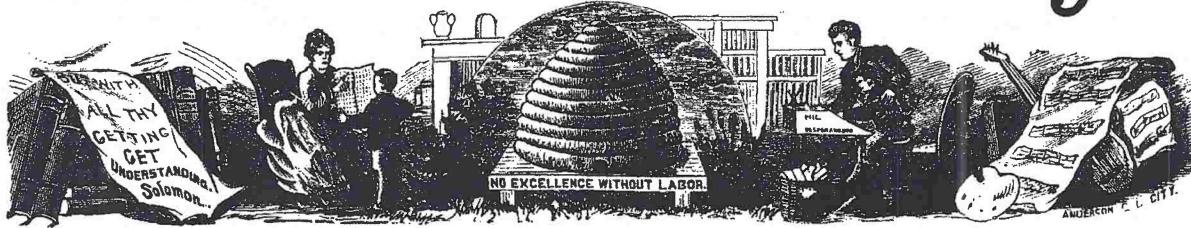


Riverton Yesterdays



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A Monthly Newsletter of Oldtime Stuff about Riverton, Utah

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with Evelyn, Vivian, and Mike

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Complimentary Sample Issue

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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. This is the final installment.]

Mike: I think the funniest place where they had the old stills during Prohibition was up to Gus Eckland's. He used to have pigs up around the corner in town. He had his stills in the pig pen. He always had straw over it so nobody could find where it was.

John: Did the police raid the stills around here?

Mike: Periodically, but the police were from Riverton so they didn't shut them down too often. Once, me and Jack Park were down to Ma Blinn's [Blinn's Parlor, 133 E. Center, Midvale] — down at the house of ill repute — for a few beers. It was down at the tracks. I was in my senior year of high school. I was working at the meat plant down to Midvale to get enough money to finish up my senior year of high school. Old Ray Hughes took us over there and we got waxed up pretty good. We were coming down the Lower Road and there was an accident over there. Uncle Ren and Jack and I were in this Ford truck of Grandpa Bills. We had three or four boxes of meat scrap we had taken from the meat plant to feed the pigs when we got home. Uncle Ren said, "You couldn't tell us over the flies that was on the meat scrap, laying there half drunk." The cops were out there and I heard Uncle Ren say, "Don't slow down here. The cops are going to get us for drinking." We came on home and put me and Jack in Ren's basement. I remember my dad coming down and getting me. Uncle Ren told him, "He's down there sleeping. I don't know how come, but he's sleeping."

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Evelyn: Dan and Boyd Creedon used to get so plastered in our place. One night they went over by the tracks. They had to stop for the train

that was going by. Boyd waked up out of his sleep when they stopped. Pretty soon here come a row of empty flat cars. He said, "Let's go. They stopped part of the train for us."

Mike: Do you know the story about when Dan died? He was out at Tooele jail. They got thrown in for drinking. I guess they were both drunk. They threw Dan and Boyd into jail. I guess Dan got a bit despondent. He cut his wrists and he died over there. Boyd came home to his mother and told her, "Mother, Dan's over to Tooele in the hospital. He cut his wrists." She said, "How bad?" Boyd said, "They've got him over there at the morgue on a slab so I guess he cut them pretty bad."

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Evelyn: Dan used to play that song *My Little Buckaroo* so much. We heard it so much that you could hardly stand it. We used to say to him, "You little booger you."

Death Notices

Alice Faye Dansie Martin (80); parents were James Robert and Jennie Agnes Dansie; died in Sept. 2002 in La Habra, California

Diana Helena Johnson Beck (94); parents were Emil and Hilma Johnson; wife of Edward Beck; born in Bingham and a lifetime resident of Riverton; died in Dec. 2002

Lucile "Lucy" Morgan Anderson (82); parents were Joseph and Judith Morgan; wife of Grant Eugene Anderson; died in Jan. 2003

Joseph Martin Bowen (87); parents were Abram and Mabel Lavinia Seal Bowen; husband of Beth Beckstead; 8 children; dairy farmer and school bus driver

Ida May Cooley Densley (90); parents were Henry W. and Laura F. Cooley; born in West Jordan and long-time Riverton resident; widow of A. Duane Densley; 2 sons

Sarah Louise Wiberg Platt (86); parents were Carl W. and Sarah Isabel Withers Wiberg; widow of Kenneth Dale Platt; died in St. George

"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 Craig Butterfield. These are the concluding remarks from that program.

