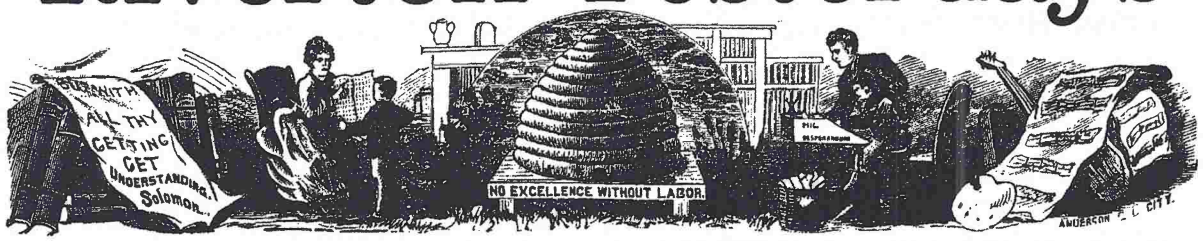
Riverton Yesterdays



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A Monthly Newsletter of Oldtime Stuff about Riverton, Utah

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Stirring Up Old Memories — with Evelyn, Vivian, and Mike (cont.)

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

Evelyn: My brother and I used to go hock watermelons. We had an old weed patch in the back of us when we lived at the alley by the grandstand. The weeds were way high and we swiped these watermelons and put them in the weed patch so Mother couldn't find them. We got caught several times.

We swiped these watermelons and put them in the weed patch so Mother couldn't find them.

Vivian: My grandpa used to have a big apple orchard. People come from all over the country to get apples. It was the only big orchard in Riverton.

Mike: Martin Bowen's dad had one, but he got his later.

Vivian: I think Grandpa had a bunch of those grafted trees and they would try them out on his trees and he would have different apples on a tree. He had a cider mill and everything. They used to sell cider and people used to come from all over the country. They'd sell apples for twenty-five cents a bushel.

Mike: I remember when a plane landed up on Daddy's field. Everybody went up there to see what was going on. They took kids for rides and Sam Bills said, "Do you have a parachute? Could I jump out?" The guy flung over his bed roll and stayed over night. He said, "There's the parachute. Put it on." He put a couple of belts around the bed roll on his back for a parachute. They didn't take him up and let him jump out.

Evelyn: All the sheep men were Republican and all the businessmen were Democrats.

Vivian: My mother was brought up Democrat and my dad was brought up Republican. They both turned Republican.

Mike: I think my mother was Democrat and my dad was afraid to say. Mom run the show, I think. Back in the Depression, we hauled wood for firewood to keep our houses warm in the winter time. We'd go over to Butterfield Canyon.

My mother was Democrat and my dad was afraid to say. Mom run the show.

Evelyn: Daddy would go down to Price and Huntington to get loads of coal. I don't know how he made it with that truck.

Mike: I went with one of the Farrell kids down there in 1934 in a 1934 truck. We were coming up the summit. This guy's truck heated up and we took turns sitting out on the fender. We had a big snowball out there and we put the snow into the radiator to try to cool it down going up the hill. We didn't have water to put into it, so we kept on putting snowballs in it to cool it down.

Evelyn: When MacDonalds gave away that touring car, we won it for having the most Black-eyed Susan candy bar wrappers. It was gray. They gave it away at the fairgrounds. We had the most Black-eyed Susan wrappers. That's all we sold in the café was those Black-eyed Susan candy bars. We kept asking for the wrappers. They announced that we had won. We couldn't bring it home that night. We had to go back to get it the next day. We walked from the tracks to the fairgrounds the next day because we had to drive the car home. We went to the Freeman reunion up in Herriman in the old gray car. We were all so proud of that thing. It stopped on the way to Herriman. We didn't know we had to shift the gears. It didn't have a clutch, but when you went up the hill, you had to shift the gear. We didn't know what was wrong with it. Someone came and told us how to do it.

[to be continued]

"In My Growing Up Years" — Don Petersen

[Note: Mel Bashore interviewed Donald B. Petersen on 9 April 1986. This is an edited excerpt from that transcript.]

