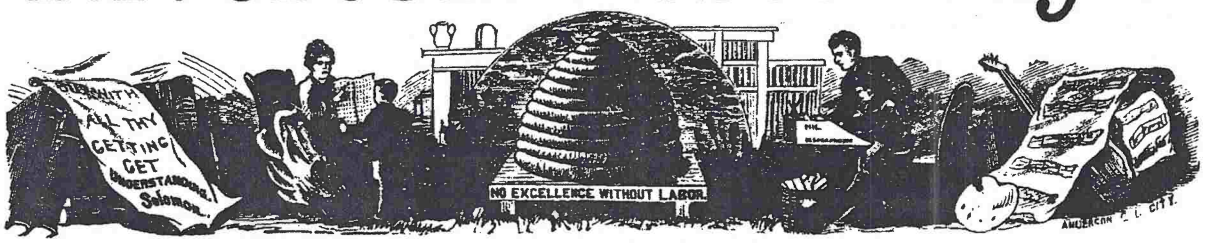
Riverton Yesterdays



Volume 3, No. 9 April 2004

A Monthly Newsletter of Oldtime Stuff about Riverton, Utah

In This Issue

"In Them Days": Rulon Dansie
Going Hunting with "Sandy" Sandstrom
The Salt Lake and Utah Electric Railroad
"Riverton Has Been a Special Place": Melva Butterfield
"I Had a Very Happy Life": Norma Madsen

Editors: Karen and Mel Bashore

Address: Riverton Historical Society
Riverton Art Museum at the Crane House
1640 West 13200 South
Riverton, UT 84065
Phone 253-3020

Annual Subscription: $10

979.225
Riverton Yesterdays
Magazine Box

"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: What was it like inside the meetinghouse where you went to Primary down on the Lower Road?

Rulon: When it was used as a church, there was just a row of seats around the outside and just benches. It was all just one big room. It wasn't built like they are now. It was just a square room. They stand up back of a desk and talked.

Mel: Was it a desk or a pulpit?

Rulon: It was more like a desk.

Mel: Where was the entry?

Rulon: I believe the main door was on the west side. On the east side they had a door, too. They had a little shed built there where they kept their coal and wood so that they could heat the building. There was a little pot-bellied stove inside. My oldest two sisters went to school there when they first started out. In about 1904 they went to the school on Redwood Road. It had the four big rooms — one big long room on the bottom, one on top. There was a stove right in the middle with a grate on each side. They had eight grades. When I first went to school, I went in the Commercial Building because the school was filled up. They had some of 'em in the domed church house, too — in the back part of that. They held school in one or two classes in there. The school could only hold so many. They had the first grade in the Commercial Building. That was the closest for me to walkin'. In the third grade, I went up to the regular school. I went to school till about the sixth grade. Then I didn't go to school. There were two or three years I didn't go to school. Then they was forcin' them to go to school till

I went to school till about the sixth grade. Then I didn't go to school. There were two or three years I didn't go to school.

they were eighteen. I was past eighteen, but I wanted to take agriculture and woodwork over to Jordan High School. That's all I took over there. I didn't take English and the rest of 'em.

Mel: How old were you when you were in sixth grade when you stopped going to school?

Rulon: About fifteen. There was about three years I didn't go to school.

Mel: Why didn't you go?

Rulon: They didn't force me to go to school till I was eighteen years of age. It was 1919 to 1920 when I went over to Jordan.

Mel: They didn't start forcing kids to go to school until 1919?

Rulon: Yes. Till that year. Prior to that I was home loading hay. In April — soon as it got so we could drill grain — I was out driving horses. Most of the kids in the fourth grade now got a better education than I have as far as book learning.

Mel: What kind of things did you learn in school?

