

Riverton Yesterdays



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A Monthly Newsletter of Oldtime Stuff about Riverton, Utah

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"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.]

Church Experiences

When I was in the stake presidency, we built three buildings. We decided we had to have a building up on 13400 South. We started to collect money for it. We made assessments to the wards to put so much money in for the stake building program. We accumulated \$50,000. At that time, we were paying 30 percent. The Church was paying 70 percent. We figured it would cost us \$150,000 and we had \$50,000 of it. We went in to the general authorities and told them we wanted a building there. While we were collecting money, some of the wards would pay up and some wouldn't immediately. They would take a little longer. A couple of the bishops one night said to Eldred Hamilton, "Well, we're going to give our money back to the people because they thought we were going to get a stake house right away." We said, "Don't you dare give that money back to the people." We got ahold of Leonard [Beckstead] and I tried to explain to him that we had to get some action before we lost everything. Then the general authorities called a meeting on the building. They told us we couldn't have a building because we didn't have enough membership. We only had a little over three thousand. They said we had to have more membership than that. Brother [?] looked at me and said, "Now look, we've got stakes up in Wyoming and in Idaho. We'd love to build them a building." We got all kinds of people, but they won't raise any money. You come in here and tell me you've got \$50,000 and we can't let you have a building because you don't have enough people." He says, "It doesn't seem fair," he says, "but it's the only thing we can do." He says, "Brother Butterfield. How many children do you have?" I said, "Seven." He said, "Don't you treat them all alike?" I said, "No, I don't. I treat them all fair. Not alike." I said, "The boys work at Butterfield Ford and the girls don't. The girls get other compensation." I said, "So that's fair." He looked at me and he said, "Boy," he said, "you've got me." "Well," he said, "go on home. I'll think about it." Two days after, President Beckstead got a letter that said we could get the

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building. President Hamilton to his dying day would say to me, "Elias, I don't know how in the world you were impressed enough to say what you said." We got that building.

In my real formative years when I was the most active, David O. McKay was president of the Church. He was the seventh president. We said maybe he'd be the last one from the End. He had that gray hair and looked like an angel. Naturally, we became schooled to him. Then as I became working in church activity, I became a little better acquainted with some of them. I've always loved Duff Hanks. A lot of people haven't thought as well of him as I have. The reason for that is the way he talks, the way he tells his stories, the way he puts things together. Boyd Packer — as far as I'm concerned — is a brilliant individual. [James E.] Faust was president of a stake when Leonard Beckstead was president of the stake. We used to meet together in welfare meetings. I knew him and shook his hand many times. I ran into him on an airplane when he and his wife were returning home from supervising a mission in South America. We said, "Where are you going on your next mission?" He said, "I guess the world will be my next mission." He was coming home and they made him an apostle. He didn't realize it at that time.

When we were remodeling our ward up here [Second Ward], we wanted to put in some sidewalks and some blacktop. That was quite unusual back in those days to have much blacktop around. So I went in to the Building Committee to see about getting some additional money for that. The Building Committee man said no. I said, "Why?" He said, "Well, you owe us quite a bit now and we're just not going to loan you any more." I said, "Who do I have to see to get it?" He said, "You might try Pres. McKay." I said, "What room in the Hotel Utah is he in?" He said, "Oh, you wouldn't." "Oh," I said, "yes I would." He said, "Well, on your way out, talk to John Vandenberg." That's when he was on the Building Committee before he was Presiding Bishop. So I stopped in his office and told him. He was sitting there signing letters. He told me, "Tell me what you want." So I told him. He took the phone off and put it in his squawk box. Pretty soon a female voice said, "Can I help you?" He said, "Yes. Tell me where the Riverton 2nd Ward stands on their loan." She came back and said it's so much and they've paid so much and they owe so much that's current. He turned to me and he said, "How much do you need?" I said, "\$10,000." He said, "You'll hear from me." We got a letter two days later and it said, "Go ahead. We'll send you the money." If I'd listened to that first guy, I wouldn't have got the money. I had to be forceful to get what I knew I had to have.

[to be continued]

"I Can Remember":
Eldred and Violet Hamilton

[Note: This is an edited transcript of an interview Mel Bashore conducted with Eldred and Violet Hamilton on 29 January 1986.]

Eldred: They had a ball park out there behind the school.

Violet: It was behind the school and the old domed church. You could have races and they had a covered grandstand with seats. I was just a little kid with my mother going to the ball games there. She had to drive a horse and buggy. There was me, my brother, and the baby. I wasn't very old. My father liked to play ball. I imagine he played. Maybe he just went to watch. I don't know. He was ball game crazy, I think. He'd go a little early and she'd have to go down with the horse and buggy and tie up the horse. We'd play around the grandstand. We thought that was great to run around. I wasn't interested in the ball games. I was too little.

