

# Riverton Yesterdays



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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. This concludes his interview.]

Mel: Do you remember Charley Nokes?

Rulon: Yes. I didn't know too much about him. Then there's Frank Seal. I remember him. He suffered like everything trying to get well. He bore his testimony and

He says, “Next time I get down, I want you to let me go.”

he says, “Next time I get down, I want you to let me go.” He says, “I know we've all got to go, but I knew you was all praying for me.” That's just like my wife. She couldn't even hold a glass or use a spoon or nothing for a month. But darn if she didn't come back to where I told 'em she would. I told 'em she had to come back so's the kids could see that their prayers were answered. And it was. She attended the two meetings. I knew she was going to go two months before she did. She was gone. Her body just wore out.

Mel: Do you remember William Heber Dansie?

Rulon: He was the one that lived down under the hill and run Dad's threshing machine. Uncle Jim [Dansie] had the first threshing machine that come into Riverton. Then Father bought one when they got enough work here to do to accommodate two of 'em. Father had a lot of grain to cut and thresh so he bought an outfit. Him and his boy run it. William Heber lived here from 1887 until when he died in 1929 in the same household. He was borned in Herriman. He was Uncle Robert's boy. His wife was Eliza Jane. His father was from England. His name was Robert, the one with three wives.

Mel: Do you remember Carl Madsen?

Rulon: Carl Madsen was one of the best carpenters a goin' around here. Des was his youngest one. She married a Newman. Her back was botherin' her. When we used to go to the show, her sister Annie used to carry her.

Birkenshaw had a show house in the '30s where the Riverton Motor used to be on the west side of the road there by Hebe Crane's. I believe they called it the Princess Theater back

They told me if I'd just stand back, they'd let me go in for half price all the time.

then. One night we were in the show there and one of the kids went to sleep. We got clear home and had to turn around and go back and find him. He was standin' outside when we got back in the car. We went off and left him sleeping on the bench.

Birkenshaws knew we had a raft of kids. They knew we were up agin' it for finance. They told me if I'd just stand back, they'd let me go in for half price all the time. That way I could afford to take 'em to the show once in awhile. I'd have to kind of wait till there's nobody at the ticket booth. I'd have to stand back till where I could walk up so's they wouldn't be selling me a ticket for half price and let somebody else see 'em.

Mel: Do you remember Tommy Nichols?

Rulon: I'll tell you something else about Tommy. Tommy Nichols bore his testimony in 1940. He says his wife give birth to a child. They were laying there dead on the bed. He called up his daddy-in-law in Herriman. He drove a horse and buggy down. When he got down there, he walked up towards his daughter and said, "Through the power of the holy Melchizedek Priesthood I hold, I demand her to live and raise her family." Jenny, Ted, and Hattie. I grew up with 'em. That was just before I was born because they were a little older than I was. In 1940, he bore his testimony and told about that.

## Baseball History Month at Crane House

Artifacts and memorabilia from Riverton's baseball heritage will be on display at the Riverton Art Museum at the Crane House during July. In keeping with the baseball theme, there will also be a show of baseball sports cartoons — facsimile images from Mel Bashore's extensive collection of autographed sports cartoons that appeared in newspapers from the 1920s through the 1950s. The show illustrates the variety of graphic styles cultivated by the great newspaper sports cartoonists during the Golden Age of Sports Cartooning.



## "I Was a Catcher":

Bob Silcox

[Note: This is an edited transcript of a lecture program sponsored by the Riverton Historical Society on 20 April 1989. Bob Silcox was the featured speaker. Comments and questions from some of those in attendance included Elias Butterfield, Karen and Mel Bashore, and Scott Crump.]

