

Riverton Yesterdays



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**"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: The mayor spent \$100,000 lighting that softball diamond a couple years ago. We never had anything like that. If you had two new game balls, you were lucky. Back in the old Farm Bureau League, if you had one that looked fairly new, you used that. In the last game, if you had two, you only used one quite heavily and the other not so heavily. The next week, you used the other.

Mel: Did any pitchers use a spitter?

Bob: I don't think they would admit it if they did. I don't know of any who did.

Elias: It hadn't got to the point of kill or else. It was a fun game.

Bob: Well, when you played Bluffdale, that's when it got to the point of kill or be killed.

Scott: Why was it so serious with Bluffdale?

Bob: That was just a rivalry. It's just like BYU and Utah. Why? Why does Utah hate BYU and vice versa? I don't know.

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Karen: There's lots of good reasons!

[to be continued]

Notice: If you need to contact the Riverton Historical Society, please call Karen at 254-0545. The Historical Society is no longer associated with the Crane House.

Ninety Years of Memories: Wilford Myers

[Note: This concludes the interview Mel and Karen Bashore conducted with Wilford Myers on 12 January 1985 and begins a third interview that Mel conducted with Wilford and his son, Merlin Myers, on 26 January 1985. Merlin was an anthropology professor at BYU. It is edited for clarity and readability.]

Wilford: For a general store, there was nothing to compare with Page.

Merlin: He started that out himself and then he took John Hansen in as a partner. Then it became Page-Hansen.

Wilford: We had a foolish guy up here made bishop. The Commercial Building was in fine shape and he tore it down.

Merlin: It had been run down a great deal. It was a solid building, but it had been run down and allowed to deteriorate.

Wilford: It was Dan Densley that built it.

Merlin: Chris Mortensen was involved in it too, wasn't he?

Wilford: Oh, he bought it. He bought it from Dan.

Merlin: It had a recreation hall.

Wilford: Had a stage in it.

Merlin: The church used it all the time for MIA dramatic productions. I'll never forget some of them. They had a children's dance at New Year's time in the

recreation hall in the top. That was very common throughout the church I believe and it certainly was here. There was a roller skating rink up in the top. They roller skated in it for a long time. Then it was allowed to deteriorate so badly that no one wanted to undertake the task of refurbishing it so they just tore it down. Oh,

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it was bad, too. It was full of bugs, cockroaches, bedbugs, and all that sort of thing. No one wanted to have too much to do with it. My father's sister's daughter, Ardella Butterfield — she married Frank Snyder — had a beauty salon [Ardella's Beauty Shoppe] in the corner of that building. She lived there right in the corner as well as had her beauty salon there. It was the first beauty salon in this end of the valley. People came from all over. In the heart of the Depression she made a real lucrative living there.

Mel: Wouldn't that have made it kind of noisy in the evenings for her with the roller skating going on right overhead?

Merlin: I think the roller skating pretty well had stopped by that time. Yes. That would be bad. You wouldn't sleep well. But no. The roller skating had stopped. There was a post office in that

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building. Max Poliner, a Jewish fellow, had a dry goods store in one side of it. My dad and his brother had an ice cream store in it at one time. Riverton Farms Dairy. They made ice cream and they marketed that ice cream partly at the outlet in that store in that building. They had another outlet in Murray. Of course, Parry Implement and Hardware was there. Roland Page opened a store in that old Commercial Building. After their father died, Meredith and Roland kept on with the Page-Hansen Store. Roland and Meredith didn't get along very well and so they split up. Roland kept his store in the Commercial Building until the bank property on the corner was sold. He bought that and had his store there. He tried to branch out like his father had, but it was far too small. You just couldn't turn around in that store. It had so much stuff in it. You had to walk sideways sometimes. Meredith kept up the Page-Hansen Store until, I suppose, it became unprofitable for him. Then he gave that up.

Wilford: The Page Store used to be in the old Commercial Building before he built up there.

[to be continued]

Law Enforcement in the 1950s: Max Parry

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

Max: Let me swing over to a little bit about the sheriff's office and law enforcement here in the city. Gene Cranfill was the first person they had in there. They called him a marshal.

Mel: When was this?

Max: That would be about '49, maybe '50.

Mel: Here in Riverton?

Max: Yes. He did what he could without any training.

Mel: Was that a city-appointed position?

Max: Yes.

Mel: He was the first marshal for the city?

Max: I won't say he wasn't. They could have had some before I was born, but not to my knowledge. That was the first that I know of. A real marshal that went around and took care of things. He would come and go whenever you called him. Incidentally when they called him on the telephone at that time, you picked the phone up and you'd have your operator there. Our phone number in our home was 95R3 and the one we had in the store was 91R2 and they had 91RJ2, 91RJ3. They'd change the syllable in the middle. So that's what you got. You didn't have a dial tone or anything. You just picked it up and they come on.

Mel: Were there numbers and letters on your telephone number?

Max: If I wanted to call you and your number was 95R3, I would pick it up and the operator would say, "Number please." You'd give her the

I would pick it up and the operator would say, "Number please."

number and she would ring that number. There was generally six people on that one line.

Mel: A party line.

Max: Yes. Lots of times you'd pick it up and there would be people on the line. At that time we had a phone in our house.

There wasn't many people had phones at the time.

