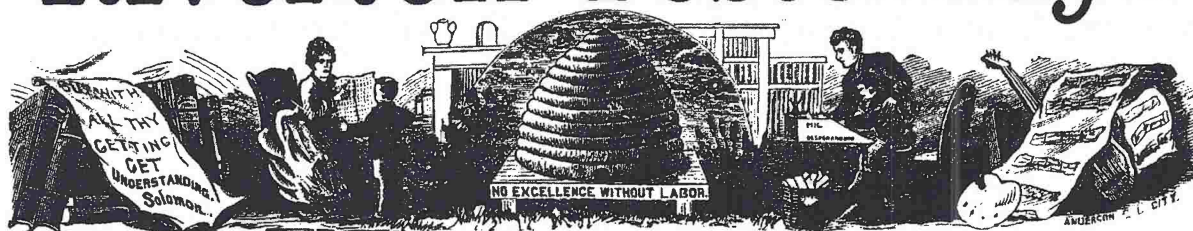


# Riverton Yesterdays



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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: When I was a little girl, they used to have all the Christmas stuff upstairs in the Page-Hansen store. Grandpa [Thomas P. Page] used to have Santa Claus up there, too. That's where they had all the toys.

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Grandpa used to hire me to go up there and sit all day and watch people to make sure they didn't swipe stuff. If I saw someone swipe stuff, I was supposed to run downstairs and tell him. He'd give me fifty cents to do that. He had a big community tree every year. He put presents on it and they drew names. People would talk about the doll they got off the tree.

Vivian: For some of them it was the only Christmas they had.

Evelyn: They had everything in there. They had a jewelry shop, shoe shop — sold shoes, repaired shoes — lumber, nails. Things like that.

Mike: Confectionary, ice cream. Beatrice Newman ran the ice cream for years.

John: What was the feeling around here when they tore down the dome church?

Evelyn: I was glad I was in California. We didn't see it go down.

Mike: I recall Mr. Lloyd had a great big old steam engine and tractors and big cables that they tried to saw that big dome in half and into pieces. They couldn't saw it down and they couldn't tear it down.  
[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.]

Mel: Who were your best friends in your early years?

Ted: Everybody! Billy Neff was. And Stanton Mason, Vaughn Dansie, and Guy Burgon. I really didn't have any one best friend. I don't think anybody did in those times. We were just all buddies.

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Mel: Would you get together and play after school?

Ted: Not so much after school. In the summer time we did after dark because we'd play Kick the Can, Annie I Over, Hide and Seek, and Simon Says. Most generally it was at least dusk because you had things to do. You didn't have play period after school. You had work period and then you had to get lessons, too. Darn it! On a Saturday afternoon, we'd get finished and have a marble contest. The contest was to see who could win the most marbles.

In the winter time, we'd go sleigh riding on Redwood Road. There were not enough cars to worry about. They didn't sand or plow the roads. The few cars that came would pack what snow there was down. We'd go out on the road and sleigh ride. You ran as fast as you can, holding the Flexie Flyer sled up and then you'd throw the sleigh down and jump on it. You'd lay on it. We would go down and sled down that hill down by the Tithing Yard Hill where Nielsen's lived. There was also a pond across the river on the other side where we'd go ice skating sometimes. It's on the other side of the river on the south side of the Draper Road. It would be east and south of the bridge. There was at one time a horse track arena there and it was a little bit east and south of that. We didn't go skating on that very often because it was so far to have to walk. The canal was a lot closer. Most of the ice skating was done on the Little Canal which is the South Jordan Canal. The sugar factory used water in the processing of their sugar beets down here. So the canal was about fifty percent of what it would be in the summer. It was only about maybe three feet deep in the winter. It would freeze over



except where there was a check or a weir. But other than that, you could skate. We would play hockey on there. The hockey puck was a half-size milk can that we'd fill with water and let it freeze. Our hockey sticks were tree limbs that we felt that we could do something with. We would play hockey out there. We had skates. We'd build a fire on the side of the canal because sometimes you'd get down too close to the weir and you'd go in. You'd be wet up past your knees so you'd go back to the bonfire and try and get thawed out a little bit. Of course, the side that was facing the fire would burn up and the back side would be freezing. You'd turn around and the process would be reversed. You'd only stay there for a little while because you had to stay there a long time to get dry. We got disgusted waiting to get dry so we'd go back to playing. One Sunday afternoon, two of us ice skated from Riverton down to West Jordan. Of course, we'd have to get out of checks where it wasn't frozen, but we ice skated down to West Jordan where the water was being used in the sugar factory. That was pretty fun, but it was sure a heck of a lot of work skating back! That six miles going north tripled coming back home.

