

Riverton Yesterdays



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A Monthly Newsletter of Oldtime Stuff about Riverton, Utah

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**"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.]

Violet: On the farm I helped plant tomatoes and picked up potatoes. We never had beets so we didn't have to work in the beets. I always thought it was so awful to think we had to wait until it got so cold before we got to pick up potatoes. I thought, why don't they do it when it's warmer!

Eldred: I rode a one-horse cultivator to cultivate the corn and sugar beets. We mostly grew grain and alfalfa hay here. I was too young to work on the old horse-powered threshing machine, but I remember it. Once when I was just getting over typhoid fever, I remember sitting at the back window and watching them run the horse-powered threshing machine in our back yard. It used to take about half a day for them to stake it down so it would be solid and the horses would go around and around and around. Later they got a steam-powered thresher and I worked on most all of them. I worked on Bill Dansie's and Fred Lloyd's. Bill Dansie owned the first three-steam threshing machine in Riverton. Then his brother Jim went and bought one. Then they had two of them here in Riverton. They had enough grain growing out here to keep them busy.

Violet: They didn't go as fast as they do now, that's for sure. It would take all day long to really get going on those. When we had the threshers, we'd have them maybe three days. I don't suppose we had an overabundance of grain.

I had to scrape the potatoes out under a tree in the shade in two pans of water. I thought I'd never get through with those potatoes!

We'd have to cook dinner for them. I was just little and I had to scrape the potatoes out under a tree in the shade in two pans of water. I thought I'd never get through with those potatoes!

Mel: What do you remember about the church on the lower road?

Eldred: It was just a one-story, one-room building. I went down there to Primary. We walked along 13200 South to get there. Along that road there was a water wheel. That water wheel would turn the windlass for Dan Coy's blacksmith shop. He had his blacksmith shop along there and then they built it farther back later. Then they got these pumps that they pumped the air into. One day he came out with a big wrench in his hand and said, "You kids are going to get hurt if you don't quit

playing around here.”

Violet: There was no road through from Redwood Road except the cemetery road. So if they wanted to go to Primary, they had to go around. All the kids would have to go either on 13200 South or go down around on Herriman Road. There was no other roads going through at all then.

Mel: Where did you go for you Sunday meetings?

Eldred: The nearest I can remember is going to Sunday school in the domed church. They never finished the upstairs in it. They'd just finished the back room in it and all the main floor was a dirt floor. I played

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marbles on that dirt floor when I went to school. They finally put a floor in and they put an upstairs in it for the sacrament meeting. They had the classrooms downstairs in the back part of the church house. They had four classrooms in a sort of corner. In between them they put curtains so they could fix it so they could have six classrooms there. It was pretty upstairs, but the bottom wasn't what you'd call pretty because it wasn't hardwood floors. It was just softwood floors.

Violet: It was kind of a funny style inside. You'd have the classrooms in each corner as you'd come inside the door. It was narrow when you come in because these classrooms took up the floor. In the opening meeting, you'd have chairs and benches across where it was wider. That was the lower rooms. Then they had two more classrooms in the other side and a stage in the middle. This was downstairs. I guess it was years and years later they got the upstairs finally finished. When we went to Sunday school, we sat in the middle or else way over to the side in between where the classrooms took the chunks out in the corners. It wasn't that tight a squeeze, but it was an odd-shaped building. They used the stage to put on their plays and that's where the officiators stood for taking charge of the meeting. The dome church was pretty, but it wasn't functional.

Eldred: It was hard to heat. It sloped down in the seats so you could look over the top of people all the time. As you went down, each bench was lower than the other. It was on a gradual slope. Up in the corner there were choir seats. The ceiling was a dome. The bricks were red brick.

Violet: It was painted. It was fancy. The windows were beautiful. They were stained glass.

[to be continued]

**“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.]

Mel: What do you remember about the old Tithing Yard Hill? Was it still in operation when you were growing up?

Ren: Well, yes. I’ve often said that when the people paid their tithing, it wasn’t the poorest that they gave — it was the best! There was never better-looking, beautiful cows and sheep and hogs and chickens. They didn’t pay cash. Some, I guess, paid a little. But most of it was the best part of their livestock. I saw some of the most beautiful cows go in there. Boy! They were really the best! That was no fooling!

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Mel: When did people start paying their tithing in money more and stop paying in produce and animals less? Was it after World War I?

Ren: Oh, it was before that. Of course, I think some of them paid a little money for quite awhile. The main part of their tithing was mostly cash, but I couldn’t place the year. It sort of just faded out after the war. As far as I know, the tithing yard served just Riverton. My granddad owned the ground that the tithing yard was on. I don’t know whether he sold it to them or give it to them or what. I don’t know. When he first come out it was his. But, oh! There was some beautiful stock took in there!

