

# Riverton Yesterdays



Volume 4, No. 4      November 2004

A Monthly Newsletter of Oldtime Stuff about Riverton, Utah

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979.225  
Riverton Yesterdays  
Magazine Box

Annual Subscription: \$10

"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: I played for Jordan High School, too.
- Elias: When did the high school start baseball? They didn't have baseball for a long, long while. When I was there in '30, all we had was football and basketball. We didn't have baseball.
- Bob: When I was there, they had it. I started high school in '47 and graduated in 1950. Bruce Bills and I played baseball for the high school.
- Scott: Did they play any of the Lark or Bingham teams in your Little League?
- Bob: No. In Little League they played just these four teams within the town. When they went to the playoffs or the all-star, they would have the tournament with different places each year. One year it might be in Riverton with teams coming from West Jordan and Sandy. One year we played the tournament at Midvale and another year we played out at Kearns.
- Karen: When you played baseball, did you dream about going to the big leagues?
- Bob: Yes. When I was down playing in Levan staying at that Forest Hotel, I was sixteen or seventeen years old. A scout from the St. Louis Cardinals come and talked to me.
- Karen: Did that get you excited?
- Bob: Oh, yes. I wanted to really play baseball as a career. The Korean War screwed me up. The Korean War come along and that dashed any
- I wanted to really play baseball as a career. The Korean War screwed me up.

hopes of anything. I was going to Utah State University and I was taking ROTC. They showed a film in the ROTC of the first forty days in Korea. It was a terrible film. The guys was passing out and everything else. When the Koreans invaded over there, all the Americans had was sticks and rocks. They had old Springfield rifles that really wasn't that good or didn't work. It was just a token amount of them. I seen that film and I thought there's no way that I'm going to go in the Army. So I joined the Navy. That dashed any hopes of a baseball career. I had quite a following. Old George Usher used to come to all those ball games just to watch me play. He thought I was a pretty good ball player.

Scott: Who was he?

Bob: He was the mayor of Riverton at one time. He was a water master.

Elias: He started his political career as a water master. I think he started working for the city. At that time, it was Riverton Pipe Line Company. He was the water master and I was the town clerk. I kept track of the billings and he read the meters.

Scott: Is that how you started your political career?

Elias: Yes. But my political spirit didn't go very good. But then George decided a little later to run for mayor and he won. Then I think he won a second term.

Scott: Do you remember any humorous experiences or unusual things that happened to you in baseball?

Bob: I remember one time up here in back of the school house that Jack Hatt or somebody slid into home. Usually they didn't have the rubber spikes. They was all steel spikes. Naturally

when you was sliding into home, you have those spikes high. Naturally a catcher is going to stand right in the way to try to block the plate so he can't slide in. That's what happened. I was catching. His spikes hit my uniform and just ripped it right off of me! I was standing there in my skivvies! The spikes didn't cut me

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at all. The spikes caught the uniform and just riddled it! I was wearing a pair of Dad's old white pants like they used to wear to the sugar factory. My mom sewed a felt blanket on the inside of them for sliding pads so when you slid you didn't get the raspberries on your hips. I had those on and they just ripped that uniform right off me. I thought that was kind of humorous.

Karen: I'll bet everybody else did too!

Bob: Yes. But I don't know how many people used to come to watch those games. There was a few. There was a fair amount of people that used to come and watch.

Elias: Was the old pavilion still there or had they torn that down?

Bob: All they had was bleachers at that time.

Mel: What did the ball diamond look like in the 1920s?

Elias: It was in the same area, but it was a different field. It was maintained different. The old ball diamond was where the grassy part of the school playground is. The old pavilion used to be in the center on the north side. The ball diamond used to be over in the north end. After they built the junior high school, it took up part of the roof and they moved the ball diamond to the southwest corner. Then they put a diamond in the field in that corner back of the old bus garages. They had some old garages that are tore down. They put some garages up further up by where Selyf Page lives. They put some garages up in that area a little further south from that for their buses. The garages used to be down where the old junior high school was.

Bob: You'd walk out the back of the gymnasium and into the garages.

[to be continued]

### Editor's Note

Interviews of Elvoy Dansie and Wilford Myers from previous issues will resume in forthcoming issues.



## "It Was a Busy, Busy Place":

Max Parry

[Note: These are edited excerpts from an interview Mel Bashore conducted with Max Parry on 23 August 2004.]