In the summer we went swimming in the Little Canal. That canal was so polluted it's a wonder we didn't get something. Occasionally — I kid you not — there would be a dead carcass that would come floating down. The farmers

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used it as their dumping grounds for a lot of stuff. If you saw it coming, you just come up to it and pushed it aside and go on. You didn't think anything about it. It was just commonplace. I'm not saying that every fifteen minutes that one would come, but when it came it was no big thing. It was just an obstacle that was going to be passing by. Mostly it was one of their newborn calfs that maybe didn't make it. I don't ever remember ever seeing big critters in there. Just young ones and dead chickens. It would be just boys swimming because we were in the nude. I'm guessing that we were nine, ten, eleven — along in that age group. I learned how to swim by trial and error, I guess. Of course it was deep for us, but if you got in the canal today, it wouldn't be much over your hips. Maybe mid-stomach. The Big Canal was over six feet deep, but the Little Canal that we went in was not that deep. Some of the bigger kids would go in the Big Canal, but I didn't.

## “Riverton’s Main Street”: A Look Back at the Old Business District

Note: On 31 August 2002, the Riverton Historical Society sponsored a program looking back at some of the old businesses in Riverton. The following is an edited transcript of the remarks of some of those who shared their memories at this program. The remarks of others who spoke that evening will be printed in future issues.

### Noel Page

I’m the third child of my dad’s [Roland Page]. There’s quite a story about when I was born — it was October 1<sup>st</sup>. The night before, they’d had a big meeting down at the Page-Hansen’s and my dad’s brother Meredith had all the stock. He declared that he was the owner of Page-Hansen’s that night. It upset my mother so much that she went in labor that night and I was born. My father stayed there for five years — him and Meredith together — working it out between the two of them, but the depression come along and things went down. Some way or another, Meredith got all the stock he wanted and declared he owned it. That’s how Meredith become owner of it.

Meredith and Dad worked it out till they closed and he had to get out. He was the manager of Page-Hansen and Gwynne was the president. In the meantime, my father got a bonus from World War I — \$600. A space become available down in the Commercial Building. He went down there and moved in. That was 1930, if I remember right. I think I was five years old. Dad rented the house. At that time, we all moved down there so that Dad could be right with the business. Dad knew Strevell- Paterson’s [wholesale hardware company] and Pykes [clothing manufacturing company] and all them people because he had been the manager of Page-Hansen so he had no problem getting credit. So automatically he was in business. He really done good. I think we lived there for about three years until it was my turn to go to school. We lived right down there next to Forrest Parry. Ardell Snyder had a beauty shop right there.

Me and Dick Butterfield become really good friends. My older brother Blaine and Junior and Spud got into quite a little problem with the man that was right next to us in the service station right by the Commercial Building. They had got mad at this fellow and had stole

Boy! Did we ever catch heck with our brothers for squealing on ‘em!

about four or five pair of tires. The cops picked me and Dick Butterfield up and hauled us to jail that day. We got clear down to the old Holt's hill down there. We was crying our eyes out. He said, "We'll tell you where they're at! We'll tell you where they're at!" So we took the cops back and took them up in the attic of the old Commercial Building. There was the tires. Boy! Did we ever catch heck with our brothers for squealing on 'em!

In 1937, mom said, "Your dad's got a chance to buy the old bank over there." We bought the bank in September or fall. We hauled all the stuff from the Commercial Building over to the bank. Boy! What a good time we had because the vaults were still on. All the doors were still on. The big metal vaults were still on. All the cages where all the tellers worked and everything were still there. All the checkbooks and all the deposits and withdrawals were all there. Us kids all got in there and played. We was really popular down at Riverton Junior High School because we had all these books and everything to play with.

We got Dad moved over there and got going along. Of course, that bus accident come along in 1938. That whole neighborhood got wiped out with kids. That was a tough go. It really was!

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Before I went in the service, Dad really made a killing. He stacked his whole basement clear full of groceries. He had cases down there in the old vaults. Of course at that time, the price of produce started to really skyrocket up. Here Dad was with all this merchandise on hand. He really done good. During the war, I worked down there stacking shelves. We got five cases of beans to put right in there — a little spot about four inches wide. He said, "Put all them cans in there." I says, "Dad, them cans won't go in there." He says, "Just move 'em back and forth. We'll get 'em in there." Had to mark 'em up. I said, "Some of these back in here, Dad, are different prices." He said, "We just won't worry about them. Just mark up them prices." So people down the road got smart enough that if they wanted to get a good deal, they'd get way in the back and find some where it was four or five cents cheaper. Dad would just charge 'em what was marked. He was funny that way.