My father liked to play ball. . . . He was ball game crazy, I think.

I was the bookkeeper in my grandfather's store [Page-Hansen Store]. I worked there five years. I started in about 1925. They had shoes and groceries and corsets and hats and dresses. You name it, they had it. He called it a department store. Everything was sectioned off. When a customer come in, you followed the customer to all the different departments where they wanted things and wrote it all down in a book and added it up. All those sales slips had to be checked over by the bookkeeper the next morning to see that nobody'd made a mistake. The groceries were high and you had one of these ladders that roll along the track to get to the high shelves. You'd have to roll the ladder over there and climb up to get the peas off the shelf or whatever. You'd have to roll a ladder to get a box of corsets or something in the corset room — they had a ladder in there. They had shoes and overalls. You had to have a clerk to wait on you. He would follow you all through the store. When you wanted something, you went to the department where it was. You went to the shoe department and got the shoes and tried them on. A drug department. He had a big drug department and confectionery where they had these ice cream tables — these old iron tables with chairs. They had a real

soda fountain. Beatrice Newman worked in that soda fountain and ice cream parlor. We called it the candy store — the candy department. You had to make the sodas. You put the syrup in with these pull-down things. We did have one girl that stayed in the soda fountain and candy department and drug department. She took care of that one big division so that we didn't have to go out there unless someone that we were waiting on wanted some drugs — like cough syrup or whatever — and then we went out there to the drugs. All the granddaughters got a chance to work in the store in the soda fountain. We kept it open on Sunday evenings. Grandpa said, "If you want to go to church," which started about seven o'clock, "you can close it during church time. Lock up. Go to church. But if you don't want to go to church, you've got to stay and keep it open."

Mel:

What was it like working for Thomas P. Page?

Violet:

He had his funny ways. He never made a mistake. You couldn't tell him that he ever made a mistake. I was supposed to check all the mistakes. If you found that he made a mistake, it was better to keep still and not tell him. He didn't appreciate it if you told him that he made a mistake. When I worked in the store he was getting pretty old. While I was working there, he appointed Roland to be manager. Then his son, Meredith, took over after he went and bought up the stock. Then he was the manager. I worked for three bosses in five years — my Grandpa and my two uncles.

If you found that he made a mistake, it was better to keep still and not tell him.

Before I worked in the store, I used to help pick apples in Grandpa's orchard. All the grandchildren could pick apples if they wanted to. We got paid five cents a bushel. He sold them to people right out of the yard. People come right to the yard. He had a big yard where they had a big shed and all the boxes and the cider press.

[to be continued]

"My First Job":
Wesley E. Lloyd

[Note: This is an edited transcript of an interview Donald B. Petersen conducted with Wesley E. Lloyd on 20 February 1986.]

I was born in Riverton in 1903. I was born to Freeman R. Lloyd and Janetta Swan Lloyd. My father was working for the Church in the Riverton Tithing Yard. From there he went to dry farming. When the canals come through, he went to irrigated farming. They were dry farming in the west part of Riverton. At that time, he was secretary of the Jordan Valley Dry Farm Company.

We enjoyed the movies and dances. I remember some of the last dances that we had in the old Riverton Commercial Hall. When in Salt Lake, we used to go every week to the Bluebird at 9th South and State. Adolph Brocks was the band leader there. At the Riverton dances, they had a combo come in and play.

Our chores at that time on the farm consisted of general, everyday farm life. We used to heat with the old coal stove. Our canal that we got water from on the farm was the Utah Lake Distributing Company. That canal was put through the area here in 1913. We had a lot of trouble irrigating the first couple of years because this area was so downhill and the ground washed out so very easily. This whole "flat" — they called it — falls 75 feet to the mile. The water would run so fast that it was hard to control. Later on, when we got a little alfalfa growing, it was easier to control.

My first job in Riverton was at the old Riverton Canning Company. They shipped the cans in a box car. They were put up in the attic of the canning factory. My first job was putting cans down that chute to the sealer. The first payday I got, the amount was \$5.25. That was for after-school work. That seemed like a pretty good payday at that time. We used to go there on the way home from school for an hour or an hour and a quarter. Riverton was quite a shipping point at that time. The electric railroad run right through there. There was hay, potatoes, grain, and all kinds of Riverton produce shipped out of there on the electric railroad.

I started pumping gas in 1923 for Bill Nelson at 12600 South and 1700 West. He was a son-in-law of James Dansie, Sr.

The first payday I got, the amount was \$5.25.

**"They All Call Me Ole":
Lorenzo "Ren" Howard**

[Note: This is an edited transcript of an interview Mel Bashore conducted with Ren Howard on 2 March 1985.]

Ren: Wilford Myers was a good ballplayer. He was a pitcher. He had good control and that's a whole lot in a pitcher. He struck out a lot of 'em, but he sure was high-tempered. I'll tell you! He stood his ground. If it didn't go just right, he let 'em know about it!