I think one thing that we've been able to gather through this presentation is that there was a great entrepreneurial spirit in Riverton. A lot of people had a drive to create and build their own businesses. That spirit is kind of the foundation of Butterfield Motor Company. My uncle Joe Butterfield and my uncle Tom Callicott started the company. Riverton Motor had resigned their Ford franchise and picked up Chevrolet. The Ford franchise lay vacant for probably three or four years.

In 1937, Joe and Tom Callicott picked up the franchise. They rented the south half of the Crane Building. They sold Utah Oil products which was UTOCO gas. They pumped gas and sold a few cars. After a short time, Almon had worked with them as their mechanic. My dad [Elias Butterfield] was down at Panguitch teaching school. Almon called up my dad and said, "Elias, come up here and help us. We need someone to do the books." So Dad quit teaching school and came up. Almon began to work in the front end as the salesman and Dad was the

bookkeeper. They bought Tom and Joe out. It's almost ridiculous at how little they paid. It was less than \$500. But that was a lot of money! They could only pay something like \$20 a month because that was a lot of money. A lot of money! They bought the franchise and they were in that Crane Building renting it for about fourteen years. It was pretty small. I guess the reason they finally decided they needed to move and get into a better location was because it was so small. In front of the counter in the parts area there was a trap door. You'd lift the trap door up and climb down a ladder and go get the parts that were stored in the basement. Once somebody had lifted up the trap door to go down and get some parts and the druggist, Marion Stringham, came in and fell down the hole.

There weren't any cars to sell during the war years so they depended a

In front of the parts counter there was a trap door [leading to where the parts were stored in the basement]. . . . Once somebody lifted up the trap door to go down and get some parts and the druggist, Marion Stringham, came in and fell down the hole.

lot on their repair business. During that time, Almon worked at the dealership in the nighttime, fixing cars and trucks. A lot of farmers had to have their trucks running. In the daytime he worked a shift at Remington Arms. My dad worked at the dealership in the daytime and then worked the night shift at Remington Arms. They flip-flopped and worked, both of them at the dealership and at Remington Arms to make ends meet and to get through those difficult times. As I mentioned, the repair business was very important because you just couldn't buy a new product of any kind.

One Christmas eve, Almon got a call to go to Price to repair a coal truck that had broken down. It had a bearing that was making a lot of noise. After he got there, Almon dropped the oil pan. He could see that the bearing was spun. He cut the tongue out of his shoe and shimmed the bearing with it. Then he put the bearing cap back on and put the oil pan back up. He filled it with oil and drove it very slowly from Price to Riverton to get it to the shop so they could repair it. He didn't get home until about two in the morning and Aunt Melba was very mad because Christmas still needed to be done. That's the spirit that goes along with a small town business — going the extra mile and doing what needed to be done to try to help the customer and satisfy their needs. There was a lot of community spirit among these businessmen. They were competitors of course. But you might also say they were like brothers. They leaned on one another and depended on one another.

Across the street from the dealership [in the Crane Building] was the Greenfield subdivision. It was owned by the Page family. Dad tried to buy three lots in that subdivision from the Pages so he could put the business across the street. They wouldn't sell it to him so he contacted a realtor through a third party. In that way they were able to buy those three lots in the Greenfield subdivision. In 1953, my dad and Jim Smith (a brother-in-law) acted kind of like general contractors to build that building. They laid out a sheet of plyboard and mixed up the concrete for the mortar on it. They didn't have cement mixers, but they did it on a board with a shovel and a hoe. They then wheelbarrowed it to the place that they needed it for the construction. It was a fairly modern facility for this small town. It had a two-car show room, a couple of offices, a wash bay and a lube bay, and some mechanic stalls in the back. Butterfield Ford was in this building for fourteen years.

