Riverton Yesterdays

Volume 2, No. 9 April 2003

A Monthly Newsletter of Oldtime Stuff about Riverton, Utah

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Annual Subscription: $10

"When Dad Run That Alfalfa Mill": Jim Bowles

[Note: This is an edited transcript of a telephone conversation Mel Bashore conducted with Jim Bowles on 23 October 2002.]

Jim: I was born in 1917. My dad's name was Grafton Ann Bowles. I was probably about ten years old when Dad run that alfalfa mill. It seemed like to me it was before the Depression. Dad had forty acres of ground there in Riverton. During the Depression he couldn't pay the taxes on it. The State took it away from him. We lost that forty acres. But when we were down to the alfalfa mill, he was working for those sheep men — T. A. Butterfield, Thomas S. Butterfield, Tom A. Butterfield — all those sheep men, cattle men. They would haul the hay into the alfalfa mill and fork it off into the chopper. Then Dad would add corn and molasses to it. We were feeding lambs and cattle there at the alfalfa mill. It was the time of the old interurban train — the old trolley train that run from Salt Lake to Provo. I remember an old sow and her litter of pigs was out there on the track one day. That train come through and killed every one of 'em — the old sow and every one of the little pigs. One night we were out shoveling corn out of the box car when a few of Alvie Dansie's horses kept a-comin' on that track. We had run 'em off the track two or three times. Dad says, "Well, we haven't got time to keep chasing them off. We got to get this corn out of here." They just kept coming back and he said, "Let 'em go." Two of them was standing with their heads over the track and — boy! — when the train went through, it slapped them beside the head and killed them deader 'n a door nail. The third one tried to outrun the train down the middle of the track. He got hit in the butt and pushed clear through the fence. He wound up dead. We had a real experience down there. The blackbirds lined up on that trolley wire that the train run on. Those old blackbirds would just line up on that trolley line. You couldn't see the line for birds. Greeks would come out there and they'd shoot those blackbirds. They'd pay us kids a penny a bird to gather 'em up. They would take those blackbirds, feather 'em and skin 'em. They had what they called blackbird pie. I was going down the canal bank one day and I run into some blow snakes — the old mother snake and the little tiny ones. The little tiny ones were about four or five inches long. When we went

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through the brush there, those little buggers made a dive to their mother. She opened her mouth and every one of them went down her throat. We had quite an experience for us kids down there when Dad was running that alfalfa mill.

Mel: Did your family live down there?

Jim: Yes. They had a house down there that we lived in. Well, it wasn't a house. It was like a cabin. It seemed to me it was sort of a flat-roofed building partitioned off to bedrooms and kitchen. It wasn't what you'd call a real home. It was on the southwest side of the alfalfa mill. There was myself and three of my older brothers working there. We would feed the sheep and the cattle. When the farmers would bring their hay in, they would shovel the hay off from the wagons into the chopper. We were there with Dad helping mix the corn and molasses with it. The people that owned the sheep and the cattle would bring that hay in and we would chop it and add corn and molasses to it for them to feed their cattle and their sheep that they were feeding there in that feed lot. As I said, there was T. A. Butterfield. There was two Butterfields there and Heber S. Crane there in Riverton that run sheep. And John A. Butterfield in Herriman and Thomas S. Butterfield in Herriman. They were sheep men and cattle men that Dad was chopping hay for. T. A. Butterfield was from Riverton. Then there was another Butterfield that lived over near where Harold Berrett lived.

The people that owned the sheep and the cattle would bring that hay in and we would chop it and add corn and molasses to it for them to feed their cattle and their sheep.

Mel: There was an A. T. Butterfield.

Jim: He lived in Riverton.

Mel: Yes. He had a big barn down by Harold Berrett's place.

Jim: Right. No. That was T. A. Butterfield. There was T. A. Butterfield and A. T. Butterfield.