Mel: Who were the ball players that you played with?

Ren: Duke Page was catch, Jack Madsen was first base, Cecil Crane was second base, I was third base. Orrin Crump and Clyde Peterson changed off playing shortstop and pitch. We only had nine boys that played. Tom Callicott was left field, Ren Bills was center field, and Robert Turner was right field. We had a regular little park and the baseball diamond was right in the center of it. That was our recreation here. On Saturday afternoon, everybody put up their tools and come to the baseball game. We had a grandstand. It was forty feet long and ten rows of seats. It was full every Saturday. Everybody was there! They had a good time. And we had a good ball team! So did the other towns — Draper, South Jordan, Herriman, Bluffdale. We had a regular league. Oh, we'd get in a squabble once in awhile, but it'd cool off and be all right.

On Saturday afternoon, everybody put up their tools and come to the baseball game. . . . Everybody was there! They had a good time. And we had a good ball team!

Mel: Did you play other teams, too?

Ren: Yeah. Lehi and American Fork and Payson. We used to exchange games with them. There was ball players from all over. Salt Lake had a league in there and they come out here. Studebaker started it first. He came out and he'd gather up us nine ball players and take us in there and we'd win the championship. I played for

Studebaker and Arrow Express and Pantages. That was a city commercial league. We played at the municipal grounds out on the east side in there. And at Liberty Park and Wandamere. They had two or three leagues in there. It was all baseball at that time when we were growing up. I played before the First World War and after. Practically all of us were drafted in except the younger ones. They didn't get to go, but the older ones went. We left here on the 10th of May, 1918. We set sail for France on July 4th. It took us twelve days to get over there and then we were on the Argonne Front. The first front we were on was the Saint-Mihiel's Front. Then we went on the Argonne Front. Then we went up in Flanders. We was up in Belgium when the Armistice was signed.

Mel: Did the Riverton boys stick together?

Ren: Yes. We were in the same company for a long time. Then they reorganized the regiment and put us in different companies. We took basic training practically in the same place. We went right through the whole business together.

Mel: You were in the war during the flu epidemic, weren't you?

Ren: Yes. Course we had a lot of flu in the army, but it didn't seem to get too many of 'em. We took so damn many shots!

Mel: Do you mean flu shots?

Ren: I don't know what they were, but we was getting them about every four or five days. That sure was funny. Some of 'em would roll their sleeve up and get a shot in the arm. You could see 'em waver and then over they'd go. They'd let 'em lay there. They wouldn't help 'em up. They'd stay there and pretty soon they'd get up.

Some of 'em would roll their sleeve up and get a shot in the arm. You could see 'em waver and then over they'd go.

Mel: It was worse than fighting?

Ren: It was for some of 'em!

Mel: Tell me some of your earliest memories. Who was your father?

Ren: Samuel H. Howard. My grandfather was Samuel Lorenzo Howard. He lived in a little log cabin down on the bank of this hill on the Jordan River. Then they moved up on 13th West. They moved that log cabin up and that's where my dad was raised. The Howard family arrived in Salt Lake in 1856. My grandfather got the name of Lorenzo from Lorenzo Snow on a mission in England. They named their first baby Samuel Lorenzo and then I got named Lorenzo.

Mel: Do you go by the nickname Ren?

Ren: Yes. Hell, they all call me Ole. That's my nickname. I was working down to the meat packing plant in Midvale. It was a slaughterhouse. Someone called in there and wanted to talk to Ole. They didn't know anybody by that name of Ole. The man said, "I'll see Howard and see if he knows." Well, I didn't know, but I got the nickname of Ole. All of my little kids and all of 'em call me Ole. It's very peculiar. These little kids come in here saying, "Ole. Ole. Ole." It tickles me to death.

They all call me Ole.
That's my nickname.

Mel: Do you remember your grandfather?

Ren: Oh, yes! He's kicked my pants two or three times. He lived in the log cabin for quite awhile. My dad stayed on the farm. He was in the sheep business. He was herdin' sheep when he was just a young kid. I don't think he was over sixteen and he took sheep for pay. He got a thousand head of sheep. Then he went on his own. They used to winter their sheep on the range on the west out here a lot. Once he sheared his sheep too early in early May. A big snow storm came and wiped him out. He lost the whole thing. They say the sheep just went wild. They went to one of those big washes and they just jumped in on top of one another and smothered. There was just a few that they saved, but that put him out of business.

[to be continued]

**RIVERTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Death Notices

Aileen Steadman Nielson Speights (93); wife of (1) Marton Nielson and (2) Jack Speights; parents were James and Mary Ann Winder Steadman; school teacher and government employee

Nola Mae Silcox Graziano (66); wife of Joseph Graziano; parents were Austin and Edith Steadman Silcox