All the neighbors came over to use our phone. They'd call Salt Lake or wherever they had to. There wasn't many people had phones at the time. Then they eventually got the dial tone. We had a lot of people come over and call the ambulance when somebody got hurt. Returning to the law enforcement, I was asked by Sheriff George Beckstead — he was from Sandy — if I would help him out in Riverton. When they hired somebody, they liked them to live in the city. I had all of Riverton and Herriman and Bluffdale, Lark. I didn't get many calls from the office, but most of them called my home. They had one in South Jordan — that was Joe Peterson. They had another one in West Jordan. His name was Ped Holt. I don't remember his first name. He was the sheriff down there. Across the river in Draper there was Joel Patience. We called him Tonto. They picked one in each town.

Mel: Was this in the early 1950s?

Max: Yes. I started there in '53.

Mel: Was it a county appointment?

Max: Yes. It was a full-fledged deputy sheriff like they have now.

Mel: Was there still a city marshal here?

Max: No. That was gone by.

Mel: That was just a brief thing?

Max: Yes.

[to be continued]

"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: Cal Osborne, who owns Osborne Engineering, called me one day and asked me if I'd come to work for him. They were doing a Magic Mini — it was a box filled with shrinking paper. The kids would draw pictures on it and put it in the oven. It would shrink and they could color it. It was called a Magic Mini canister. I worked there after I wasn't working at the drug store any more in the early fifties. It was right across from the Riverton Motor in that old building. That was where the Magic Mini was. Then Cal moved over to the old Peterson store when they vacated it. They actually had to have parental guidance because you'd put it in the oven and watch it shrink. It came in a big, colorful metal canister and quite a few sheets of that shrink paper. The children would draw on it and paint it. They would put it in the oven and it would shrink. You'd put those little shrunken things on bracelets, on their necks, or hang them on their lockers. A lot of pretty designs.

Mel: Was this in the early 1950s?

Betty: I was married in 1950. Yes. Definitely in the early 1950s. Cal didn't do that for very long. His partner wanted out so they dissolved the business. Cal was doing the engineering business at the same time. I became Cal's secretary in my home. He brought me in a telephone. I took his orders for two years in a big notebook when he started his main business in that building where Bruce's old store was. I worked there in that old building for two or three years while I was married. Then I worked in the new building for about twelve to thirteen years. I worked for him as a secretary.

[to be continued]

Driving around Town with Elvoy Dansie

[Note: These are edited excerpts from an interview Scott Crump conducted with Elvoy Dansie on 25 January 1986.]

Elvoy:

Riverton Motor has been added to and added to a dozen times. It started off in about 1924 when they first built the building over there. It was first in the Crane Building. Then they bought this little piece of ground off of Aaron Densley and built the small building that they had then. They've added on to it.

Coming back to the lumber business, during the Depression years Morris and Merrill sold out and Arthur J. Orr came in and took over the business. He was here for several years. Then he sold to Websters. Either Morris and Merrill or Arthur J. Orr bought their store from Page-Hansen. Arthur J. Orr built a home on the west end of the ground where Billy Webster lives now. Websters moved from the west side to over there on the east side in about 1980. Then they rented this building out over here on the west side. They still own it, but they rented it out.

There used to be a blacksmith shop across the street on the east side owned by Jack Banks. He had a shop there from about 1925 to about 1935. It was just vacant ground before. They've been using it for pasture. They bought that off from Hans Jensen. The home there is Hans Jensen's, just to the south of Websters. Hans Jensen lived there all his life. About 1935, Banks moved down into his own garage. Then he moved down to where Earl Adams lives now. He had a blacksmith shop there until he passed away.

There never used to be a road [12800 South] run down through there south of Websters for years. When they decided to put the road through, the people down there on the

east end only had a little narrow strip of ground. They didn't want to give any of their ground up for the road. John Hansen gave them a rod and a half north of their home for a rod and a half south of their home so they could put in the road. It bettered the town a great deal. Lute Peterson bought the ground where the old domed church was. He bought it shortly after it was torn down.

Lute Peterson had cut meat for Dave Bills ever since he was a young fellow.

Lute bought some of the material from the old church and he built a grocery store here on the corner where Mom's Fabrics is now. Lute was a meat cutter by trade and livelihood. He had cut meat for Dave Bills ever since he was a young fellow. When he moved out of Page-Hansen's Store here, he moved over into this building that he has now. There was no place to park and there was too much traffic here on the corner for what it was. Bruce bought that piece of ground where he is now and built there. Then they bought more ground and increased his store here a couple of years ago. When Safeway was coming in, Bruce added to his store and built up.

Scott: Who is Bruce?

Elvoy: Bruce Peterson is the son of Lute Peterson. Lute Peterson was a nephew of George Bills. I think Lute's mother was a Bills.

Scott: Was this lot where the first Peterson Market started a part of the old domed church property?

Elvoy: Yes. Where the La Fonda's Café is was part of it, too. They built this little café there as a hamburger stand. It's been owned by a dozen different people. It was Mac's at one time.

Hardy McFarlane and his wife run it for awhile. It was called Mac's at that time.

Hardy McFarlane and his wife run it for awhile. It was called Mac's at that time. I don't remember just who built the thing.

Scott: Could you tell me about the building where Sena's Upholstery is?

Elvoy: Harry Page was an implement dealer. He started out in the old Commercial Building down on the corner when I first remember him. He was selling International Harvester parts. In those days, all you would have was a mowing machine and a hay rake. Once in awhile, you'd have a binder and maybe a header. He decided to move and he bought this piece of ground. It was part of the old Turner property. He bought this section of ground and built the building on it. He had his hardware store in there and dealership for International Harvester.

[to be continued]

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