[to be continued]

Silent Movies and Malted Milk Shakes:
Max W. Parry

[Note: This is an edited transcript of an interview Mel Bashore conducted with Max Parry on 26 August 2002.]

Max: I was born in March 1923 in Winter Quarters, Utah. My parent's names was Forrest and Twyla Parry. They lived down in the lower part of Riverton. He was a farmer and he run the Parry Implement and Hardware Store in the Commercial Building. My dad was an excellent baseball pitcher and he used to play for the companies. They'd hire him to work and give him a job. Really they hired him because of his pitching. He happened to be down at Carbon County when I was born. He played for Sunnyside, Castle Gate, Helper, Kennecott, and all those larger places around here pitching ball.

When he moved up here, we went up to Bingham. He played ball for them. That's why we was up there. Then he came back down here to Riverton and, of course, I came with him. I was about three years old at that time. His father had already started the implement and hardware place. In 1932 and '33, we had the Chevrolet dealership at the Parry Implement. I guess about '34, he decided he could sell more tractors than he could cars so he sold the dealership to Riverton Motor. They had Ford and then they sold their portion of Ford to Butterfield Motor. There was one other dealership in Riverton which was Ray Battison's. That was Chrysler products. That was over in the building where the show house used to be.

At least once a day, I'd go over to Leonard Beckstead's and buy a malted milk for ten cents.

The farmers would all come in to the hardware store. It was the only place to buy a sack of nails or horseshoes. Things like that. I was very well acquainted with most of the elderly people by their first name. We had a set of scales in the backyard. We had a coal yard back there. I worked there. I'd go out and weigh a load of coal. At least once a day, I'd go over to Leonard Beckstead's and buy a malted milk for ten cents. Leonard Beckstead had a service station just around the corner from that Commercial Building. The building is still up. It's the one that Charley Tea lived down here by. That was the service station. They moved it down there. They had a small hamburger place in there. In the back, Leonard Beckstead had his quarters where he lived. The pumps were out in front. At Parry Implement, we had a gas pump there. It was one they pumped by hand.

Dad would go and drain it all out of that big bowl and then I had to go and pump it up all the time.

We lived two houses north from Elvoy Dansie's house on the west side of Redwood Road. I walked to school all time. We had pigs, cows, and chickens. My job was to slop the hogs and take care of them after school. We had a cow. We pastured it up behind the old Crane home. I used to walk up there with my little bucket every morning and night and get a pail of Jersey. The Cranes had a big barn up there. It was quite a place. I used to run around with their grandsons — Ray Battison and Keith Battison.

In that building this side of the Crane house, we had the movies once a week. When they'd bring the projectors over — from Burkinshaw's over in Sandy — I'd go over and help 'em get 'em up inside of the projection room. I got to go to all the movies because I'd help 'em. I think he had three show houses. The one biggest one was in Sandy. There was one in Midvale, too. He would bring the projectors over from his show house in Sandy and we'd hoist it up in there. It was straight up and down, but we had to pull 'em up with a block and tackle. Set 'em up. That was during the silent movie years. Irma Battison used to play the organ for the silent movies. Later on they got talking pictures. It was really quite a thing to us. I didn't think there could be anything any better!

When they'd bring the projectors over . . . I'd help 'em get 'em up inside of the projection room. I got to go to all the movies because I'd help 'em.

Mel: Do you remember the first talking movie that you saw there?

Max: Well, yes, I do, but I don't know what the movie was. When we'd go in, Irma Battison would be playing the organ. I walked in that first night that they had their projectors which had the sound on 'em. We walked in there and she wasn't at the organ. We couldn't figure out. There was something missing. When they started it up and the sound come through, we thought that was great.

Mel: So you didn't know beforehand?

Max: Not really. Oh, I'd heard that they were making it, but I didn't know that Burkinshaw had gotten the projectors that could play anything.

[to be continued]

"As We Go Along in Life": Elias C. Butterfield

[Note: This is an edited transcript of an interview Scott Crump conducted with Elias Butterfield on 10 May 1991.]