Mel: Was there somebody who ran the tithing yard?

Ren: There was a family that lived right there. They took care of it. Freeman R. Lloyd was the first man that I ever remember being there. They lived right there and took care of it. They had a granary. They built it all out of 2x4s. It was two-story. Those men would carry that wheat up those stairs and put it in bins. I don’t know how they did it because that’s a hard job when you walk upstairs with sixty pounds on your shoulder! It’s gone now. My daddy-in-law bought that from the church. He was in packing plant killing. He hauled meat to Bingham. He built the house that’s down there now. He lived there for quite awhile. There was a flowing well just below the hill and they built that slaughter house around that

flowing well. They hauled meat to Bingham. Bingham was the salvation of this whole valley! Why, if it hadn't been for Bingham there wouldn't have been hardly anybody down here! They struck rich ore up in Bingham and everybody was out to get a claim. There was five bug tunnels that went into that mountain with different mining companies. They depended on labor from the valley — a lot of them. There was a lot of Swedes, Finns, and Italians. It seemed that they would work underground better than the valley kids.

Mel: Did many kids from Riverton go up and work there?

Ren: Oh, there was a lot of us that was up there. Hell! I worked up in Butterfield Canyon twice for Combine Metals and Ohio Copper. I was a pretty good ball player. They had a baseball league and I went out to Magna and worked for the Utah Copper then.

Mel: You mean you got hired on because of your ball playing abilities?

Ren: Well, I guess so. My brother, Bob, was playing out there and he said, "Come on out. I believe I can get you a job." So I went out there and they put me right on. I stayed out there quite awhile. That was after I worked for Dave Bills. When I worked for him, we'd go up to Bingham twice a week with a load of meat and we'd furnish all the meat markets up there. There was only three at that time.. We'd go up on the hill. Hell! They had terraces and roads all the way up to the top of that mountain! And we'd go peddle it out. Some of those old foreign ladies would come out there and you'd have a quarter beef sitting in your wagon and she'd say, "I want that piece right there." You'd cut it off and weigh it and she'd fork out the money. She knew what she wanted. There was no inspection in those days.

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[to be continued]

Death Notices

Clair Max Lloyd (81); husband of Azona Farr Lloyd; parents were Joseph Leo "Lee" and Leah Densley Lloyd; business owner

"In Them Days":
Rulon Dansie

[Note: This is an edited transcript of an interview Mel Bashore conducted with Rulon Dansie on 6 February 1986.]

Rulon:

I was borned March the 18th, 1901 down here in Riverton in the house where my brother, Elvoy, lives. All of us kids was borned there. That house has got quite a history to it. I can remember going to school over in the old meetinghouse. We went to

There was only two or three funerals held upstairs in that tall building because it was almost impossible to get a casket up there.

Primary along with my mother. She was the president of the Primary down where Don Coy lives [13115 South 1300 West]. That's where my brother's funeral was when he passed away in 1908. In fact, I believe that he was the last funeral held in that meetinghouse. It was about that time when they finished the tall meetinghouse [domed church] and put a roof on it. They had it up to the square and it stood that way for quite a few years. Four of them raised the money to finish building it and put the top on. The next funeral in the tall meetinghouse, they tried to get them up around them steps and one thing and another. There was only two or three funerals held upstairs in that tall building because it was almost impossible to get a casket up there. On the east side you went up so high when you went in. Then you went down just like they have these here seats where they play basketball. That's the reason why they quit using it. It wasn't practical. It was about forty feet from the roof down to the floor. It took a ton of coal to heat it in the winter, so they give it up. They tore that down and in 1939. Bert Gilbert and his boys, and I and Marion and Del, my two oldest boys, and Penny Silcox cleaned the brick from the tall building for the 1st Ward meetinghouse. Now it's the 3rd Ward. We cleaned the bricks and hauled them all over. Then the war broke out and we couldn't finish building it so we used the school house for quite a little while to hold our meetings in.

Mel:

Did they still use that meetinghouse on the Lower Road as a school house after your brother's funeral in 1908?

Rulon:

No. They moved up on Redwood Road. When I was six years old, I went to school on the corner in the old Commercial Building for two years. There was a windmill there and a pump beside the road. In them days, we all had to have a bucket of water and a dipper that we used for

drinking water. If the wind wasn't running the windmill, a couple of us would have to change it over so we could use the hand pump. In the winter, they just had a common stove. They had a tin around it so they could throw the heat out a half circle. We used to have to carry wood and coal. After they got the fire started, it used mostly coal to get the buildings warm so we could go to school. Our school room was on the bottom floor. After two years, we moved back up in the other school house. Then they put the post office in there. First the post office was in Page-Hansen's Store, then they moved it down there to the Commercial Building. They had the bank in there at one time. In that old building, the lower floors were used for a lot of things. The upper story was used for shows and a dance hall. Right at the last, they quit using it, you might say. Mortensen bought it and he run the dances there for years. When they quit using it for dances, they started roller skating. In the wintertime, that where they had their basketball games and practices. They really couldn't have competition too much because the outside wall was too far in on one side. They'd throw the ball against the wall and grab it again. They just fooled around over there.