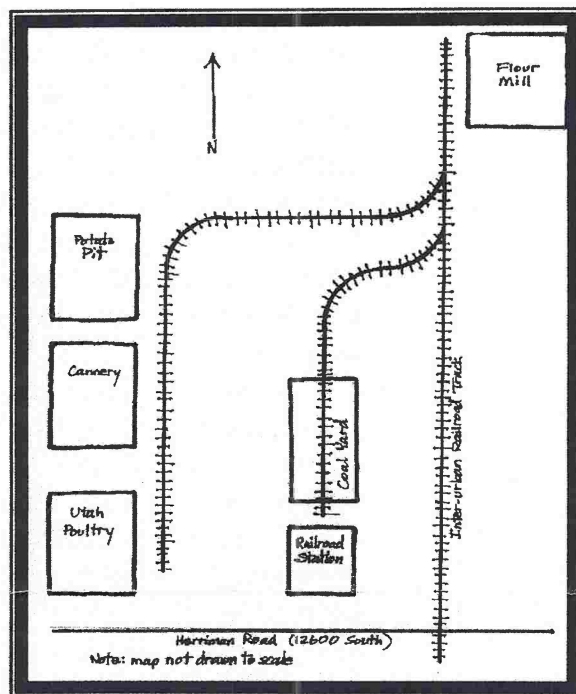
Max:

We had a railroad station. It was about 1800 West and 12600 South. The train come along the railroad track here and they could walk into the station. Now that station at the present time is over in Midvale — Gardner's Village.

This one up here is the Utah Poultry. It's a pretty good-sized building. They had all types of feed. They had picks and shovels and all that kind of stuff. They had a railroad spur that went along here. They'd unload the feed and stuff into the Poultry.

On that same spur, to the north of it, they had a two-story cannery. They used to do a lot of canning in the fall or whenever. They canned tomatoes and stuff like — whatever you had. They would start the cannery up and make all kinds of stuff for the people in the valley similar to the cannery that the Church has. It was a dark gray frame building. The Poultry was a brick building.

To the north of the cannery was a potato pit. Trucks could come in and drive down in and back into the pit. It was high enough inside that you could dump the load on the ground. They had sorting bins on all the sides. They had sorters to get the size of spuds you wanted. They would put them into potato sacks. Mostly it was women that did the sorting. They had an elevator about right in the middle. They elevated them out to the railroad train right there. The pit was dug into the ground and it was covered over on the top like a Quonset hut, but it had dirt on top of it. The pit had to be fifty feet long. It had a driveway down the



middle. They unloaded and put the spuds on both sides. I guess it was at least thirty feet wide. It was pretty good sized. That's how they got their potatoes. We could raise good potatoes here. We could raise beets, hay — those were they best things they had.

On the other set of tracks was where they'd bring the coal — train cars full of coal. They were elevated. They'd run up on cribbing. They'd put it underneath so they could get it up high so when you let the coal out the bottom of the train, it'd fall through the ties and go down onto the ground. Then with a tractor, you could shovel it up and put it in the truck and take it away. That's what we used to do at the school. When they ordered coal, they wanted it to come in on the rail. They didn't want our trucks to bring it in. We had two big trucks. Every day we brought two loads in, but they wouldn't take it. They wanted the coal to come in on the railroad. I don't whether it had to do with the unions. I think it was. They'd rather have union people handling that coal than not.

On the other side of the track, they had a flour mill. It didn't have floors, but it was about four stories high. You could drive under the bin and they'd drop it into your truck — wheat or whatever you had. They bailed it for you or they put sacks in there. This belonged to George Bills. It was on his piece of property. Actually that chapel that's down there northwest of and behind Elvoy Dansie's house is sitting where that flour mill was. They put everything on trucks because there wasn't a train loading dock at the mill. The train couldn't stop there because this was the main line for the trains to come through. The mill was built out of lumber. It had a silo in it. The silo was about fifty feet in diameter. They would take the grain and stuff that they were going to put up in there. They drop it down. As it come down, it would grind. Flour or whatever they wanted. Then you'd load it on the back of your pickup.

Mel: Do you know if there any photographs of that mill around?

Max: I don't know.  
Elvoy would have them, I'm sure of that. That's how much commercial stuff was in that area there. There was quite a little bit. It was a busy, busy place.

**It was a busy, busy place.**

[to be continued]

"I'm Just a Common Old Citizen":  
Zach Butterfield

[Note: This concludes 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.]

When I came down here first, we was drinking the water from this little canal down here. That was out then. I drove a well here for my wife and had a windmill on it. Fixed it all up for the poor soul and yet it got so, in her weak way, she packed water from that little canal up here. It's all of a half a mile to that canal, probably a little more. That woman packed water here. When I got home, when I looked at her, she was just sick. That's all and went to bed in a little while after I got home here. In about three months, why then, she passed away. I had everything fixed all up, but the windmill went bad and then she went to live with her father and a sister I had till I come home [from my mission]. That was about that. . . .