The Crane House was directly across the street from Butterfield Ford. When I was in first or second grade, the barn that was behind the Crane House burned down. One of my school friends, Dennis Miller, lived in this house. He said, "I saw your dad helping hold the fire hose." My dad was never part of the fire department, but they all came together and did whatever needed to be done. My dad came over in his shirt and tie to help try to put out the fire.

Noel Page mentioned that they closed businesses on Thursdays. I remember that. Thursday afternoon was the day off. It was closed. A lot of them did go to Salt Lake to procure supplies, but I wondered about why that

might have taken place. This is just a thought that I had and it may be wrong, but in pioneer times they used to have fast day on Thursday afternoon. So I think it stems from that tradition of going to church on Thursday afternoon for fast meeting.

We outgrew this facility in the late '60s. It was very small in the sales area. In 1967, Dad hired Jay Holt from South Jordan to knock the whole front of the building off. Then they put a new front end on it. That building was just recently torn down. It was very modern for its time in 1967. I think we were the first automobile showroom in the whole United States that had carpet. Hercules had this Herculon carpet. They convinced us to put carpeting on our showroom floor. Everyone used to have asphalt tiles. We increased our showroom capacity to hold five cars. That was a lot because the other place only held two cars. In 1968 I believe, Ford went on strike and we didn't have any cars for introduction day. We didn't have any cars! So Brent [Butterfield] went to Heber City to the Chevrolet dealer there and bought a Chevrolet and put it on the showroom floor. On new car introduction day, there was a Chevrolet on Butterfield Ford's showroom floor for sale.

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We were in this particular situation until 1977. Ford Motor Company wanted expansion in the market place. They do these market surveys. They spend tons of money and go through extensive market research. They said, "We want you to move to the Draper crossroads. It's either going to be you or the Whetman's that are going to be there." So they cancelled the Whetman's franchise. They said, "OK. If you don't move to the Draper crossroads, we'll cancel you and put somebody else there." We said, "OK. But we'd like to go one offramp north to Sandy." There was nothing at the Draper crossroads. This is the vision that Ford Motor had in 1977. They knew that Draper crossroads would eventually be what it is today. When we left, we had a window painter paint "Thanks for 45 Wonderful Years." We feel that way. We feel like that Riverton is our home and we hope that some of the foundation that we have in our character and in our lives comes from the people of Riverton. So that's a little bit about Butterfield Ford.

“My Father Was a Hard-Working Farm Boy”

[Introductory note: Brigham D. Madsen's grandfather was Carl Madsen and his grandmother was Annie Crane Madsen. His father was Brigham Andrew “Brig” Madsen, who was born in Riverton in 1891. Following are some excerpts from his published autobiography [*Against the Grain: Memoirs of a Western Historian* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 33-35, 37] pertaining to Riverton and Riverton people. This will conclude these excerpts and we are grateful to have been given the author's permission to print them.]

My father, christened Brigham Andrew Madsen, always hated “Andrew” so much that he never used it and was known universally as “Brig.” He was born September 28, 1891, in Riverton, Utah, the third of my grandmother's ten children. I have an enlarged photograph of him at about age six with his brother Carl Jr., who was a year and a half younger. They are dressed in stiffly starched Little Lord Fauntleroy suits, long curls hanging nearly to their shoulders. This picture is quite deceiving and probably represents what their mother wished they were like. In reality, my father was a hard-working farm boy who received very little schooling and, from age seven to nine, was placed with an aunt and uncle in Herriman . . . working for his room and board while his father did missionary work in Denmark. As he wrote in a short autobiography of this period, “[I] used to get in to mischief like all boys do & on Sat when mother would come up to see us I used to get a whipping just as sure as Sat came. I used to be broken hearted. I didn't think I could stand it but I had to.”

