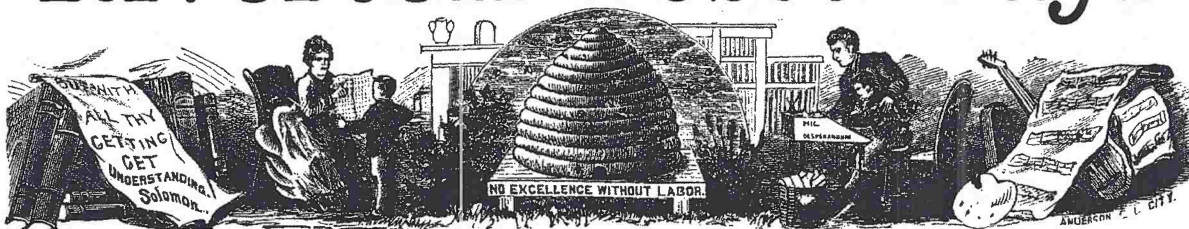


# Riverton Yesterdays



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A Monthly Newsletter of Oldtime Stuff about Riverton, Utah

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“When That Thing Happened in My Life”:  
Lovell and Mildred Densley (cont.)

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

Laurel: Lovell, when did your father [Moses Densley] pass away? I remember him. It must have been after 1945 because that's when I came to Riverton.

Lovell: He had a stroke that passed him away.

Mildred: Yes. Lovell would go down and bathe him.

Lovell: You had to take him for a walk. Boy, you had to hold onto him! My mother [Emily Percilla Densley] and Aunt Lisa [Aaron Densley's wife] were sisters and my

They thought they might be good, so — we'll just marry 'em!

Uncle Aaron [Densley] and my dad were twins. In other words, twins married sisters. They used to trail sheep up through Coalville and up through Upton. That's where they met their wives was trailing sheep along the road. Got acquainted with them. They wanted somebody to help 'em drive the sheep through. They thought they might be good, so — we'll just marry 'em! That's what happened. They made a good living there for a good number of years. When Uncle Aaron went on a mission, Dad run the sheep for two years. When the two years was up, they split the culls right down the middle just like Uncle Aaron had been there all the time. They was very, very close people. They was in the sheep business for about sixty years. Dad was only about ten years old when he started gathering pet lambs up there on the flat. He sold them out when he was about seventy. After Dad sold those sheep, he pined his life right away. He thought that all he knew was sheep — sheep, sheep, sheep. When I'd go down to see him, he'd say, “Lovell, we shoulda never sold those sheep. We should have never sold those sheep.” He'd just set in that rocker.

Mildred: He wouldn't even get up and walk around.

Lovell: He wasn't even doing anything. He'd just say, “Well, we shouldn't

have sold the sheep." And that's all there was to it! Of course, when a guy has his lifetime like that and that's all he knows and that's all he cares to know — I guess that's life.

Laurel: Lovell, tell us something about your childhood.

Lovell: When we were young kids, we weren't the very best sometimes. Kenneth Bills — who we always called "Chick" — was a son of Dave Bills, who was the bishop. He run the meat market.

We looked up and here come the train, chugging down the hill. Man, we piled out of that car!

There was him and I and a young fellow named Max Miller and Herb Farrell. We was going over to Draper to see some girls. We went and pushed this car out on the road and started over towards Draper. Of course, we had to go down and cross the river and up on the other side and cross the railroad track. This old Model T had a direct line to your steering and you just had to hold it right straight to keep it going. I believe Herb Farrell because Chick had a broken leg. He couldn't drive it very well and he was on crutches. We came to the railroad track and they just had ties laying across the railroad track. He missed the tie and hit the rail of the track and right straight up the track we went. Just bumpity, bumpity, bumpity over these railroad ties. Pretty soon we hollered, "Stop the car! Stop the car!" Finally he got the car stopped and we looked up and here come the train, chugging down the hill. Man, we piled out of that car! Chick threw his crutches in the air and he was gone! It was each man for hisself! I went over on the right-of-way and I was trying to jump over the fence. I couldn't make it so I just hid myself down under one of the bushes there! And here come the train — chuck, chuck, chuck. And boy, I was waiting every second to hear that Ford all walled! And pretty soon — chug, chug, chug. It went right on by. My golly! We got up and looked and there we was on a side track! And there was sure a happy bunch of people! We pushed the car back on the road. In those days, them old Fords had wooden spokes. The spokes was all bent out one way and another. So we had to turn it around and take it back home. It went loppity, loppity, loppity — all the way back to the garage. I don't know how Chick come out telling his dad what happened. He had another brother named Leo. Leo was awful good to help us get out of situations like that.

