

Riverton Yesterdays



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A Monthly Newsletter of Oldtime Stuff about Riverton, Utah

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"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: Thomas A. Butterfield's wife was pretty particular. If you ever went in their home, she'd say, "What have you got in your back pocket?" — before she'd ever let you sit in a chair or on the couch or anything. If you had rocks or anything in your pocket, you wasn't setting on her couches or her chairs! Do you know where Leonard Beckstead lived? That used to be that T. A. Butterfield's home. He had a lot of money. I used to work for him on his farm there in Riverton. We would pitch hay for him. We would load the slips and he would drag the slips in by the derrick with his car and then they'd finish pulling it in with a team of horses. Many, many loads we had to load over because he jerked the slip out from under the hay.

Mel: How old were you when your family lived at the alfalfa mill?

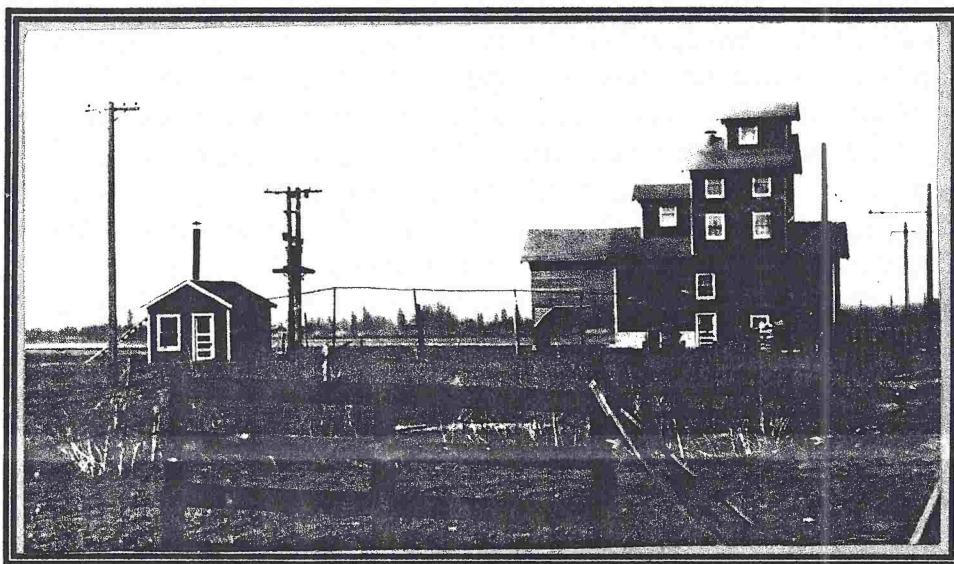
Jim: Probably ten years old. I was born in 1917 so that would be just before the Depression. Boy, that's something I wouldn't wish on to anybody! I lived through that Depression with my folks. Boy I'll tell you, if we hadn't had a little bit of ground in Herriman, we'd have starved to death! Many a night I went to bed with a piece of bread and jam for my supper! When we moved back to Herriman, Dad put some chicken wire around the hay rack and we put the chickens on the wagon and led the cow.

Lee Lloyd and Harold Berrett were big farmers. They were good farmers. They growed a lot of nice, big potatoes. They would ship 'em out on a refrigerated car every fall. They would dig 'em and ship 'em out. They just delighted in giving me all kinds of trouble. I don't know why. I guess it was just because they liked to tease me. Anyway, they both come in there with a load of potatoes one day. I was out there and they was giving me a bad time. They both grabbed the bag of potatoes and walked to the far end of that refrigerator car. I snuck over and locked the door on 'em in the refrigerated car. They called me everything under the sun. They said, "You little son of a b----!" When we get out of here, we'll just boot your butt till you won't be able to set on it!"

b---! When we get out of here, we'll just boot your butt till you won't be able to set on it!" And I said, "Well, I'm not afraid of that because you're not going to get out." Finally Dad come and made me let 'em out. I run for the house.

