

Riverton Yesterdays



Volume 3, No. 5

December 2003

A Monthly Newsletter of Oldtime Stuff about Riverton, Utah

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Annual Subscription: \$10

“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.]

Mel: What was the flu like?

Eldred: Fever.

Violet: Ache all over. We didn't get it in our family. I can remember wearing the masks.

Mel: Did you know anyone who died from it in Riverton?

Violet: Jim Henderson died. Chris Mortenson. His wife died too, didn't she?

Eldred: I think so. There was Peterson.

Violet: They shut down the church and schools. If you went anywhere to the store or anything, you wore a mask over your nose. Everybody wore them. You didn't go to many places in public because they weren't open.

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Mel: Another tragedy was the train-bus accident. Did that affect anyone you knew?

Eldred: I was driving a school bus out on the flat at the time. It was a contract bus. I'd pick up the kids out on the flat and bring them down here. I'd have to meet that other bus down here. I was late that day and had to wait for some of the kids. I was late catching that other bus. Several of them missed it.

Violet: That was the bus he should have caught with his load from the flat. My mother lived down there across from the old Page home. She had one boy that should have been on that bus. She called him two or three times and he didn't get up. She says, "You'll miss your bus." It was a good thing that he did. He got to school on another bus, but he missed the one that got hit by the train. There was six from our ward and four from the 2nd Ward and six from Bluffdale. My mother was just surrounded. The school bus driver lived on one side of her that got killed. He left his wife and a small child.

The neighbor on the other side and a cousin, kitty corner across the way. There was a boy across the street and the Crane boy was just down a few houses.

Mel: Eldred, being a bus driver, did you go to the site of the crash?

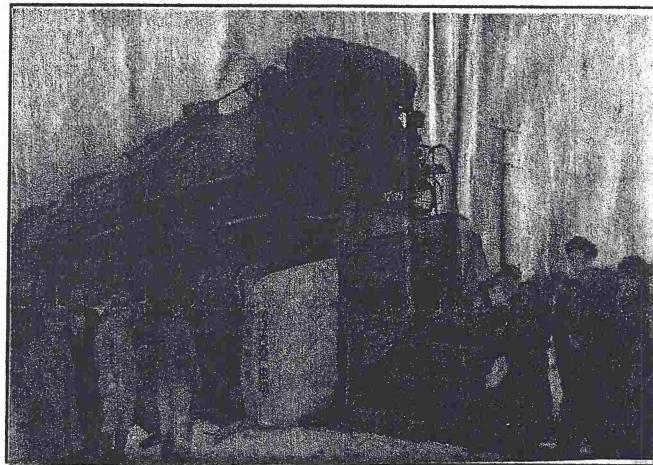
Eldred: Yes. I drove my car over.

Violet: We had a pair of twins that was two years old that day. I had another baby that was about six or seven months old. My neighbor come running and said the bus had been hit by the train. I didn't know whether my brother was killed. When he come back with his bus, he let me go downtown to see what had happened and who was hurt and what the news was. He stayed with the children. It was a terrible day for all. My cousin, my mother's sister's boy, got on at the school house and sat right in front by the driver. That was Rolly Page's boy. Peterson, who had a store in Riverton, his boy. The Densley boy on the other side and the bus driver on this side. The Stevenson boy was right kitty corner the other way. They were all surrounding my mother's house.

My neighbor come running and said the bus had been hit by the train. I didn't know whether my brother was killed.

Eldred: All the boys that got killed were in my scout troop.

Violet: It was really an upsetting, sad day.



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

[Note: This is an edited transcript of an interview Mel Bashore conducted with Ren Howard on 9 March 1985.]

Mel: When did you start school?

Ren: I started school when I was six years old. I had to walk to school or else Dad would take us up in the wagon. It was more than a mile from our house. When there was snow, we'd walk up on top of the drifts. The Herriman Road would drift full every winter. The traffic would be up on top of it. In the later years they had to shovel out from here [his house; present site of Hogi Yogi] clear up to the corner. There was fifteen to twenty men shoveling snow up over their heads. Everything was done by hand.

**When there was snow, we'd walk up on top of the drifts.
The Herriman Road would drift full every winter.**

Mel: That would have been a job!

