grandfather Charles Mormon Nokes built?

Reid: Yes. He added on to that house about 1890 to the appearance of it now. When I was born, my dad and mother lived in Bluffdale in a rock house southwest of the new church house. I was born in my grandfather's house in extenuating circumstances. I was born two months premature. I weighed 4 1/4 pounds at the time I was born. I was a blue baby. Just before I was born, Ed Beckstead give my mother a ride down from the old rock house. I think he was driving a buggy or just an old wagon. It was a bumpy ride, no doubt. Ed Beckstead could only have been about fifteen years old. He was from South Jordan. They gave me a name and blessing right after I was born because they didn't figure I would live. We'd moved here and then we moved back to Levan where my grandfather had some ground. My father went back there to run that ground for him. That had to be about 1920. After my brother Doyle was born in June 1920, we moved back out to Magna. My father worked for Utah Copper Division for a couple of years. Then we moved back to Riverton again in 1925. He'd bought an old gray house up there in Magna and moved it out here. It was a frame house. It had a dirt basement under the house. We'd come out in an old Model T Ford that he had bought. I was just a little

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tiny kid. I couldn't have been over three or four at the time. He had a red Hills Brothers' coffee can and he had a bunch of little mice in it. I remember that just as clear as ever — seeing the mice in the can. In Riverton, he started in the chicken business. He built coops — one at a

time. Our house was located just south of our old home. That old frame house has been torn down. We never had electricity in it for years. We had four or five children born in that house. We eventually had ten children in the family. I first remember my grandfather and grandmother when we'd come out to visit them. I couldn't have been over three years old. On the farm, he had the cows in the old barn — a herd of eight or ten milking cows. My grandmother [Sarah Elizabeth Nokes] had geese — four or five geese. I thought that the geese was way bigger than me. I remember their neck and their head was way above me. I was scared of them. I was wearing rompers at the time.

My grandfather didn't move until 1926 to Salt Lake. He moved to 333 East 17th South. He was in the Whittier Ward there. He passed away in 1932. I remember an occasion when he came back to visit us. We were down in the field piling hay. He'd show me how to pile hay. He'd say, "Now this is the way to do it." He told me when I was putting a dirt dam in the ditch, "Now jam the shovel in the dirt so that it'll make it so that it won't leak." He was a bee man. He had a lot of bees. He had a lot of orchards. He had his own cane press. He still had the cane press on the farm there when we moved in. We moved up from the little gray house into the big house in about 1931 or 1932. We remodeled the big house.

Once one of my uncles was driving in the Model T Ford and had my grandmother in the car with him. They were crossing the track just below 21st South on State Street and was in a car wreck with a train. My grandma was paralyzed from the waist down. She was in the hospital for quite awhile. She never did walk again until she passed away. She was bed-ridden.

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[to be continued]

Death Notices

Elias C. Butterfield (90); husband of Maxine Sargent; parents were Joseph James and Dora Caroline Petersen Butterfield; father of Brent, Roger, Janeal, Janean, Veda, Craig, and Rhonda; founding partner of Butterfield Ford, Riverton Town Board member, founding member of Riverton Historical Society

Glen Golden Page (71); husband of Colleen Bills; parents were Roland and Cleo Bateman Page; father of Ray, Drew, Sam, Colette; Kennecott Copper employee

Notice

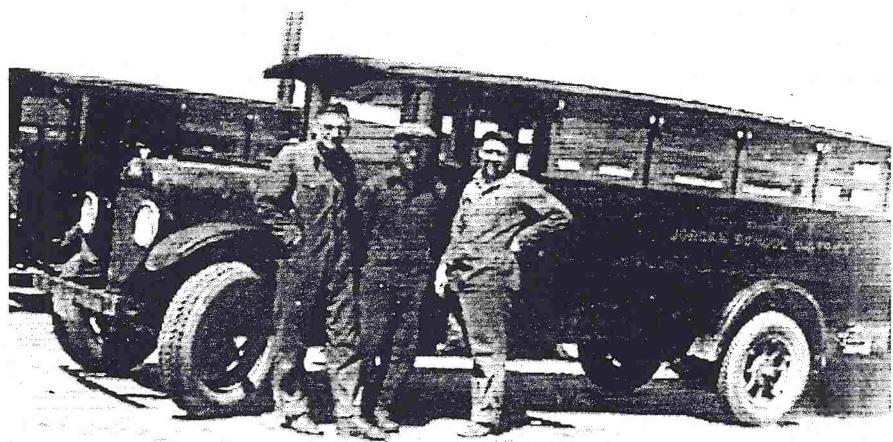
The Historical Society is sponsoring a historical lecture/organ recital on the old Domed Church on Saturday, 30 March, at 7 PM. Jack Webster donated the old organ from the Domed Church to the Historical Society and Jack Chidester has beautifully restored it. It now sits on the main floor of the Crane House. You will be able to hear it played again that evening. Ken Neff will be the guest organist. Those attending will receive copies of some of the recollections of people (including Ren Howard, Mildred Densley, Elvoy Dansie, Reid Nokes, and Rulon Dansie, etc.) who used to attend church in the Domed Church. This should be a very memorable evening! Please come.

Next Issue

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“When That Thing Happened in My Life”: Lovell and Mildred Densley

“When I Was Growing Up”: Reid Nokes

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