Mel: Do you remember anything about the little house that you lived in at the alfalfa mill?

Jim: It was on the southwest side of the alfalfa mill. I remember that. It seemed like 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. That's what I remember of the old alfalfa mill.



Death Notices

Donald L. Peterson (81); husband of LaVerda; parents were Franklin Arthur and Alice Madsen Peterson; 2 children

Flora Bastian (83); widow of Ralph W. Bastian; parents were Flora and Morgan Edwards; 3 children

Etcetera

A big thanks to Roy Tea for donating a copy of a large aerial photograph of Riverton taken in 1946 (decades before the big housing boom). It shows the old approach from the east coming into Riverton across the old bridge and up Tithing Yard Hill. Really neat!

**"Up on the Flats":
Rosetta Glazier Hilton**

[Note: These are excerpts from a letter Rosetta Hilton, daughter of Roy and Lorena Mae Glazier, sent to us in February 2003. She shares some recollections from her childhood. Her family had an eleven-acre farm up on the flats. She presently lives in Brigham City.]

Dad had a well dug. He built a large water tank, windmill, and a building out in back of it for a wash house for Mom. She had a motor to run her washer. They called it "Prairie Rose Ranch" because of Mom's large rose garden.

Dad got a job driving the school bus. In the winter he had a big sleigh to gather the students. We had hay for us to sit on and extra blankets. We would stop at May's place and we would all go in to get warm. Once in awhile she would have hot chocolate and cookies for us. One day he was waiting for the students. When school let out most of the children rushed out. Ruth and Rynthia, twins in my class who lived just across the road, ran out in the street and Rynthia was hit by a car. Dad got out to help. They got her to Dr. Sorenson's office. She lived, but she had a bad head injury.

Dad worked for years to get the power and telephone line in. More people moved to the flats. Uncle Ted and Ceicle were the first; then the Parrs. He had a barber shop in town. The Zabrisks came. They finally got the power and telephone. Mom gave a party for all the workmen. She made a large amount of punch. She stored it in a dirt basement Dad had built at the back of the house. After a week or so, the four of us found it and had quite a party. We were one sick bunch.

Another time we really got in trouble was a day following a big storm when the copper water was really high. We grabbed some clothes from the dirty-clothes pile to wear swimming. Unfortunately we grabbed some of their temple clothes. This time, Huck wasn't the only one who got a lickin'.

Mom always helped plant the garden. One year she lost her wedding ring. Dad bought her a new one. A few years later she went out to pull some carrots and her ring was on one of them.

We grabbed some clothes from the dirty-clothes pile to wear swimming. Unfortunately we grabbed some of their temple clothes. This time, Huck wasn't the only one who got a lickin'.

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 remember the old ice man that used to come through. We didn't have refrigerators. He used to come through and bring blocked ice to everybody. His name was Chauncey the ice man. He was a real jolly guy. He went from Hygeia Ice to West Jordan, Riverton, and Bluffdale. I guess he did go to Bluffdale because they had the store up there at that time. Then he went over to Draper. He just sold ice all the way around this country.

Mel: Did he come out here every day to deliver ice?

Max: No. He used to come down about twice a week and leave the ice in an ice house at David Bills's store. It would hold it for maybe three days of ice. It never would melt. It was just a well-insulated building about like a coal shed would be — like a walk-in wardrobe. They'd sell it out before it would melt. People would come and buy the ice from there and take it home to put in their coolers. Their coolers had a fan in them. They had burlap bags over 'em. It'd just keep it cool. They'd put ice in their drinks or whatever and chip it up all the time.