Rulon: To be honest with you when it comes to schooling, I never did learn to read. I had hay fever from the day I was born. I couldn't see the blackboard. My eyes swelled shut so's I couldn't see. But I still had to go out and milk the old cows. We found out if we cut our hay before it got in bloom that it didn't bother me. In 1927 when we moved up to this farm here, the hay got in bloom and it got the best of me. I had a bad dose of hay fever. I knew I had to get my hay up. That's when they administered to me on fast day down at the school house. I went up and told 'em I wanted to be administered to so's I could get my hay in because I had hay fever. Ren Bills was in the bishopric. He practically cured the hay fever. The next day I went out and put up hay. I worked around combines and everything else since. I was practically cured overnight. It still bothers me, but not like it used to. I used to choke down just like a horse choking down. But

To be honest with you when it comes to schooling, I never did learn to read.

after that day, it helped out like everything!

Mel: Did you ever catch the flu in 1918 during the epidemic?

Rulon: I'll say we did! I caught the flu. In our family, we got through it all right. We had to stay inside because they found out by staying in and not going out, it helped. Henry Crane of Herriman — that's Walt Crane's brother — insisted on going outside to the outhouse that year when he was sick. He wasn't using a pan or anything. The next day he was dead.

Mel: Didn't Chris Mortensen die from the flu?

Rulon: He could have done. He died sudden about that time.

Mel: Did his wife die from the flu, too?

Rulon: She died of a heart attack cooking for the threshers. It was too much for her that day. During the night she died of a heart attack.

Mel: Didn't Jim Henderson die from the flu, too?

Rulon: That's right. He was Louie Madsen's husband. He was big, heavyset. He was almost a 250-pound man — just the picture of health. He had a well-matched team and when he died, they sold the teams. Father bought one of his horses and Uncle Jim [Dansie] bought the other horse. I remember hooking up a team so they could take a sleigh up to Herriman to help a man with the flu. One of the ones that drove the team up, two days later he caught the flu and died. They lost both of 'em. When they got to Herriman, the man with the flu passed away. Then they come back down and about two days later, the one that drove the team up was gone. I don't know what caused it, whether it was a germ or just what it was. The ones they said who would stay in and take care of themselves and wouldn't expose themselves to the outside would be alright. But the one that insists on going outside that way, just that sudden change, it got 'em. It was worse during the winter. That's about the only time we lost anybody round here.

[to be continued]

Going Hunting with "Sandy" Sandstrom

Carroll Henry "Sandy" Sandstrom, son of Harry W. Sandstrom, recently visited with Violet Morris and recounted some of his hunting memories with his father and his friends. These hunting adventures took place from approximately 1933 until just before the war. An edited excerpt follows:

Sandy said that his brother, Harold, did not like to go hunting. He didn't want to kill animals.

There were a group of men from Riverton which included Gwynne Page, Harold Berrett, Ardella's husband Jack, Emery Berrett (from Berrett's Blossoms), Mr. Stan Anderson (a school teacher), and anyone else who wanted to go along to learn to shoot. They would take any of their boys who were over eight years of age.

Harry and Sandy went with this group of men into Rose Canyon, West Canyon, and other canyons on the west side of the Salt Lake Valley to hunt. They also hunted cottontail rabbits near Camp Williams. There were doves below Camp Williams and jack rabbits in the fields near the South Hills of the Valley. They also hunted what they called "pot guts." These were ground squirrels with a short tail and a large belly. They hunted with a .22 rifle, .410 single shot, and a 12-gauge German shotgun. The area was mostly sage and farmland during those years.

They also hunted pheasants from about 12600 South and 1800 West down along both sides of the Orem Line railroad tracks. Pheasants were plentiful for the season and a meal fit for kings. Sometimes they brought home a little asparagus or watercress from the canal.

When the men went to hunt, they chose up sides. The losers with the least 'catch' bought dinner in Lehi for the winners.

When the men went to hunt, they chose up sides. The losers with the least 'catch' bought dinner in Lehi for the winners.

The only problems they had were associated with hunting in the western mountains where some contracted Tularemia (Rocky Mountain spotted fever or Lyme disease). It is very dangerous and came from ticks found in the animals or shrubs in the canyons.