Ren: Yes! And Edward Orgill had the contract to haul the mail from the Denver and Rio Grande up to the post office. The post office was in the old Page-Hansen store. He carried that mail for years and years. He had lost his right arm. He only had one arm and he drove horse and buggy back and forth, twice a day, to get the mail. Edward Orgill was an industrious man. He had a little farm down here on 13th West and about 13400 South. I was just a little kid when he was hauling the mail. He was quite a good Church member. He always sang in the choir and he was quite a man to help the young kids. He managed the baseball teams that they used to have in Riverton. I played under him for several years. He was an Englishman. He married a girl by the name of Farmer and she was a relative of the Butterfields. Old man Butterfield was one of the first ones that migrated to Fort Herriman. They named the canyon just west of Herriman — Butterfield Canyon.

Mel: What school teachers can you remember?

Ren: Herb Quinn was my eighth grade school teacher. After eighth grade, we went over to Sandy to Jordan High School. They had a man and a four-horse stage coach that gathered us up and we rode to Sandy in that. Then the automobile came and done away with the team and wagon business. They had regular school buses from then on. I drove a horse and buggy

over there one year 'cause I wanted to play in sports. They wouldn't hold the stage so I drove, but they paid me for it. My one sister and Norma Hamilton and I drove over there in the buggy. It wasn't too bad in the winter because you got accustomed to it. You'd get cold, but we'd heat bricks and put them in the bottom of the buggy. We had side curtains. It would take you an hour to get over there, especially in the winter when there was snow. But anyway, we didn't mind it. We just had to do it, that was all.

Mel: There must have been a lot of horses lined up over at the school.

Ren: They had quite a barn there to take care of the horses.

Mel: How did the teachers keep discipline?

Ren: [Ren flexes his arm and smacks his hand with his fist.] When you got home, you got two or three more of them [smacks his hand with his fist]! That's what's wrong now! They protect the kid instead of the teacher! If they'd allow a teacher to knock a kid on his ass two or three times, that would be all over!

Mel: So there was good order in the schools?

Ren: You're darn right! And you learned! If you were a little bit slow, the bright kid would help the poor kid. A slow kid takes a long while to get it, but when he gets it he remembers it. I've noticed that all through my schooling. I think that's just what's wrong in all our schools. The teacher don't give a damn whether that kid in the corner learns anything or not! They just help the leaders. The slow kid is kind of left behind now, but he wasn't when I went to school. Those old school teachers would drill you, drill you, and drill you until you did learn it! That was all!

Those old school teachers would drill you, drill you, and drill you until you did learn it!

[to be continued]

"In Them Days": Rulon Dansie

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

Mel: Where did you get your culinary water?

Rulon: Father first got it from the county well. The county drove a windmill on the corner [southwest corner of 12600 South and Redwood Road]. Then Father had the well drove and a lot of them got their water from his house for drinking water. Anderson drilled Father's well. Hebe Crane's well wasn't good drinking water. They used to haul water from Father's well. Uncle Zach [Butterfield] had one. Still got the hole in the ground, but it wasn't good drinking water. Ain't every well that you can get good drinking water out of. Frank Seal across the road here, in '27 drilled a well and it turns a tea kettle red. When they drilled mine the next year, they got down to 243 feet and they was in solid rock and no water at all. Then they went down a lot deeper on mine and it turns a tea kettle white. It was pretty good drinking water. Course when the pipe line come through, there was no comparison. They dug that pipe line by hand in 1908. Then they done away with the windmill down there. They quit using that water at the windmill. I think there was about a hundred taps on the first pipe line to come in. Father had a 2,000 gallon tank and he built a square and he lined it all with paper. They lined it the best they could in them days. It had a thick heavy door when you went in and he had a tank up above it where the wind would go. It would fill it. Then he carried water from there to the house.

**Ain't every well that you can
get good drinking water out
of.**

Mel: What do you remember about the windmill? How tall was it? What did it look like?