At my Dad's business we had a coal yard. It started out with one truck and they went down every day and got a load of coal. When the coal truck come back in, I had to unload it. It was in the back of the Commercial Building — between Mortensen's there now and the back end of the Commercial Building. We had a coal yard in there and a set of scales. We delivered coal. We'd have to in order to get a load in every day. Finally he got two trucks and we got two loads a day. When I got home from high school, there was always twelve ton of coal sitting there that I had to take to Salt Lake Floral to unload. I'd get one of my buddies to go in with me. It was a big floral. It was at 1950 South State Street. They had a big greenhouse. It was a pretty handy job when I started dating in high school because they never did sell their leftover flowers

When I'd get through shoveling coal, I'd say, "Would it be ok for me to go in and get a bouquet of flowers?" The next day, I'd take it to my girl friend.

from the night before. When I'd get through shoveling coal, I'd say, "Would it be ok for me to go in and get a bouquet of flowers?" The next day, I'd take it to my girl friend when I was dating. I was pretty popular that way because it didn't cost 'em anything. They'd just throw them away the next day. So they were pretty nice.

I took care of the hardware store about as much as anybody else. At a young age, I learned how to run the scales and weigh trucks and scales for nails and things like that. We had the John Deere dealership, Baldwin-Greener dealership — that's the Harvester. We had baled ties that they would shove through with a man on each side of the baler. They'd shove the wires through and the other one on the other side would put two ends together on the two different wires and tie 'em. It was before they had the automatic balers come out that tied themselves. As often as we could get the cement, we would go in and get us some. Sometimes we'd get two loads a week, sometimes just one. We'd go in and get a hundred bags of cement because there was no trucks that delivered cement. They had to mix their own. In time, we had a gravel pit up in Bluffdale so we made sand and gravel and sold that — also the cement. We'd deliver it with the dump trucks. Everybody put it up with a shovel and shoveled it into the cement mixer.

In the top of the Commercial Building they had that big roller rink. I did the same thing there as I did at the show house. I'd go up and put the skates on the shoes. That would pay for my evening of roller skating. There was no shoe skates at that time. You had to clamp 'em to your shoes. Every time they had the roller skating up there, I would go up there and roller skate. There was big crowds! They really enjoyed it! Everybody came to that because it was the only one in this end of the valley. South Jordan, Riverton, Herriman, and Draper — all of 'em came over. There were two posts in there. We'd skate around there with about five guys arm in arm. As the guy went to the post, he'd grab the post and they'd come around just like a whip. The guy on the end would just go clear around the whole room. Of course there was nobody else on the floor but them. That building was built in two sections. The south section was built first. That had kind of a gabled roof on it. The new section was the other one. It was a sloped roof to the rear. We had dances in that building, too.

We'd skate around there with about five guys arm in arm. As the guy went to the post, he'd grab the post and they'd come around just like a whip.

[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.]

Depression

In the spring of '34 when I came home from the A.C. in Logan, I found out that there was some work available for a few dollars a month with the government. The Depression was on real severe. I had an elementary teaching certificate from Logan because of the year and two quarters I had been there. I went to the government and told them I needed some help. They gave me a job teaching adult education. I'd teach adult education five nights a week on Tuesday and Thursday. I taught a class in Draper, a class in Lark, and a class in Riverton. My job was to get a group of people together that wanted to discuss something. I got about twenty people at the school house of a night. We talked about current events, good books, and things of that nature.

The Car Dealership

My brother Joe and my brother Almon and Tom Callicott had opened Butterfield Motor Company [in 1937]. I worked for the company that summer. Worked twelve hours a day, seven days a week. Got \$75 a month. A lot of money in those days. It was a lot of hours, too. I'd go to that garage at seven in the morning and stay till seven at night, Sunday through Saturday. Seven days. They run a service shop, sell gas and parts. I ran the front end, Almon run the back end, Joe sold the automobiles. That was what the three of us did. Then [in 1938] Joe decided he didn't like it so he wanted out of it. Almon said, "Well, I got \$115." And he said to me, "You pay in \$90." He said, "Let's raise your pay to \$115." He said, "I've got \$300 in the company. You put \$25 a month in for the first year and you'll have \$300 in it. We'll keep 25 of your dollars and you take the 90 and we'll work together." And that's what we started with — his 300 and my 25 a month out of my pay for a year. We had an old coal stove in the front and an old coal stove in the rear. We just drove the car in and fixed it

I'd go to that garage at seven in the morning and stay till seven at night, Sunday through Saturday. Seven days.

and drove it out again. We had a little parts counter that we used for office space. Not much to it. I primarily sold gasoline, kept the books, and sold parts.