The Salt Lake and Utah Electric Railroad

The Riverton Intermountain Farmers Association (IFA) is constructing an historic marker just east of their new store on 12600 South and near the original site of the old railroad station to memorialize the old "Inter-urban" railroad. The "Orem Line" enabled Riverton farmers, agricultural co-operatives, and businesses to transport their goods to market and passengers to travel to places between Salt Lake and Payson. The plaque will overview the history of this important part of Riverton's past. A brief history follows:

As early as 1906, an inter-urban railway was being discussed for Salt Lake County. A number of men and businesses from Riverton voiced support of "The Utah Light and Railway Company" who were requesting a franchise for lines to different parts of the county. Franchises were granted in1910 and 1911, but actual construction didn't begin until 1912 when the project was taken over by eastern businessman, Walter C. Orem.

Commonly referred to as the "Inter-urban" or the "Orem Line" the train ran with gas engines in the beginning, but by 1916 the line was completely electrified. The line ran from Salt Lake City to Provo by 1913 and reached Payson in 1916, a distance of 67 miles. The train ran hourly at first, then every 2 hours in the 1920's. The regular stops were Salt Lake, Adams, Taylorsville, Granger, Bennion, West Jordan, South Jordan, Riverton, Bluffdale, Jordan Narrows, Kirkham, Lehi, American Fork, Provo, Spanish Fork, Salem and Payson. Passengers were encouraged to buy " mileage books". In 1914, a 500-mile train pass book sold for $11.25 which was 2 1/4 cents a mile.

"The Big Red Cars," locally called " the Red Heifers," were luxurious. They were painted red with gold gilt trim. Each was sixty-two feet long and nine feet wide. The seats were leather with mahogany trim. There was a smoking compartment, steam heat, a drinking fountain, electric lights, and overhead storage racks in each car. Trains averaged 45 miles per hour. A trip from Riverton to Salt Lake City took 48 minutes. Passengers would embark or disembark at the Riverton Station located just north of 12600 South at 1840 West.

Moving freight along the line enabled many area co-ops, farms and businesses to prosper also. By the end of World War I, automobiles and trucks had drastically reduced the use by passengers and businesses of the Line. The last runs of the "Big Red Cars" were made in 1946. The Denver & Rio Grande and the Bamberger Railroads bought most of the trackage and equipment in an auction sale of the assets.

"Riverton Has Been a Special Place": Melva Butterfield

[In 1987, Melva Bills Butterfield wrote this brief autobiographical sketch and donated it to the Riverton Historical Society.]

In 1910, Grace Swan owned the property where Tom Tateoka's farm is today. Grace wanted a small lot where she could build a small house. On January 14, 1910, Cleon and Christine Lloyd sold her one-half acre of ground where she built a two-room house [2691 W. 12600 S.]. A year later a small barn was built. We tore the barn down in June of 1984 after seventy three years of use. In July 1930 — twenty years later — this place was for sale again. Rowland and Christine Lloyd (her second husband) sold it to David Bills. He rebuilt the two-room house and in 1931 sold it to Glenn and Melva Butterfield.

In 1936, we bought one acre of ground adjoining our lot from the State Land Bank. We lived in the two rooms for twelve years. In 1943 we built our five-room house and we are still living in it [in 1987]. It was built by Reuben Wiberg of Riverton. For many years, our culinary water was piped from Rowland Lloyd's well for $1.50 a month. In 1932 we built our first chicken coop. Alvin Miller of Riverton was the carpenter. This is when we started in the chicken business. Glenn also worked at Utah Poultry. At one time all of the land above the "Big Canal" was called The Flat. There were few homes, but we had plenty of wind, drifting snow and even drought. Many times we were snowed in for days at a time.

At one time all of the land above the "Big Canal" was called The Flat. There were few homes. . . .

Albert Gilbert owned a dairy farm. During this time it was necessary for him to take his milk down to Redwood Road to meet the truck. So with a team and sleigh, he took his milk down and also did the grocery shopping for all of his neighbors. He was a great delivery man. We enjoyed many good sleigh rides on top of a road completely filled with packed snow drifts. Now we live in the middle of a city. Riverton has been a special place to raise our family of four children.

"I Had a Very Happy Life": Norma Madsen

[Norma Hamilton Madsen was born 9 June 1898 in Mill Creek, Utah, to Reuben Seaburn and Matilda Winder Hamilton. She wrote this autobiographical sketch in 1977. It has been edited for clarity and readability.]