Bob: When I first started off playing baseball, I played with the old Riverton Farm Bureau. I was probably about fifteen years old. We used to play Draper, Crescent, Bluffdale, and Sandy — all those teams. They was made up from different towns. On the Riverton team at that time, I was a catcher. Keith Poulsen was a pitcher. Jack Parks was a pitcher. Bart Parks pitched. Jack Smith played first base. Him and Bob Coy played first base. Howard Edgington played third base. Sometimes Paul Howard played in the outfield. Bruce Bills was a pitcher. This was in 1946 and 1947. Probably in about '49 or so, they had a all-star team. A guy by the name of Shelly Vincent took our all-star team down to Levan for a five-day tournament. We won the championship. On the fifth game, we won that championship on five straight bunts. That's how we won down there at Levan. There's nothing in Levan. Only a ball field. We stayed in Nephi. This was a Farm Bureau tournament. It was just these little one-horse towns that had these ballplayers or what they thought was ballplayers. We stayed in Nephi at the Forest Hotel. Now it's a rest home — right down there on the main street of Nephi. That's what I remember about my early playing days in the old Farm Bureau League.

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Only a ball field.

Elias: Farm Bureau sponsored it.

Bob: Yes. Each player had to pay five bucks to play. The Farm Bureau put up money and that's how we bought the balls and bats. You drove your own cars or bicycles. I played American Legion baseball when I was about sixteen. I played for Draper American Legion and Sandy American Legion. Bruce Bills was a pitcher and I was a catcher for the American Legion.

[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.]

Karen: Did you play baseball behind the old school?

Wilford: Well, yeah. The ward or Riverton town bought some property west of the school. We had a real nice ball park there. We had people coming out all of the time from all over the country. We had people from Draper, South Jordan, West Jordan, and Fort Herriman. Our uniforms had the name "Riverton" on it. I was a pitcher most all the time. Young Ed Orgill pitched some. He was the son of the old gentleman. The old gentleman was quite a slow speaker. He lost his arm over in England. He was quite well educated. He worked over there in a paper mill in England. He got caught in machinery and it broke his arm so it never healed up. It hung down. They had to take it off eventually. They had to amputate it. He was a nice old fellow, but he talked slow and he had certain phrases that he always used to use. "Well, we'll go to work now and do this" and "We'll go to work now and do that" and so on. He was a choir leader for awhile.

Mel: I read in the Church minutes that one weekend, the one who was playing the organ couldn't keep time with his directing. There was an argument about it and he decided he'd rather not be the choir leader.

Wilford: Yes. He had some daughters — Eurilda, Clara, Emma, Lydia. Then he had a couple of smaller ones. They was a nice family. But young Ed Orgill — he got to drinkin' and he got kind of wild. He was humored so that anything he did was right. See?

Karen: What else did you do when you were young?

Wilford: Well, I guess I worked pretty much. I guess mostly what I did was work. I went down to the smelter in Midvale

I guess I worked pretty much. I guess mostly what I did was work.

and got a job working there when I was fourteen. See?

Karen: Did your father run a farm?

Wilford: Yeah. He run a farm. He also worked for the sugar company — Utah-Idaho Sugar Company. He was a field man. He sampled beets to find out whether they was ready to dig. He sampled beets to figure out what content of the beets was sugar. When they get up to a certain point of sugar then they give 'em the order to dig. The sugar industry was quite a thing here in Riverton.

The sugar industry was quite a thing here in Riverton.

Karen: What is your earliest memory?

Wilford: Well, course I was born in 1890. There was a large family of us. I remember pretty much when I was just a little fellow. I come out of a large family and money was hard to get at that time. We had a bunch of cows, about twenty head of cows all the time. I started to milk cows when I was about seven or eight. My mother made butter. People come out here from Salt Lake City and buy her butter. She made excellent butter. Everybody that took her butter said that it was the finest butter that they ever had. Course we had all those cows. As soon as separators came into existence, we got cream separated — separated cream from the milk.

Karen: Did you have any toys like little wagons or rocking horses?

Wilford: Oh, yes. There was fourteen of us in the family.

Karen: How did you meet your wife?

Wilford: Well, she was a Riverton girl and that's how I met her. Course I was six years older than she was. Her father was a genius. He could do anything — make anything, fix anything. He never went to school on it. But he could take a piece of iron and heat it and make anything he wanted out of it.

[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.]

Now, he called me up to him. I'd been farming his farm because the other children — the boys — had married and moved out. I was the next boy from the second wife.