Community Improvement

The Riverton Pipe Line Company was a private corporation. There was some individuals that owned several shares of stock in it. Those that did own a little bit of stock weren't getting any dividends out of it to no magnitude. So a group got together and decided that we were tired of the same little group dictating what was going to happen pertaining to water and that sort of thing in the community. Rex Hamilton had started an issue to get a sewer system. Couldn't get much of a sewer system going without the water system being more updated than it was — living on the water that was coming across from the east side out of a 2-inch pipe. We got together and decided to hunt and buy up whatever stock we could find to get control of the company. We walked into a Pipe Line meeting with our stock and outvoted the corporate officers of the Pipe Line Company. In the meantime, we worked for an incorporation of Riverton with the idea of one thing in mind only — to improve the cemetery. And then — getting the water system getting turned over to the community instead of being a private enterprise. We bought up what we could and got the corporation changed and a different board of directors. We started to work on the incorporation of the town. We went out with petitions and did all the legal things. We went to court and got Riverton incorporated. We had to get a certain percentage of the people in Riverton to sign the paper. We got it done and put in a new town president and town board. We tried to work the two hand in hand — to get the cemetery beautified and the water. Prior to this time, the cemetery had been tumbleweeds, parched up for a year or so. In order to get that taken care of, we wanted to get the water system in the hands of the town. We went to court and got it incorporated. Well, the opposition came and went to court and got us disincorporated. They opposed this because those individuals that had ruled this community all their lives outside of the church function just tried to dictate it. They were older than some of the rest of us and thought they owned the place. It was a threat to their power.

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

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

Bruce:

We raised chickens for somebody up in Salt Lake. Just raised it to make a little money. I remember one time, we had to weigh the feed and I lift it up and put it on the scales and I missed it. It fell down and it killed one of the chicks. I was afraid to go home. Dad never did get after me. He was a hard worker. During the Depression he had five dollars. He lost it. He laid down. He wasn't going to get up any more, he was so discouraged. He's one of these guys that's work, work, work.

He used to work for the David Bills's store for about twenty-five years. He used to kill beef and cut it up and haul it up to Bingham. One time they had a team of horses taking them up. He couldn't get out of the road. Snowed in. So he took them up and unloaded his load and, I'll be darned, the tongue broke coming down. The only way he could get out from under the horses was make them go faster. He come down out of Bingham there pretty fast. He'd go to work about three or four in the morning and get home at ten at night.

When he worked at Dave Bills's store, there was a robbery. Two of 'em come in and stuck a gun in my dad's ribs and Dad tried to josh 'em out of it. They were serious. They'd killed a girl over in Draper. The Fitzgerald girl. Hen Bills was just scared to death. He said, "Lute! Lute! Let 'em go! Let 'em go!" So Dad finally give in to 'em. They took off. The next morning, Hen's brother, Lance, worked at the store, too. He come in behind Hen and said, "Stick 'em up!" Hen run for a window. He'd a jump right through it, but then he seen the reflection of his brother. Hen got ahold of Lance and put him in the meat cooler. Wouldn't let him out.

Hen Bills was just scared to death. He said, "Lute! Lute! Let 'em go! Let 'em go!"

Donna:

It was written up in a magazine like *True Crime*. [Editor: Does anybody know where we can find a copy of this magazine article? We'd love to reprint it in *Riverton Yesterdays*.]

[to be continued]

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