

Riverton Yesterdays



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A Monthly Newsletter of Oldtime Stuff about Riverton, Utah

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**"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: Did your folks shop at his Thomas P. Page's store much? Where did they buy their food?

Rulon: When T.P. Page was alive, they had what they call a co-op. Mother had stock in it. You could get like ten percent off if you had some stock in it. You could buy a little bit cheaper. That's where he got his money to run the store. If the stockholders was patronizing, they can never in this world break it. But when you get a few of them trying to steal from 'em, why sure, they'll go broke. But if a co-op's run the way it should be and if people will patronize it, they could get stuff a little cheaper. That's the way it was for years. When Roly had it, it was a pretty good store. Then Meredith kind of took over. Roly had to pull out and go on his own. Everybody lost the stock that they had in it. Mother lost the stock that she had in it. But when it was flourishing the way it should have been, we bought practically everything down there.

Mel: Did you ever have any direct dealings with T.P. Page or was he quite a bit older?

Rulon: Oh, he was a lot older. I was just a youngster. He used to stutter all the time. That's how I remember him. But Meredith, I grew up with him. I went to school

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with him. . . . he was something else. He went on a mission, but The scriptures tell us in a parable, half will be wise and half will be foolish. Half will stay with us and half will go for Satan. If you don't keep the commandments and if you do anything wrong, why Satan takes ahold of you and you're soon gone. Gwynne Page was the county commissioner here for awhile. He's a pretty good sort of a guy. T.P.'s oldest, Tom Page, I remember him. . . . Gordon Bills was the one that give me my name. He ordained me to a deacon and a teacher. I almost had the chance to ask him for a recommend to be married, but they made him a patriarch and

put Dave Bills in his place about six months before we were married.

Mel: He didn't live too far away from you, did he?

Rulon: He lived where those apartments are just after you pass the little canal. That was the country where he had one wife. Then he had the other wife straight down the hill when you go on the south side of the cemetery. Just keep on a goin' down east of the Lower Road, 1300. He had his other wife down there.

Mel: How many of those old polygamist families did you know?

Rulon: Dan Densley. Nokes had two. Gordon Bills. That's about the only polygamy that I really knew in them days.

Mel: Was it talked about much here?

Rulon: Oh, no. They just went right on and they recognized each other as brothers and sisters. They didn't call 'em half brothers. But they lived in different houses in order to keep the kids from fighting quite so much. It's more normal to do that. Nokes had two houses and Dan Densley. . . .

They lived in different houses in order to keep the kids from fighting quite so much.

Mel: Did you ever take tithing down to Tithing Yard Hill?

Rulon: Oh, yes. We used to take hay down there years ago. When we'd take it down there, they just unload 'em and put it in a sack of hay. You'd just have to wait your turn, just like you was hauling hay on your own place. They had the stock down there because a lot of 'em would give a cow or calf, mostly young stock. They had to have milk cows. They had quite a pasture down there. Hebe Crane owned the pasture later. I don't know who owns it now. There was a guy with race horses down there. They was going to have a race track. They tried to get them so's they could gamble and Utah wouldn't go for it so then they didn't do much with it. He only got started, but he never did do much with it.

[to be continued]

Ninety Years of Memories: Wilford Myers

[Note: This is an excerpt of a transcript of an interview Mel and Karen Bashore conducted with Wilford Myers on 12 January 1985. His son, Merlin, a BYU professor of anthropology, was also present during the interview and some of his comments are included. It is edited for clarity and readability.]

Merlin: He [Wilford] pitched and Edgar Morgan caught. They were pretty famous in the leagues around here.

Karen: Was there baseball here in the early years?

Merlin: Oh, yes. Very early. I guess he started pitching when he was in his teens. You pitched before you went on your mission, didn't you?

Wilford: Oh, yes.

Merlin: He went on his mission in 1910, wasn't it?

Wilford: Yes. So it was between 1905 and 1910.

Karen: Did they have very many teams here?

Merlin: Every little town had its team.

Karen: So Riverton had just one team and they played Draper and Herriman and all the other towns?

Merlin: Yes, that's right. The Crumps in Herriman — they were all good baseball players. The Crumps were really good players, weren't they?

Wilford: Yes. If you were a Crump, you were a good ball player.

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Merlin: They were just known to be like that.

Karen: Was it hard to get on a team or could anybody play?

Merlin: I suppose they let everybody be a part of the operation, but those who played the best, played the most.

Wilford: We played amongst ourselves here in Riverton. Then when we played the outside people in the different wards, they selected their teams. See?

Karen: How early did you play? Did you play as just a young child?