John G. Hamilton, my grandfather, homesteaded forty acres of sage brush land in Riverton which he gave to his sons Reuben and Thomas Hamilton. Two houses were built for them. They worked very hard and with the help of their father, did very well. In 1898, my father was called on a mission to Texas so he left the farm to Uncle Tom, took Mother and two children — Florence, 4, and Rex, 2, to live on the old Winder farm in Mill Creek. In June 9, 1898, I was born. My grandfather John R. Winder named and blessed me. He later became first counselor to President Joseph F. Smith of the Church.

In 1900, Father returned from his mission and we moved back to the farm where six more children were born — Eldred, Elmo, Ralph, Kay, Lola, and Mildred. We were all taught to work, but found time to play too. I had a very happy life on that farm — riding horses, cows, raising pet lambs, helping pick up potatoes, topping beets. I loved all kinds of animals and had many pets. I also helped my wonderful companion, my mother, with the work in the house. We had a family of eleven to cook for and it kept us busy. I baked ten to twelve loaves of bread every other day. We had no electricity. We used coal oil lamps, coal stoves, did washing on a washboard, heating the water on the coal stove in copper boilers, and boiling the clothes to get them clean. We hung them on lines outside to dry. This was fine in summer, but so cold in the winter that they would freeze stiff as a board and we had to take them in and hang them on chairs around the coal stove to dry. Then they were ironed with heavy irons heated on the stove. Later we had a washing machine turned by hand which helped. We picked and canned gooseberries and currants. I sure didn't like to pick them as they had too many thorns. We had a large orchard and garden and that was more work.

We had a family of eleven to cook for and it kept us busy. I baked ten to twelve loaves of bread every other day.

My mother was a good cook and she taught me to cook. She wanted to feed everyone that came there. She was always making cakes, home-made ice cream, and pies. She made the best cream cakes from sour cream and caramel frosting . Her coconut cakes were delicious. She never used a recipe. When I

was at Jordan High School, the first year I had a cooking teacher by the name of Clayton. She asked me to make bread rolls and a cake to take to the State Fair. Instead of using her recipes, I used the ones my mother had taught me. I took first place in my bread and rolls and second place on the cake. I didn't fuss nearly as much as if I had used hers. I didn't like to sew so I told Mother I would do the work while she sewed. She had such good taste and sewed beautiful.

My parents were great believers in prayer. We had family prayers every morning and night no matter who was there. We all took turns praying. My mother was a wonderful companion to me. We worked together — getting meals, picking and bottling fruit, and cooking. All my problems I took to her and she knew all the answers. I never went wrong when I took her advice. My parents loved to have our friends come home. They were always welcome. Nobody got lonesome. We always had company. Uncle Tom's family and ours were like one big, happy family. We worked together, played together, ate together, and always got along fine. I loved my Aunt Gladys and was heart-broken when she and her new-born baby died. My mother felt her responsibility to the family and helped them in every way she could and they all loved her. She was so humble, kind, and thoughtful that everybody who knew her, loved her. I never did hear her use a swear word or slang. The only thing I ever heard her say was "Oh darn it!" The men folks in both families took time out once in awhile to go fishing and hunting. They came to me to milk the cows — sometimes as many as nineteen cows a day. They were always good to me. The only means of travel was horse and buggy or horseback.

I never did hear [Mother] use a swear word or slang. The only thing I ever heard her say was "Oh darn it!"

[to be continued]

Death Notices

Vaughn Leo "Tuffy" Lloyd (87); husband of Noriene Coon Lloyd; parents were Joseph Leo and Leah Densley Lloyd; telephone company sales representative

LaVon B. Jackson (94); widow of Curtis D. Jackson; parents were Ezra Laros and Harriet Ethel Walker Bills

RIVERTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
CRANE HOUSE
SALT LAKE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
[redacted]
3 1181 06707 0954
5
SALT LAKE COUNTY
LIBRARY SYSTEM
RIVERTON
LIBRARY
3/29/04
CALL
NO.

Riverton Library
12860 S. Redwood Road
Riverton, UT 84065-3204

Riverton Yesterdays
Ap04