Rulon: I pumped many buckets of water out of there when I went to school. It went up about 25 or 30 feet high. Wiberg had one. When the wind didn't blow, he'd bring his stock over to our place to water them. He had a big waterin' trough. One of his kids fell in there and drowned. That was a disaster. Boy! That was a sad deal to have one of your kids drown in your own water trough. Hebe Crane had one over there. His wife used to go up there and grease it and oil it and fix it. Hebe couldn't do it because if he got too high off the ground, he'd get dizzy. At the windmill on the corner there was a trough. Ren Howard remembered it was about three feet wide and twenty to thirty feet long. He said it would take about three or four

hours to fill it up if there's no stock around. There was no building by it on that corner when the windmill was there. There was only the Commercial Building on the other side of the road. On the side where the windmill was there was only a field. Densley used to farm it all the time. They most generally had it in hay or grain. The well was kind of on the road, sitting out in the road so's any and everybody could use it. The county furnished the money to build it. When the wind didn't blow, it would take two of us to unhook it and hook the handle up so we could pump it. You pull the throttle of the windmill and pull the fan around and that shuts it off. Then you take the pump and put it through a bolt by each one holding it. Then you could take the other bolt off. Then when you lift it up, you could put the rod to one side and tie it over. Then you could pump it. If the wind was a blowin', that old handle would be goin' up and down. You'd pull a bolt out and then drop the handle straight down and then the wind would take it. When there was no wind, they had a wire we could pull and pull the thing around. When it's double, that shuts it off and out of gear so the wind won't turn it.

Mel: Wasn't the wind generally blowing here?

Rulon: Well, there was a lot of times it wasn't. If it was foggy weather, the wind don't blow. We had three weeks of foggy weather one time.

Mel: Did you say that they dug the pipe line by hand that they first brought in?

Rulon: Dug it by hand in 1908. They buried it about four feet down under the ground. It was a wooden, wrapped wire pipe first. All the pipes in them days was all wooden, wrapped with wire, tongue and grooved. It was round. It was redwood. They tongue and grooved it and wrapped wire around it to hold it. It went up about as far as Uncle Zach's. Then it went up into Bluffdale. It went along the Redwood Road and the Lower Road. It all come from Bear Canyon. I'm pretty sure it got across the river in this pipe, too. It was running all the time so it would never freeze. They didn't have to pump it because they had a tank high up in Draper.

All the pipes in them days was all wooden, wrapped with wire, tongue and grooved. . . . They tongue and grooved it and wrapped wire around it to hold it.

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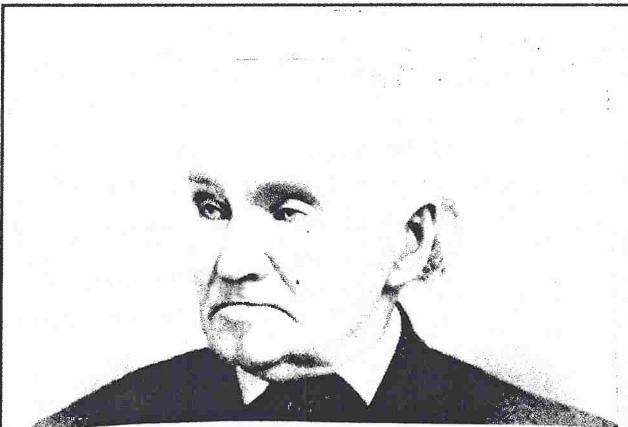
Who Was Riverton's First Rancher?

Abraham Hunsaker has been credited as the first to own land in Riverton (1855) and Archibald Gardner is usually credited as being the first person to live in Riverton. We recently stumbled across a document that calls these historical "firsts" into question:

In the fall of 1850 my Father [Lorenzo Dow Young] "pitched camp" on the west side of the Jordan river opposite of what is now called Draper in Salt Lake County, and took cattle and sheep to herd. I was put there to follow a flock of sheep. The wolves were very bad and could be seen in packs. And usually took a cow, or a poor ox every night. One evening I put stricknine in and around a dead cow, about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from our herd house, and when I went there next morning I found six big white wolves, one cayote and one fox, all dead within a stones throw of the carcass. After that I got one or two of a night, until they were so far killed off that they killed no more cattle at our herd ground. . . . About this time, 1853, Father having abandoned his claim to the ranch on the west side of the Jordan river, he traded for a small farm, and house on the east bank of the said river above the mouth of Little Cottonwood Creek and I herded sheep about there.