Elias: I went to grade school in Riverton when I was six years old. That was in 1918. There were two buildings then. The elementary school was in a white brick two-story building. It had four rooms downstairs and four rooms upstairs. To the south of the elementary school was another two-story building. It had two rooms in the top that were used for a dormitory for teachers and the other two rooms downstairs were used for classrooms. I didn't ever go to school in that building until I was in the 7th grade.

In 1st grade, I had a lady by the name of Miss [Naomi] Duke. In the 2nd grade, I had Miss [Irma] Leaver. In the 4th grade, I had Mrs. Armstrong. In the 5th grade, I had Jane Garfield. In the 6th grade, I had Orpha Dorius. In the 7th grade, they built the new building and I was over in the junior high school. A man by the name of Lewis taught music and a few other subjects. We had Papa Edgell. He taught the writing and penmanship and history. We called him Papa Edgel, but he was W. R. Edgel. Stevens was a one-armed man. He taught mathematics. We had one other teacher, Miss Johnson. I had those teachers all through the 7th, 8th, and 9th grades.

We were all scared of Stevens. He'd come up behind you and grab you by the nape of the neck if you were doing something a little bit wrong.

We were all scared of Stevens. He'd come up behind you and grab you by the nape of the neck if you were doing something a little bit wrong. He'd push you down or haul off and hit you. We used tell stories about how rough he was. We said that he would come in and pick up a guy like Dean Anderson or Max Willard or some of those ruffians — or what we though were ruffians — or Herbert Farrell. He'd take 'em by the head of the hair and lift them up. He'd let loose of them and smack them with his fist and they were practically across the room before they hit the floor. That's what we used to tell about him. I don't know whether he

got quite that bad or not, but he was rough. He believed in discipline and he smoked all the time. Everybody knew it. He tried to hide it, but we'd all see him smoking. He was just a mean, tough individual. We thought Miss Johnson was a pretty woman and we shined up to her. She was real nice to us. Arthur Lewis was a guy without a chin. He played the violin. His mouth sloped right back into his Adam's apple. Stevens was a great baseball person. He claimed to have played in the National Leagues.

We had an operetta when I was in the 6th grade. Tom Carlson was the lead in it. I had a little part in it. The story was the story of a black man that was working for a company or for a family and they were dismissing him and sending him on his way. One or their daughters was named Rosalie. He had been called Uncle Joe. As he was leaving, the two of them met and the song was "Farewell, dear Rosalie." "Farewell, dear Uncle Joe. I'm sorry you must leave." Then he'd say, "I'm sorry I must go."

We all looked forward to going to high school. That was a big thing. We could ride the bus then. We didn't have to walk to school any longer. I graduated from Jordan High School in 1930. I took the easy subjects. I'm sorry today that I did. I took auto mechanics and woodwork a couple of years. I took study every year. I took some of the easy things to get by. Students started dropping out when they got about fifteen years of age. One here and one there, they would start dropping out. They would get little jobs for fifty cents a day. Only about half of us — of those that started in the beginning of the 1st grade — graduated from high school. Those who dropped out worked on the farms. That was the only thing there was to do around here. When they got a little older — 17 or 18 — then they could go work in the mine. Up to Bingham or Lark.

Scott: When you got through with high school, what did you do?

Elias: I drove a coal truck. My brother, Joe, opened up a coal yard and he had three coal trucks running down to Castle Dale and Price and Helper area. I hauled sugar beets with the trucks in the fall.

Scott: Did you have any career goal when you went to high school?

Elias: No. Just to graduate from high school and go on with life.

[to be continued]

"I'm Not a Baby Any More":
Bruce Peterson

[Note: This is an edited transcript of an interview Mel Bashore conducted with Bruce Peterson on 21 October 2002.]