Wilford: I started to play when I was going to school — grade school. I was twenty when I went on my mission and I'd been playing for seven or eight years then.

Karen: Was the Church the organizer?

Merlin: No. The Church wasn't the sponsor of the team, was it?

Wilford: No.

Merlin: It was just the town. They got together and they wanted activity. They just agreed among themselves and they developed a team.

Wilford: They had a fellow here by the name of Edward Orgill. He was a one-armed man. He was a very nice fellow. Then there was another fellow by the name of Sam Howard and they kind of

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took charge of athletics in the town of Riverton. The whole town was interested in the ball game! We even played the Occidental team. They come in here from back east somewhere. They had a really nice team. We played games there. Sometimes 1 to 2 or 2 to 3. Something like that. The game hardly ever went over five runs. We had a really nice ball game.

[to be continued]

“I’m Just a Common Old Citizen”:
Zach Butterfield

[Note: This is a transcript of a recorded interview conducted with Zachariah Butterfield on 31 January 1958. He was 94 years old at the time and lived for another six years. Wallace E. Malmstrom and John A. Butterfield of the Temple Quarry Chapter, Sons of Utah Pioneers, recorded his reminiscences.]

Father Butterfield started in Herriman. Before he got in Herriman, though, he rode his saddle horse from West Jordan up to the mouth of Butterfield Canyon and that canyon has been named after my father. It still has that Butterfield name. He’s told me many experiences he had, some of crossing the plains and some up in the state of Maine where he was born and joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints there in Maine.

Well then, he heard of the prophet Joseph Smith. And he wanted to come down and see the Prophet of the Lord. So he fixed up an outfit to travel and brought his family that he had up there. I think it was two children — a son and a daughter. The daughter was Father’s oldest girl and she was borned, her and my brother Almon, he was borned both of them in the state of Maine. Well, he came down now to see the Prophet. He got very well acquainted with the Prophet Joseph Smith. I’ve heard him tell it time and time again what a great man he was. He said he was one of the greatest men that ever traveled the earth since the Savior’s day. Well, to get to Joseph and Father — Father got acquainted with him and he come to Father one day and wanted to borrow fifty dollars off of him. Well, Father said, “Yes. I’ll lend you that.” So he wrote on a piece of paper that he had got the fifty dollars from Father.

It went on to the time that was fixed for him to return the money. So he came to Father, and he said, “Brother Butterfield, I’ve been trying to raise that fifty dollars for you, but,” he said, “it seemed like I can’t. But now,” he said, “I have a fine horse here. He’s worth fifty dollars. You would say so if you took him.”

“Now Joseph,” he said, “where is that certificate?” Well, he went and got the certificate for Father and Father took it and tore it up.

And he said, “Why tear it up, Brother Butterfield?”

“Well,” he said, “Joseph, I can spare that fifty dollars and I’ll make you a present of it.” And then Joseph give him a blessing.

He said, “You nor your family shall never want for bread as long as they live.”

“Joseph, I can spare that fifty dollars and I’ll make you a present of it.”

Now that has been literally fulfilled by my stepmother. She tells of being

out of flour once when he was up in the Salmon River with the men that Brigham Young sent up to look over the country there. Now my father had met a man down here. In fact he probably worked for him and he owed him two hundred pounds of flour. So while this went on, his wife — my stepmother cleaned the bin out clean, but she said, "I never worried because your father had a promise that we'd never want for bread." So that morning, they got breakfast and she didn't have enough flour to make dinner for them. But she said, "I never worried." And that day, this man brought and put two hundred pound of flour into her bin. And they then had plenty of flour to last until Father come home and met her.

Now, I'd like to get of their travels a little. Father left Nauvoo and got here three years after the emigrants got here — Brigham Young. Well, he fixed up his outfit and started on the trail. Now my oldest sister, Mary Jane, they called her — she was about between eleven and twelve and Almon was quite a bit younger than that — two or three years — my brother. But that girl traveled across the plains and walked. When they got here — I think it's in Herriman — either there or when he got to Salt Lake, but anyhow, let that be as it will. But she had traveled with that company and walked. So my father said and so my sister said, across the plains most all the time behind the outfit. Well, when they got here, she had walked and got here to Herriman or in Salt Lake — we'll say either one of those places, but there were twelve head of sheep brought here, three swarms of bees here, right to Herriman. That's the way they started out. My father had bees all his life here that I can remember until he got old.

Now, I'd like to say a little about him. He went up this canyon, up Butterfield and found the water. And then the canyon, as I said before, has been his canyon. Well, Father was a man that, he had good religion and he just loved the prophet Joseph Smith. He set up nights with a little parlor stove in my mother's home many a night and told the story of Joseph. Now, he died with a firm knowledge of this gospel.