I remember when Hebe Crane had a couple of dogs on a treadmill. That's how they done their washing. The dogs was on a treadmill that turned the washing machine. That's before the electricity come in. When they put the electricity in, they stayed there at Father's house

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and wired all of Riverton. In fact, when they surveyed the road to go to Herriman, they stayed there. When they surveyed for the Utah Distributing Canal, they stayed right there at the house. Father had a big house. Three of them stayed right there that surveyed the canal. I used to have to take them out in the mornings and leave them in a buggy. Then I'd go pick 'em up at night.

Mel: I've heard that your house was even used as a hotel.

Rulon: Oh, yes. When the groups would come to play in the Commercial Building, a lot of 'em would stay over night because we had quite a few rooms. The people from Utah County traveling to Bingham would stay with us. We've had as high as six teams pull in there in one night and had to double 'em up. Us kids a few times had to sleep on the floor and give 'em our beds. Many a time I had to go out and turn our teams out in the corral so they could have stalls to put and feed the horses in.

[to be continued]

**"Everyone Knew Everyone":
Violet Sandstrom Morris**

[Note: This is an edited transcript of an interview Joel Denning and CJ Evans conducted with Violet Sandstrom Morris on 9 July 2003 for an Eagle Scout project.]

Q: Who were your parents?

A: My mother was Anna Mae Sandstrom and my father was Harry W. Sandstrom. He was foreman of the Riverton Motor Company. They came to Riverton in 1923. My father was asked by Gwynne Page to come and be the foreman. They lived in a little red house. It was on the corner where the Crane House used to stand. It was a store at first, but when my parents came they rented it as a house. Later they bought the house.

Q: How long have you lived in Riverton?

A: All my life. My home has always been here.

Q: What are your earliest memories?

A: My very earliest childhood memory is when I was less than five years old. I used to go to what they call "Sunbeams" in church now. We used to go up to the top of the old domed church where we could see the little dome. I remember singing, "Up, up, in the sky, where the little birds fly. Down, down, in the nest, where the little birds rest."

I remember singing, "Up, up, in the sky, where the little birds fly. Down, down, in the nest, where the little birds rest."

Q: What do you remember about school?

A: I loved school. My first memory about school was that I wanted to go to kindergarten because my sister went to kindergarten the year before. They didn't have it the year when I would have gone. I just got to go to the Sunday school course.

Q: Who were your best friends?

A: Betty Hansen was my very best friend, but she didn't come until the third grade. My next-door neighbor, Elizabeth Page — and that was the Page-Hansen Shore Pages — was my girl friend.

Q: What kind of games did you play?

A: Kick the can. Auntie-I-Over. In Auntie-I-Over we used to throw a ball or a can or something over the garage or any building that was low enough and somebody would catch it on the other side.

We played mumblety-peg.
Do you know what that is?

You got points for the catches. We played mumblety-peg. Do you know what that is? They used to take a pocket knife or a knife of some kind and flip it so that it would stand up in the ground. You got points for how many times it stood up in the ground. Nobody ever got hurt. We would play lots of marbles and jacks. We lived on the edge of the school grounds so that was our place to play. We had a great grandstand right by my house so we used to play in the grandstand.

Q: Did you ever get in trouble in school?

A: I sluffed once in my life. That was when I tipped over the teacher's cabinet and all the art things spilled out. I was too frightened to tell her. Me and my girl friend went out and hid by the science room. A teacher came and told us not to sluff school and go back to our teacher. We did.

Q: What kind of chores did you have to do at home?

A: We planted flowers. My sister took care of the kitchen and I took care of the rest of the house because I didn't like to do dishes. We had inside chores and outside chores. At one time we had a cow and one time we had chickens. One time we had rabbits. Not all were at the same time.

Q: What was your father foreman of?

A: Riverton Motor Company. My father died when I was a little over eleven years old. We had four children in our family.

Q: How did you mother get along without your dad?

A: She did very well. She worked for Peterson's Market during World War II. She would prepare the ration stamps and the books. She was a very good mother. She never married again. I had two brothers. One was killed in a Jordan School District bus accident in 1938. They were twins. The one who survived the school bus accident later died of a heart attack.

[to be continued]

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