## "When I Was Growing Up": Reid Nokes (cont.)

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

Reid: The alfalfa mill was located on the Big Canal on 13400 South just about where George Dansie lives. Lloyd Peterson and Millard Crane lives about on the same spot where the alfalfa mill was. The alfalfa mill was in operation until possibly 1938 or 1939. We had a beet dump up there where they dumped beets and the Orem track run through there. The people that lived there and took care of the alfalfa mill was Grafton N. Bowles.

Mel: What do you remember about the Page-Hansen store?

Reid: The Page-Hansen store was in operation when I was growing up. When I was just a little boy, we'd hunt sparrow eggs up in the trees. I was a little bit chubby.

We thought those fellows were gone and wouldn't chase us anymore. We were scared stiff!

I'm still chubby. A group of the boys would get sparrow eggs and have a whole hat full of them. They'd go throw them at cars. They threw them at an old Model T Ford and these fellows in the Model T Ford stopped and was chasing us. We rushed down to the Page-Hansen store and was setting eating ice cream. We thought those fellows were gone and wouldn't chase us anymore. We were scared stiff! We left and they come up and caught us walking up the road. The fellows that caught us was Gail Peterson and Clarence Giles. They said, "We'll take you down to the sheriff." They took us down to South Jordan. The sheriff was Holt. They called him Ped Holt — just north of 103<sup>rd</sup> South in a white frame house — possibly where the Roy Holt house is. We set out in the car and they questioned us each a little bit. They finally decided that we all told the same story — that we didn't do it. So they let us go. That's my first real scare with a sheriff. Gail Peterson is a brother to Bruce Peterson, the owner of Peterson Market.

We all shopped at the Page-Hansen store. After that was closed, Rolly Page had his store where the old Jordan Valley Bank is — Rol-Save Market. They could sell you anything there. Rolly Page happens to be Noel, Glen, and Lynn Page's father. A fine

gentleman. You'd go in there and he'd always say, "Is there anything I can do for you, Reid?" I remember his father [Thomas P. Page]. They had an orchard over three right in back of where the Third Ward church is. That was all orchard — Thomas P. Page's orchard. They had a soda fountain in the Page-Hansen store. They had ice cream chairs with the curved iron on the back of them that you set on. Naturally, the kids was interested in ice cream. I still am. Page-Hansen was the only store here except for down on the Commercial Corner where the hardware store was owned by William Parry from Bluffdale.

Mel:                      What other things did you do when you were a boy?

Reid:                    At one time, we had a lot of chickens. I was quite young. I was supposed to go down and water the cow in the barn. We didn't have a tap down by the barn. My dad said, "Now you take that bucket down

He kept on saying, "Now, don't do it. You don't have to do it just because he says to." I says, "He'll know."

and water that cow." One of my friends was over there with me. He was a year and a half older than me. He says, "Now, don't do that. Just go and act like you did it." I says, "Oh, no. My dad will know what I done." So I took the bucket and got some water in it. He kept on saying, "Now, don't do it. You don't have to do it just because he says to." I says, "He'll know." I went down there to water the cow and looked through the window and my dad was watching us. That teaches you to do what you're supposed to be doing. We done an awful lot of work. None of us has been afraid to work.

Mel:                      Did you work in any of the businesses in Riverton?