Then I went in the service and come out. Keith Olson went to work for Dad for a four-year apprenticeship. I went to barber school. Dad said he'd put a barber shop down in the basement. I said, "OK." I went to barber school and Keith was working upstairs. In the meantime, Butch Madsen's son went to barber school, too. That town



was so small that they couldn't hack two barbers in a town that small. So I forgot about being a barber and I went up to work underground mining. Keith finished his four years up and he tried to get Dad to buy some ground and expand. He knew you had to get bigger because that's the way things were going at that time. He joined AG. I think Dad was number eighty-seven or sixty-seven. He was one of the first founders of AG food store. You only got one share so you can't have a whole bunch of shares. It's the amount of stuff you'd sell. I used to go with him all the time to grocery conventions. It was quite a deal. We went to them all the time. He hired a lot of young girls in town over his lifetime — Chris Neilson, Rick McMoldie's wife, Viv Brown. Then he wound up hiring Jane Butterfield. She stayed with him for thirty-four years. She lived to be a 103. Me and my wife went to see her about once every two or three months. Everytime we went down to see Jane, she'd just come alive. I used to tease her. I'd say, "You know you guys worked together a long time. Any hanky-panky going on, Jane?" She said, "You'll never know." She was quite a gal.

My dad was in trouble all the time in World War II on his stamps. He had old ladies coming in that was out of sugar, they was out of coffee. They'd always weasel some out of Dad some way or another.

He was always in trouble with the board all the time on his stamps. I remember so many times when he went across the street and helped Mrs. Crane across the street. Dad would say, "Go help Mrs. Crane across the street with her box." So I'd have to take her box. It made me mad. "Heck! She can carry it! She's not an invalid!" And blah, blah, blah, blah. You know how kids are when they're about twelve years old! But she was a grand old lady. I come in that back door a good many times and put the groceries down. I got Dad's charge books when he passed away. You would be amazed how many people in this town that were prominent people still owed my dad money. My Dad was a grand old guy.

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an invalid!"

Elias [Butterfield] even talked about one time at Christmas. They had bought buggies for their twins. He started putting the buggies together. One of the buggies lacked a wheel. Elias's wife said, "I know Rolly Page's got one of them buggies down there in his front window. I don't think he's got it sold yet." This was on Christmas eve. At twelve o'clock at night he called Rolly and said, "Rolly, we're lacking one wheel on this buggy." Dad said, "Well, I got one down there if you want it." So down they went. At midnight or one o'clock in the morning, he got that

buggy out of that place and give it to Elias. It made a good Christmas for the kids.

My dad give so much. I went with him one year down to the Tea's family with about three or four boxes of groceries. They were really destitute down on Thirteenth. I says, "How are they going to pay for that?" He says, "Don't worry about it. The Lord will take care of it. We're lucky that we got plenty so just don't worry about it." So we took them all those groceries. I helped him pack them all in. Old lady Tea wrapped her arms around my father and cried. She said, "Rolly, I don't know what I'd ever done this Christmas without you." So I've had the experience in my lifetime to see what my father really was. He was really a kind person. He wasn't rich. Nobody in this town was rich in them days. Even Doc Sorenson wasn't rich. They was just all common people. Unbelievable how times has changed!

#### Anne Denk

My dad [Dee Jones] had the drug store. It was about seven or eight hundred square feet. He had that store crammed just like Rolly's and the others were. One of Dad's memories was of Dr. Sorenson's office being above them. When he'd operate, the whole store would smell like ether really bad. The customers would come in and

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say, "Whoa! What's going on?" That was one of his memories. In 1967, we bought some land and he built the original building that we owned. This store was about three thousand square feet. This is before we put the dentist office on it. This was actually part of the Crane estate when he bought it. It was an apple orchard. He had to cut down all the apple trees. In 1996, we built the store next to Monte's. I guess we're one of the young ones in town. [Karen Bashore: "They've been there forty-five years and they're the babies in the town."]



## Death Notices

Leon Huffman Densley (84); husband of Charlette Buhler; parents were Moses and Emily Huffman Densley; father of Sharon, Brock, Moses, Aaron, Julie, Stan, Michelann

Gwena Joyce Myers Stott (84); widow of Rolla W. Stott; parents were Wilford J. and Edna Lloyd Myers; died in Ogden



### Utah and Salt Lake Canal Company Stock Certificate

The Riverton Historical Society recently acquired this historic stock certificate. This certificate documents the completion of this and other canals that enabled the bench lands west of the Jordan River to be farmed and settled. Upon its completion in 1881, the "Big Canal" was regarded as the "greatest work of internal improvement" in the history of Salt Lake County to that time. The Utah and Salt Lake Canal Company was formed on 2 October 1880 and began issuing stock. The principals whose names appear on this particular 1893 stock certificate include purchaser Frank B. Stephens, company officers Peter Reid and Gideon A. Gibbs. Stephens was a noted Utah attorney who was active in education and civic affairs. Scottish-born Peter Reid was a highly respected carpenter and plain, honest citizen. Gibbs was a pioneer Utah civil engineer and surveyor. Stephens kept his three shares for more than six years, selling them to Thomas John Jones, a Bluffdale farmer, in 1899 (according to documentation on reverse side of stock certificate).

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