Don: [Sometimes when I went over to Zach Butterfields] there would be a sheep herder getting ready to go out to the summer range with the sheep. They had their sheep wagons with canvas tops sitting out there in the back. There was usually two or four of them. The old sheep herders stayed in them at that time. I went over there to see what they were doing. Sometimes they would invite me in to have supper with them. I used to just love to have supper with them because they cooked mutton. They cooked the fatty part of the mutton up real well. It was well done and I got so that I liked that. It was a real treat to me. They had sourdough bread with it and sopped it up with the grease. We never had mutton at home. My dad always had a herd of cows and we always had beef. It was quite a treat to have mutton. They also had lamb chops. There was quite a number of sheep herders around town — Densley, Butterfield. Each one had quite a large herd and they built up a pretty good fortune from it. They became quite wealthy. I think Isaac Freeman originally started with the sheep. They seemed very wealthy to me. They always had the best of everything — large homes, nice big barns. Other people built barns of lesser size, not being able to afford brick. These people had brick barns and seemed quite affluent. During the time that I was growing up there was quite a few sheep men. There were also a lot of dairy farmers and a lot of people with chickens. There were a lot that raised chickens — thousands of them. It seemed like that was where you made the most money at that time.

The Depression had an effect upon everybody's lives. It was very hard for them to understand why a bank would go broke. Some of the people like Ike Freeman had been very wealthy. The Depression came along and he went broke and the bank went broke. My father had a fairly sizeable savings account at that time.

> My father told me that the bank didn't have my money any more. . . . How could we lose money that we'd put in there? We trusted those people.

I even had a few dollars in the bank. My father told me that the bank didn't have my money any more. It caused me to wonder why that should be. How could we lose money that we'd put in there? We trusted those people. I was only six years of age.

The Depression had a very profound effect upon our lives. Hardly anybody had any money. I don't know whether old Zach Butterfield took out bankruptcy or not. He managed to save his farm somehow. It seemed like all those people that had large herds of sheep and had been quite wealthy at one time were suddenly just like all the rest of the people — poor with nothing left. But most of them still had their homes, but times were hard for them. The Depression was quite hard on young people because there was no money to buy anything. You couldn't go anywhere. We never went on a vacation all the years that I can remember except one time when my father and mother took my younger sister and I in our Model T Ford. We went to Nebraska where my two oldest sisters lived. They were both recently married. Their husband worked in coal mines there. They were both so homesick that they begged Mother and Father to come and bring my younger sister and I with them. There were some summers when we had to go without shoes because they were worn out. There was no money to buy shoes with. You'd have about one pair of work pants and another pair of corduroys or something to wear. We had to make do. In a way, being on a farm during the Depression wasn't bad as far as eating was concerned. We always had plenty to eat. T-bone steaks, sirloin steaks, barbecued spareribs, and filet migñon were commonplace things for us. We ate them all the time. We had pies, apple pies, and ice cream made from milk that we milked from the cows. We had whipped cream and butter from our cows. We had eggs from the chickens. We had beef steaks and veal. We had it all. We ate like kings, I think.

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[to be continued]

"More Fun Than Un-Fun":
Ted Seal

[Note: Mel Bashore interviewed Ted Seal on 8 August 2002 in West Jordan. This is an edited excerpt from that transcript.]

Ted: I was born May 28, 1928, in Riverton, Utah. I lived there until I got married at the age of twenty. There were some fun times and some un-fun times in Riverton. More fun than un-fun. My parents were Franklin E. Seal, Jr. and Lydia Orgill Seal. I was born in what we called the south room of our store building. We had a grocery store on the corner of what we used to call the Herriman Road and Redwood Road. We were in the third and fourth building going south from the bank. I was born in the fourth building. At that time, my folks and their children were living in that building. It was built in about 1923 or 1924. My folks were married in 1921, if I remember correctly. In March 1922, my folks bought the old Bills meat and grocery store from George Bills. We changed it to Seal's Meat and Grocery. My folks operated that thing under the brand of Red and White. They used that label until 1937 when they went to IGA which is Independent Grocers Alliance. It was just independent grocers banded together to do advertising and buying. Two weeks after I was born, they moved out of the living quarters south of the grocery store down to their new home. It was about a quarter of a mile north on the east side of the road — on Redwood Road. Alvin Miller built it.

There were some fun times and some un-fun times in Riverton. More fun than un-fun.

Mel: Was your dad pretty successful in the grocery business?

Ted: I guess so. He built the home and paid off the bills and bought a forty acre farm on the northeast corner of 13400 South and 2700 West — which we used to call Pole Line Road.

Mel: Was the south building of your grocery store meant to be a home?

Ted: It was intended to be a business, but it was built because they needed living quarters. They built it with the ultimate idea of having a business in that building.

Mel: Were there any others who were living right in their business?

Ted: My uncle Harry E. Page, who was running Page Implement and Hardware, across from Riverton Motor on the west side of the street, did the same thing. He built that building and lived in the west end of the building. In 1934, we leased a grocery store and a home in Salt Lake City on 13th East between 4th and 5th South on the east side of the street. My dad ran that grocery store and hired Lute Peterson to manage his store for him out here in Riverton. I started 1st grade in the Stewart Training School. It was actually on the University of Utah's campus. They used it to train the students. It was like student teaching. I started 1st grade there.