Well, my father called me and said, "Now," he said, "my boy. I've got no money to give you. You know it. But I'm going to give you some good counsel." I was then prepared to go out on the desert here to cook for my brother-in-law Freeman that winter.

"I've got no money to give you. You know it. But I'm going to give you some good counsel."

He said, "Now I want to talk to you. You're going to meet men who profane the name of the Lord. Now," he said, "you never heard me profane."

I said, "Father, no."

That was the counsel he give me. My father. Now I've been vexed enough at an old ewe if she had two lambs and one run away and left all of them, I'd get out of patience. Never have I ever used that language.

Now, as far as Fort Herriman — I helped tear down the old fort that they made for the Indians. It was twelve feet high, an acre and a quarter of land, and I was borned inside of the walls, but the both ends at this time was out. But I've had the privilege to help him move the rock out of there. By the way, he bought from the town this acre and a quarter of land. He owned it until he died. His wife, my mother-in-law, divided it among the children — that little farm. He was the father of seventeen children.

[to be continued]

## Death Notices

Afton Densley Crane (70); widow of Ralph Crane; parents were Thomas Lyman and Hazel Blanche Bills Densley; two children, postmaster



**"I'm Going to Love This Town":  
Betty Mitchell Hansen**

[Note: These are edited excerpts from an interview Mel Bashore conducted with Betty Hansen on 15 May 2004.]

**Betty:** I was born April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1929, in Bingham Canyon, Utah. My parents were Alfred Preston Mitchell and Elida Justeson Mitchell. I had two brothers — an older one, Glenn Ormond Mitchell, who now lives in Sandy and Marlin A. Mitchell who now lives out in Pleasant Grove. No sisters. My dad was a miner. He was a foreman at the Lark mine. In fact, he drove back and forth. When I was about two, we moved from Bingham to Midvale — then from Midvale to Sanpete County, to Spring City. My dad drove all that distance. Sometimes he would get rides and just come home weekends. He finally said it's time to move up closer and he found Riverton.

**Mel:** He was commuting in the 1930s from Spring City to Bingham?

**Betty:** Yes. To Lark. He would stay up here and then come home on the weekends. They had a hotel room. A lot of the men from out there did. There was not work out in that area like there

When we first pulled into Riverton, I said I'm going to love this town because it smells good.

was up here. But he finally decided to move us up here. When I was ten, that's when he found Riverton. When we first pulled into Riverton, I said I'm going to love this town because it smells good. I didn't know it was those trees that no one else liked!

**Mel:** The Russian olive trees?

**Betty:** The olive trees! Yes! I was ten. It was 1939.

**Mel:** Where did you move to?

**Betty:** We moved to, believe it or not, a block north of here in a basement house. It was up above the ground, but never finished on top. It was right down the street behind the school where that big white



house is now. We lived in the basement for quite a few years. The people that owned the house decided to make a ground floor on the house. That was annoying to us to have all the noise of a family above us. My dad talked them into selling us that house and we lived there all those years. My mother lived there until she died at 92 just eighteen years ago.

Mel: I guess they called them "hope houses" — they hoped some day to build a top story.

Betty: Exactly. We had to pull a chair up to look out the window. We had not seen airplanes or trains out in Sanpete County. My brother and I about wore the steps out in that basement —

My mother wanted to move to Midvale. . . . but us kids didn't want to go. She stayed in Riverton for us.

running up every time a plane would go by or the interurban would go by. We loved Riverton. The time came when my mother wanted to move to Midvale. She wanted a different home, but us kids didn't want to go. She stayed in Riverton for us.

Mel: Did your dad continue to work up at the mine when you came to Riverton.

Betty: He did until he lost his health and passed away at 54. He got a tumor in his pituitary glands. He was deer hunting and he couldn't sight his gun in. They sent him to a specialist and they did surgery. He lived eleven days and passed away. We lost him at a real young age. Mother continued to live in that house. You can see that we moved a block away from there after I got married.

Mel: How old were you when your dad passed away?

Betty: I was married with two little children — one five and one three.

[to be continued]

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