Now in my day, I worked for my father until I was 18 years of age. I never got any pay from him because he had no money. He had a little farm and he had a nice orchard or two. He was a great provider. He had cattle and he had horses. At one time, him and my brothers, they had forty-two head of horses that run in these Butterfield mountains. Well now, he was a man that when he said, "Yes," it was yes! And when he said, "No," it was no! And I knew that.

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[to be continued]

“I Had a Very Happy Childhood”: Crilla Myers Egbert

[Note: These are edited excerpts from an autobiographical sketch written by Crilla Myers Egbert in 1987.]

Our father took us and some of our neighbor cousins to the movies in Riverton — first in our surrey and later in our Model “T” Ford. The theater was owned by Heber S. Crane. It was in the days of black and white silent films. Horace Burkenshaw ran the film and his wife furnished the sound effects on the player piano. The shows were shown on Monday and Thursday evenings. The tickets were fifteen cents for adults and ten cents for children.

When I was five and a half years of age, my grandmother Margaret Johanson Myers died of cancer of the throat. She was sixty years of age.

Electricity came up Myers Lane about 1917. Our house was wired. It was a great event in our lives after coal oil lamp and hand-operated washing machines.

We children walked two miles to school except during the winter months when we rode the school wagon which had a canvas stretched across the hows like a pioneer wagon. John A. Rindlisbach was the owner and driver of the team and wagon.

When the soldiers returned home from World War I they brought with them an epidemic that was fatal to many people. The nature of it was unknown to doctors here. Our family became its victim. However we all survived. We missed several months of school. The principal, Mr. Isaacson, who was also my fifth grade teacher, contracted the disease and died. He was a brother of Elder Thorpe B. Isaacson, a general authority of the L.D.S. Church. The disease was diagnosed as influenza (flu).

In elementary and junior high school it was customary to line up in rows according to classes and march into the school building to piano march music. If we got out of step we were pulled out and had to march in the “awkward squad” after school — very humiliating.

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We older children worked on our father’s farm thinning and hoeing beets, weeding potatoes, piling hay and shocking grain. During my mid-teens I harrowed the ground after Dad

plowed.¹ I also cut hay with a mowing machine and a team of horses. Then I used one horse on a dump rake to rake the hay for piling. Then when it was dry, I piled it and helped load it. My sister, Tressa, and I did various types of farm work not only for our dad, but uncles and friends and neighbors. We received \$2.00 to \$2.50 per day.

When we dated we enjoyed going to the Wilkes Theater to "live plays" and the Pantages for vaudeville acts. We went on excursions to Saltair, a resort built on Great Salt Lake where we thrilled in riding the great racer, the "Fun House," and floating on the lake. During the winter we skated on the Big Canal, The Utah and Salt Lake Canal, a block west of our home. We coasted down the Tithing Yard hill in Riverton.

I was sustained a kindergarten Sunday School teacher in 1928 in Riverton, a position I held for five years. In 1929 I became a Primary teacher. On the 31 of July I was sustained second counselor in the Primary. Edna Myers, my aunt, was president.

My marriage to Ross Egbert took place in the Salt Lake Temple, 9 June 1930 by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith. We lived in Riverton for two years. Our first child, Jack Myers Egbert, was born 7 August 1931. The depression was approaching.

The Jordan Valley Bank in Riverton went bankrupt. We lost our savings.

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Ross worked for his brother Wilford, who was feeding cattle, in the winter. Ross hauled hay to the mill in Riverton to be chopped. He received his noon-day meal and seventy-five cents per day.

In June 1932 we moved to West Jordan. Ross worked for farmers and at a fox farm in Sandy. He worked at the Utah and Idaho sugar factory during the campaign in West Jordan and eventually at the Utah Poultry Association in Salt Lake City part time. Our daughter, Margie, was born 3 April 1934. The depression was still in force. We were rationed.

I have been a teacher in all the Church's auxiliaries and have served as president in Primary, M.I.A., and Relief Society and have held many other positions in the Church and town and school.

[concluded]

¹In a biography of her parents, Crilla wrote about the death of her father, Charles Frederick Myers. At the time, he was living in Baldwin Park, where he had moved for his health. "Charles died at the pulpit during sacrament meeting 23 Oct. 1966. His subject was 'Where we come from, why we are here, and where we are going.' He was on the last part of it when his voice trailed off and the bishop caught him as he was falling. He died of heart failure."

**RIVERTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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