There is no question of blaming my grandmother, who was coping in the best way she knew how, but I think of that little boy, longing yet dreading to see his mother for two years, and my heart aches for both of them. My father must also have longed for the return of his father, when the family could be united again. Yet whatever emotional satisfactions might have come, his life did not ease. Father and Carl were directed to clean out all the irrigation ditches on the Riverton farm and “from then on it was nothing but work no play. All work. We couldn't have a dog or a gun or we couldn't go fishing — just work.”

Nor was their family life the sentimentalized and nostalgic version of the nuclear family that the ill-informed think of when they envision the nineteenth-century family. My grandfather saw no need to control his temper with his children and saw every harsh economic reason for getting as much

From then on it was nothing but work no play. All work. We couldn't have a dog or a gun or we couldn't go fishing — just work.

work out of them as was humanly possible. It was the way he himself had been raised. . . . Every year Dad and Carl were kept out of school for the spring planting for four or five weeks and then were sent back to class during the last two or three days of school when the exams were given. My father always did his best, but Carl rebelled one year and played hookey during exam week. When my grandfather found out about it, in a rage he started for him. His mother told Carl "to run for his life" until Carl Sr. got over his terrible anger. When my father was about seventeen, a neighbor woman accused him of having gotten her daughter pregnant. He absolutely denied it and refused to run from his father's exploding temper. My grandfather picked up a buggy whip and gave my father a terrible whipping on his bare back. Finally my grandmother, a big, strong woman who towered over her husband, pinned my grandfather's arms to his side until he subsided. Another youth in the neighborhood later confessed to the moral offense.

At thirteen my father ended his fragmented schooling and began working as a carpenter alongside his father who kept his wages as a matter of course. My father never had control of the money he had earned until, at seventeen, he left home to work with his older brother, Charley, at Magna, Utah. . . .

After a few months he moved to Lark, Utah, a short distance above Herriman to work on another mill and boarded with his parents. His father was building a schoolhouse at Lark at the time, and Carl was working for him. Although my father was eighteen and on his own, my grandfather still expected instant obedience, leading to the following incident:

One Friday night we [Carl and Brigham] wanted to go down to Riverton to the dance & Dad told us not to but we went anyway with my horse & buggy. So the next day was Sat Mother & him went home for Sunday & he was so mad because we went to that dance that he took my horse & Buggy home with him I got the boss to let me off I hired a Saddle horse & went down home to get my horse & buggy & when he saw me he wanted to know what I was doing home when I should be at work. I told him I had come after my Horse & Buggy. But his dainish got up & he called the Sherriff & told me he would have me arrested if I tried to take the horse & buggy. Mother put her arms around me and begged [me] to go back without the Horse & buggy so that's what happened so a week or so later I got it back. . . .

Grandmother Madsen must have spent a good part of several years physically restraining either her husband or her son so that they would not commit mayhem on each other.



Ladies Literary Club of Riverton, 1950-51

Max Stephensen, a *Riverton Yesterdays* subscriber from Mesa, Arizona, donated this photograph and a circa 1960-61 club booklet to the Riverton Historical Society. He and his sister, Beverly, children of Hazel Stephensen, were unable to identify all the ladies in the photograph. One of the treasures in the collection of the Riverton Historical Society is a scrapbook and minute book of the Club. Although the reverse of the donated photo states that this photo was dated "about 1946," we found a similar photo in the scrapbook identified as being from 1950-51. Max and Beverly identified the following people and hope that other subscribers can assist further (members of club in 1950-51 listed on cover of *Yesterdays* mailer for clues). We hope so, too.

Back row: (1) Mary Egbert, (2) Sadie Morgan, (2) Blanche Densley, (3) _____, (4) Julie Stringham, (5) Evelyn Beckstead, (6) _____

Middle row: (1) Mrs. Crump, (2) _____, (3) _____, (4) _____, (5) _____, (6) Mrs. Nokes

Front row: (1) Ruby Broadbent, (2) Hazel Stephensen, (3) Mary Crane

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