Down in Wyoming in the headquarters of a little town down there, we was way away from that. There was a lot of cattle men down in there. We got in there and was a lambing there nowhere's near their land at all. There was a mob come up. We'd had one bunch of the sheep lambbed and the boys was a coming over for to get them sheared. And by golly that night there was a plateau like. In my camp, I had my boy there — young Zach with me and Lyme was there down under a ledge like. We docked the lambs from the river that went down. It was quite a big stream that run into the Green River. See. But anyhow, the boys was coming over and was going to shear the next day or two. And by golly about ten men come on that plateau. I had a man by the name of Limm with me and Howard. There was ten men come up there after dark. Now my brother, Lyme, was down with me, see, and the boy. We was down in my camp and they had a tent up here and a commissary wagon. A new one we had. We had a nice team, too. They come in there — them beggars — and Limm the man, got his arm shot off. The two bullets went in there. I brought him into the St. Mark's Hospital and they took his arm off. And shot Howard and hit some sciatic nerve here and he got out in two or three days. He wasn't hurt much. But they shot him in that big cord — my sheep herder, Billy Limm, pretty near in two. Over half in two, that big cord that goes down to the heel. We had a man from American Fork with us —

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a boy. My brother Lyme, he had a gun, but he got the wrong [?] or something. But this boy, ten men had now come and they'd poured into them horses. They killed fifty head of sheep and killed that [?] of horses and set afire to the commissary wagon. A new wagon and a new saddle that cost us \$75 — burnt the whole thing right up. These cattle men. But this boy, he got down on to the ledge and he was pretty close to 'em then. They couldn't see him, see. It was just up on a plateau, they call 'em there. He fired two or three shots. I know 'cause we could hear him from below. Cause we could hear them bullets come right over where my boy and brother Lyme was at. Just whoo! whoo! Right over, but never hit us. Well, I heard this man shoot. Well, the big man that was the boss of the ten men, he shot a man. I know the beggar. Well, the bullet must have struck him in the leg here. That boy, they took him down to the little town they had down there and they never took care of him and blood poison set in. We heard this after a long time. And the boy died. And the man's wife left him there. Got a [?] from him. Now that was a terrible thing!

Well then, just after that, then Aaron Garside, he was working for a man by the name of George Beckstead who used to live here. Well, he was a working for him. And by golly! This was about a year or two after us. Anyhow, he was getting out of the wagon. He was a married man. They shot him right in the heart. He dropped right down face first right there. Well Beckstead, he put it in the paper that he'd give a thousand dollars to the man that tell who done the shooting. But nobody couldn't tell it you see. But that was tough times.

They shot [Aaron Garside] right in the heart. He dropped right down face first.

We wasn't on their land. This Limm I had, he worked for us for twelve years. He come back to me and got his arm fixed up and come back and he was with the outfit for twelve years. In fact, he was in Wyoming and took his sheep. He'd lost his left arm. He had his right. On government land down there. There wasn't nothing there. There was [?] miles we was away from them people down there. There was just a little hay stack and a little fence stuck around it. They didn't own the land up where we was. Not at all. It was government land. But they took possession of that and they just drove us out and we got out. Now I've told you that.

[Note: Zach Butterfield died in 1964 and was buried on his hundredth birthday.]



“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: We had some characters who used to come in the drugstore. I was working there during the Korean War. There was a few fellows in this town that delighted in coming in and telling me all the things my husband was doing over there with the girls in the war zone and in Germany. They tried to make my life miserable, but I had a good sense of humor.

Mel: What were some of the fun things you would do with your friends when you were a young teenager in the summer and winter?

Betty: I was never a swimmer, but we went swimming. I was one that would hang onto the side of the pool. At Saratoga. We all went to Saratoga. The dances were something we still did at the school. They always had a good orchestra. When we dated, it was always out of town. We went out of town for our dates to the movies. We loved Saltair. Most of us went dancing and for the rides at Saltair. We went to the Rainbow Rendezvous.

Mel: How did you get there?

Betty: With our dates. They’d borrow a dad’s car.

Mel: Was the Interurban still here?

Betty: It was. We rode that back and forth too. My girl friends worked at Woolworth’s. We rode that Interurban a lot of times just to go into Salt Lake to shop and to have visits with our friends that worked in there.

We rode that Interurban a lot of times just to go into Salt Lake to shop.

[to be continued]

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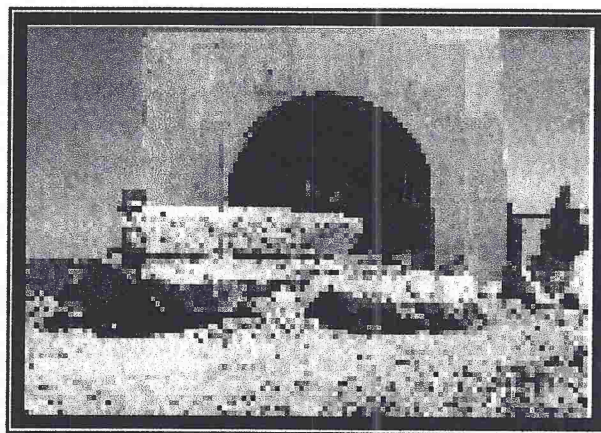
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