Reid:                    I worked a little on the farms. Here in Riverton they had a 4-inch wooden water pipe line. It was owned by several of the people in town. When I was seventeen years old, we shoveled trench on it for two dollars a day with a shovel. I thought that was great! This wooden line went right out on the west side of Redwood Road. It would be about four foot out from the curb on the west side where the wooden pipe line went through. We'd dig that by hand with shovels. It went from probably 11800 South to

Bluffdale. The pipe was three foot deep so it wouldn't freeze. It was a wooden stave pipe line. It was a water line. I worked on it in 1935 or 1936. That wooden line was already in there. We

were changing that line to a cast-iron line. That wooden line came over from Draper from Bear Canyon. It supplied enough water for us all the time. We had chickens, beets, and a large family. We always had plenty to eat, but we didn't have the money to spend. When you had 25 cents for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, why it was great! I'd buy a bottle of soda water and drink it. But it wasn't much for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

When you had 25 cents for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, why it was great! I'd buy a bottle of soda water and drink it.

Mel: Was that the big holiday during the year?

Reid: Yes, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July was the big holiday. They had a rodeo ground in back of the old church house. They done a little rodeo stuff there — horse riding and stuff like that. It was back where the school park is. There was a pavilion there — right back of where the café is — the café on the west side. It was back of the old Peterson's store where the church house was. They had a ball diamond there, too. I never did play ball. The sidewalk on the west side was a WPA project. It was built in 1935. It probably started at 13400 South and then went possibly down to past Morris Butterfield's, past the old Zacharias Butterfield home [approximately 12150 South]. Cyrus Bills worked on it.

Mel: What do you remember about the train-bus accident?

Reid: That bus accident was December the 1<sup>st</sup>, 1938. I was at home at the time. I think that one of my brothers missed the bus. He didn't go that day. It was real foggy — sort of a stormy day. I heard about it and walked across the road and talked to Ellis Butterfield's brother, Ovid. He was working on some machinery. We discussed it then. It was terrible! Bruce Peterson's brother lost his life. Harold Sandstrom lost his life. There was several right close by. There was some families that lost two children. The bus driver was Jack Silcox's brother — Ferrald Silcox. They were days that were real tragedy.

When I graduated from high school, I went up to Idaho to

work in thinning beets. We had a group that went up from here — thirty-eight or thirty-nine boys. Mahonri Butterfield went up with us. We had a drought in here then. We didn't have things going for a few years on account of the drought. We went up there and thinned beets. In 1936, I went up again and thinned beets with another couple of fellows. I went on up to Osgood, Idaho, and was thinning beets there. Just a group of us went up there alone that year. It was 1935 when I first went up. I was only sixteen then. In 1936, after I thinned beets for six weeks, I worked up there for three or four weeks in the hay.

I started at Kennecott Copper in 1939. I went in the service in February of '41. A group of us went in the National Guard from here — about nine boys. My number was quite close up in the draft at the time, so we went in February of '41

That is a hard feeling to have — the war started and you don't know what's going to happen or who's going to bomb what or where.

and went to San Luis Obispo. At the time that the war started, we'd just come back from a bivouac and maneuvers up in Hunter Liggett, which is about sixty miles north of San Luis Obispo. We were thinking about coming home for Christmas from the Army. That was going to be a great deal to have a furlough to come home. We'd been home once in September, but this was in December. And the war started then. I had an appointment to go have my tonsils out on December 8<sup>th</sup>. War was declared on December 8<sup>th</sup>, but as we were sitting there, the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor. There was a whole division there in that camp. They had them evacuate from the camp. Those that were in the hospital, they left there. I'd went to the hospital that day on December 7<sup>th</sup> and had my tonsils out on December 8<sup>th</sup>. I couldn't talk for a week after — sore two weeks. My folks come down to see me at that time and took me on down the coast to where my unit had went to — clear down to San Diego. That was 350 miles south — in Escondido. That is a hard feeling to have — the war started and you don't know what's going to happen or who's going to bomb what or where. Nobody knew nothing at that time. There was other Riverton boys with us. We'd been to Fort Lewis in the meantime. A couple weeks after the war started, we was in Escondido. We came back up and was on detached duty around Terminal Island.