Bruce: I had twelve brothers and sisters, but two of 'em died at birth or shortly after. I'm the baby. That's what my mother used to call me was my baby boy. I told her one day, "You know. I'm forty-five years old. I'm not a baby any more, Mom." It kind of hurt her feelings.

"You know. I'm forty-five years old. I'm not a baby any more, Mom."

I remember during the winter time, we used to go down to what they called Green's hill and sleigh ride. I never did go sleigh ride up at Tithing Yard hill. I remember many times coming back and our Levi's or overalls would be frozen up above my knees. I sleighed on a Flexible Flyer and inner tubes.

I used to swim in the canal. So did Donna. When I got older though, I used to go out by the prison in the hot water there. One time up in the Crystal hot pots up there by the prison, we was swimming in there naked. A car load of girls came up and they wouldn't leave so we just had to make a dash for the car.

I had a car and I stripped it right down with no body on it — just the seats. This policeman — Jed Bills — caught me. He says, "You better get this off the road." So I did. About a week later, he caught me again. He says, "Tell your dad to come and see me." I didn't have a license.

Mel: Were you old enough to have a license to drive?

Bruce: No. One time, my mother and dad had gone to Idaho. They left the car here — one of 'em. They had two of 'em at that time. I went down Redwood Road and I come back and I was just turning in the driveway and one of my friends went by honking. I turned around and looked at him and the next thing I know I was hitting a tree.

[to be continued]

Etcetera

Mary Freeman and Violet Morris helped us in identifying some of the unknown and misidentified people in the photograph of the Ladies Literary Club which appeared in our last issue. Thanks!

Allen Stocking shared with us some written reflections — "sweet memories from the old sourdough jar" — when he first learned how to make sourdough bread and pancakes as a teenager riding with a pack outfit at Old Mill City Flat. Thanks, Allen!

Rosetta Hilton, a *Yesterdays* subscriber from Brigham City — and a daughter of Roy and Lorena Mae Glazier, sent us some of her Riverton childhood memories. We were delighted by them and will share excerpts of her recollections with our readers:

> Once in the winter after a big snow storm, Mom, Lavaughn, Venice and me went out back for a walk. Ven went to lick some snow off the large wheel of the hay rack and got her tongue stuck. We ran in for some warm water to try to get it off. We finally did, but she had to drink all her food from a straw for a long time.
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> Grandpa gave Mom and Dad eleven acres up on the flats. They planted a garden up there. Dad took Huck, Ven, Bill and me up to water and weed the garden. There was a pond there and also a ditch in front. We carried buckets of water from the pond to the garden. We were carrying the water when Huck threw a bucket full on Bill. Bill threw a bucket of water back at Huck. Then Ven and I threw our water on both of them. It was a hot day and it really felt good. We got our clothes all muddy so we threw them on the truck. Then it was a free-for-all. Mud or water — it didn't matter. There were pollywogs all over. We tried to catch them and throw them at each other, trying to see who could catch the most. We took turns going out to see if Dad was coming. I spotted him coming up the road. We grabbed our clothes and headed for the garden. We huddled down and started singing softly, "We pity our bums. We pity our bums. We won't have any tomorrow." Huck was the only one who got a lickin'.
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> We huddled down and started singing softly, "We pity our bums. We pity our bums. We won't have any tomorrow."
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> [continued in next issue]

RIVERTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Death Notices

Norma Nielsen Evans (83); parents were Niels J. and Evelyn W. Nielsen; widow of Frank C. Evans; mother of Susan, Marsha, Craig

Ruth Alice Calamia (92); parents were William Henry and Florence Harriet Newman; wife of John Calamia; died in Sandy

LaRuel Lovendahl (76); parents were Leonard and Eva Dansie Lovendahl

Floyd G. Bills (81); parents were Bertie M. and Victoria Crane Bills; husband of Evelyn Jenson; Kennecott Copper; original member of Riverton Rough Riders Riding Club; 3 children

Marvin J. Butterfield (81); parents were Marvin and Ardella Garside Butterfield; police officer; 3 children