Mel: Did you go to kindergarten?

Ted: I went to kindergarten before moving. I don't remember much of that other than walking up there. It was just a six-week summer course. It wasn't like they have nowadays — the whole year. It was just a few weeks in the summer. I just remember carrying a small container of milk. That must have been *really* good to drink by the time we had our break because there was no refrigeration. We all lived through it. I don't remember anybody dying because of it. That must have *really* tasted good when we got around to drinking our milk. Even if it was around an hour after class started, that's quite awhile for milk to be sitting out.

We all lived through it. I don't remember anybody dying because of it.

Mel: Did your dad sell milk in his store?

Ted: Yes and no. In those days, most every home had a cow. It was a farming community. There was a dairy in Draper that brought milk to our store in bottles. We did sell milk, but not very much. Bottled milk. Unpasteurized. Unhomogenized. It was just raw milk from the dairy. He would bottle it up and bring it to us.

Mel: Did you have a cow or were you city people?

Ted: We had a two-acre piece of ground at the new house that we moved into. We had chickens, pigs, and cows. We had two milk cows because in those days you dried up a cow for about three months. In that interim period, you wouldn't be getting any milk from it. We had two cows to fill that void so that we always had fresh milk from the cow. They were

Jersey cows. They didn't give much milk, but what they gave was about two-thirds cream. It was very good. It made us all very fat.

Mel: Did you walk to kindergarten from your house?

Ted: Yes. It was just under a mile to the school. At that time, if you lived a mile from the school, they'd bus you. We were about two steps too close to the school to catch the bus so we walked. The first time I was able to catch a school bus was when I went to Jordan High as a sophomore.

Mel: Do you have any early memories of before you went to school.

Ted: I just remember a few things. I remember going up to the farm with my eldest sister whose name is Jean Seal [Hansen]. She was about six years older than me. We were going up to pick carrots. We were walking up. To save a little distance, we cut diagonally through the old Orem Line. We walked up that way to save a little distance. When we went to cross the Big Canal, the railroad ties were open across the big beams that held it up. I wouldn't go across there because I knew my foot would get caught; then the train would come and kill me. My sister was very angry at me for not coming. Eventually I must have gone over. But I knew that I'd get caught there and get killed by the train. In the general area of where Inter-mountain Farmers is now, there was an elevated thing for coal cars to come in so that they could drive trucks close and dump the coal out of the cars. There was also a platform there that Riverton Motor unloaded their automobiles out of railroad cars. They had four automobiles per railroad car. Riverton Motor would pay their employees extra money to go up there and unload the cars after business hours. I used to go up and watch them. They even had to bring gasoline because there was no gasoline in those new vehicles. You had to put gasoline in them to drive them up to Riverton Motors which was not very far. The mail would come up there. Les Butterfield was the station master. I remember him bringing mail down to the post office in a little cart — very similar to handcart that the pioneers used — not as large of course. That's what he used to bring the mail down to the post office.

I wouldn't go across there because I knew my foot would get caught; then the train would come and kill me.

[to be continued]

Death Notices

Jean Page (84); wife of Delbert H. Page; parents were Neivan and Lillian Crab; mother of Dennis and Gail

Jacqueline Dansie (77); wife of Larry Dansie; parents were Lorenzo Evrett and Florence Melba Peterson

Hal Rindlisbacher (61); husband of Mary Beckstead; parents were Harold L. and Audrey Atwood Rindlisbacher; father of Debby, Kevin, Troy, Ryan, Jason

Notice

On Saturday, 31 August, we were treated to a "A Look Back at the Old Business District of Riverton" at the Crane House. As one of the speakers said, with the demolition of all our old business buildings, all we have now are memories. As soon as we transcribe the recording made that evening, we will print excerpts of those memories in *Riverton Yesterdays*. It may be of interest to our readers to learn that we have subscribers in such far-flung places as California, Idaho, Arizona, Washington, and Oregon. One of our subscribers from California, Lauritz Petersen, was in attendance that evening. He even played some impromptu hymns on the old domed church pump organ. Those who couldn't attend or who live too far away can look forward to reading about Rol-Save, Seal's market, Peterson's Market, Riverton Motor, Butterfield Motor, and other businesses in future issues.

On Monday, 30 September, the Riverton Historical Society inducted Bill Allinson and Sandra Lloyd into the Riverton Hall of Honor during a program at the Crane House. Their portraits and plaques will be placed in the city hall along with other distinguished past honorees.

Next Issue

More "Stirring Up Old Memories," "In My Growing Up Years," & "More Fun Than Un-fun"

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My mother was
Democrat and my dad
was afraid to say.
Mom run the show.

Mike Brown