Stirring Up Old Memories —  
with Evelyn, Vivian, and Mike

[Note: John McCormick, a historian with Utah State Historical Society, interviewed Evelyn B. Dreyer, Vivian Brown, and Mike Crane on 12 August 1980. Original interview is in Utah State Historical Society and a copy is in Riverton Historical Society. This is an edited transcript of that interview.]

**Evelyn:** Roland Page run the Rol-Save Store on the corner, but when he first started he had a place in the Commercial Building. Him and his brother, Meredith, didn't get along too good so he took his share out of Page-Hansen store and he went in business by himself. He had a place in the old Commercial Building for years. When they sold the Jordan Valley Bank building, he moved in there. On the north end of the Commercial Building was the post office. Next to it was Rolly's store, then an implement store and then a beauty parlor. Rolly started in there in the late 1920s or early 1930s. Upstairs they used to have a skating rink and hold dances. It's a place where everybody went.

**Mike:** It was torn down in October 1939. It was condemned and the old dome church was condemned. Frank Seal tore them down.

**Evelyn:** There was a gas station over here that Hamilton run. I think they sold out to the church.

**Mike:** The bank failed in the '30s. I still have a check on this bank for a nickel. They repaid you five percent of your money. I have a nickel check written out in November 1935. One time I took two checks and a nickel to get a bucket of cigarettes. Tommy Nichols had his place behind Bill Nelson's garage.

The bank failed in the  
'30s. I still have a check  
on this bank for a nickel.  
They repaid you five  
percent of your money.

**Evelyn:** They used to call it a cigar store.

[to be continued]

## Death Notices

Jack Braithwaite (81); husband of Agnes Florence Orton; parents were Laurence and Lucy Smith Braithwaite; carpenter/contractor

Edna Margaret Tea McNeill (91); widow of Charles F. McNeill; parents were Charles Edward and Margaret Weenig Tea

Calvin Barnett (62); husband of Deanna Mash; parents were Glen and Vera Barnett; raised in Riverton

## Letters

When he sent in his re-subscription, Max Stephensen (Mesa, AZ) included a nice note which we thought might be of interest to our readers. Following are excerpts from his letter:

I was a resident of Riverton from 1921 until 1940. My parents were Stephen F. and Hazel Giles. Dad was principal of Riverton Junior High School. There were ten children in our family, and we all had a very interesting life in Riverton. . . . My brother Carol was killed in the train/bus collision in 1938. That was a terrible time for our whole community. [My] brother, Capt. Mont F., an Air Force pilot, was shot down over Germany during World War II in December 1944. [My] brother, Col. Mark L., U.S. Air Force pilot, was shot down during the Vietnam [War] in the year 1967. He had been missing in action for 23 years when his remains were returned for burial in the Riverton Cemetery. In fact, several of our family members are buried in the Riverton Cemetery. I still consider Riverton my hometown and am happy to see the development going on there.

Note: We still have about 100 copies of the Riverton history book [Melvin L. Bashore and Scott Crump, *Riverton: The Story of a Utah Country Town* (1994), 424 p.]. It contains a chapter on the train-bus accident mentioned by Max Stephensen. We are selling them at cost for \$12 (add \$5 for shipping and handling). We originally printed 1500 copies. They won't be reprinted. They make great birthday and Christmas gifts (but who's thinking about Christmas in this heat!).

## Notice

Rosetta "Set" Hilton (Brigham City) recently donated numerous heirlooms originally owned by David Bills and Roy Glazier. Set's mother was Mae Bills Glazier, daughter of David and Lorena Bills. They are on display in the Crane House.

RIVERTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
CRANE HOUSE  
1640 W. 13200 S.  
RIVERTON, UT 84065

The Riverton Historical Society is sponsoring a historical lecture on Saturday, 31 August at 7 PM at the Crane House. It will be "A Look Back at Our Main Street." With the demolition of so many of the old businesses on Redwood Road, we thought it would be timely to hear from some of those whose families had stores and businesses in old Riverton. Those of you who attended our dome church lecture/organ recital know how interesting these affairs are. Put 31 August on your calendar. Don't miss it!