This was written by Franklin Wheeler Young in his autobiography (p. 9, microfilm of holograph, Church Archives). Lorenzo Dow Young (1807-1895) was one of Brigham Young's brothers. He was the first to cultivate garden flowers in Salt Lake Valley and was successful in raising fine vegetables. He came to Utah with the Pioneer Company led by his brother/prophet. With him were his wife, Harriet, and two of his children. Harriet was one of three women in the company and his children were the only children. Part of his family, including his 9-year old son Franklin Wheeler, followed a few weeks behind in Jedediah M. Grant's company. Franklin helped herd his father's

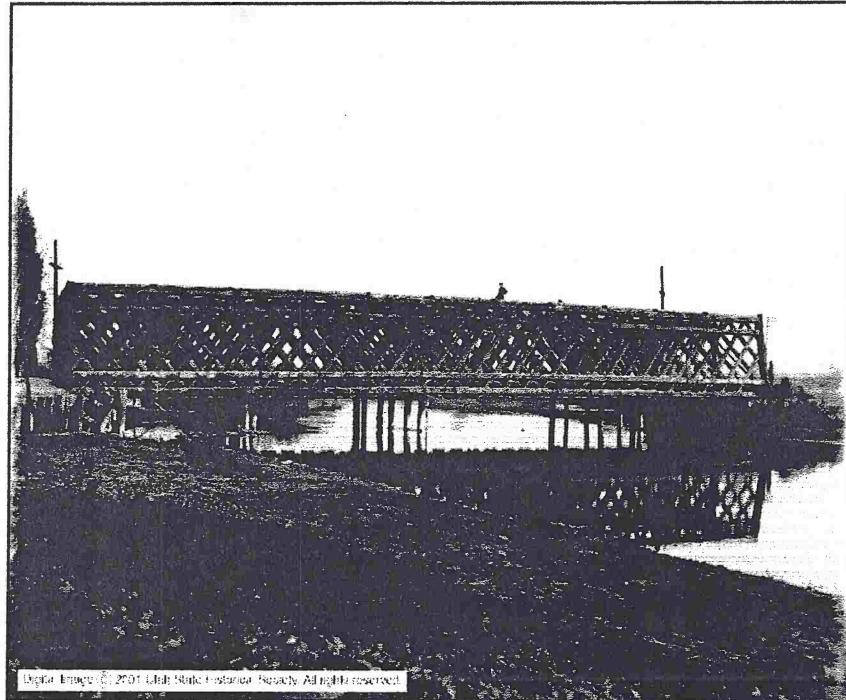
cows and sheep across the plains. Lorenzo also took a cow with him in the company — one of the first cows brought to Salt Lake Valley in 1847. A few weeks after their arrival, Harriet gave birth to the first white male child born in the valley. In 1849, Lorenzo went back to Missouri and bought a herd of 500 sheep and some cows. These are the sheep and cows that Franklin Wheeler Young herded in Riverton when he was just 12 years old.



Lorenzo Dow Young

On 1 March 1851, Lorenzo Young was returning on horseback from his Riverton ranch. He traveled north up the trail that paralleled the west side of the river to an old wood bridge that crossed the Jordan River where North Temple crosses it today. It was called White Bridge. According to the account of this incident in Orson F. Whitney's *History of Utah* (vol. 4, p. 54), "It was a time when horse thieves were giving trouble,

and a secret guard had been placed by the sheriff at the White Bridge over the river, with instructions to intercept and arrest the marauders." When Lorenzo reached the bridge, "he was hailed in a somewhat boisterous manner by the guard, whom he mistook for drunken campers. Refusing to halt at their command, he was fired at by three men, and seriously wounded in the left arm, the ball severing the main artery and causing him to bleed profusely." Hanging on to his horse "with characteristic doggedness



White Bridge

he rode on, but nearly bled to death before reaching the house of Daniel Daniels, a friend, about half a mile from the scene of the shooting." Young said, "Brother Daniels went for Brother Thomas Jeremy, close by, and they two laid hands on me, and asked the Lord to stop the flow of blood from my wounded arm. It stopped immediately. The main artery was cut above the elbow, and but for this timely relief I should have bled to death."

This new information extends the early settlement history back five years earlier than previously thought and revises our knowledge of Riverton's first land owner. It was Lorenzo Dow Young in 1850.

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