

Riverton Yesterdays



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A Monthly Newsletter of Oldtime Stuff about Riverton, Utah

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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.]

- Scott: When did the Farm Bureau teams start up here?
- Bob: They played baseball in the late '30s. From '40 to '46, there was nobody around here to play ball. You couldn't have mustered a ball team till after February 1946 when they started coming home.
- Elias: Elmo and Eldred Hamilton and some of those guys had some pretty good acreages of farms. They joined the national Farm Bureau and then they started sponsoring teams.
- Scott: Did you just play other Farm Bureau teams?
- Bob: We played everybody that wanted to play or could play. We played Midvale. A lot of them Bingham ball players came down to Midvale and played.
- Elias: You might have played some teams that weren't Farm Bureau teams, too. Maybe there was a Midvale City team or maybe Shelly Vincent had his Sandy team even though they weren't a Farm Bureau team.
- Bob: Yes. I don't know if they were all Farm Bureau or not. But out here it was Farm Bureau.

Death Notices

Alvin Burdette Lloyd (91); widower of Lorna May Walker Lloyd; parents were Frederick Sayers and Elizabeth Cecelia Drake Lloyd; six children

Newell Lloyd Myers (88); husband of Lucile Owen Myers; parents were Wilford Jacob and Edna Mary Lloyd Myers

Ralph Jensen (77); husband of Anne Rae Pucell Jensen; parents were P. LeRue and Myrl L. Jensen

Ninety Years of Memories:
Wilford Myers

[Note: These are edited excerpts of 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.]

Merlin: Roland went back down to the Commercial Building when he split off from Meredith. Meredith and Roland were up there in the old Page-Hansen Store and they didn't hit it off too well and Roland went down to that Commercial Building. He was there for quite awhile. Then he bought the old bank. Anyway, Meredith has been around for a long time. He's an interesting character. He's different from any of his brothers. . . . Meredith is pushing ninety now. He's getting up there. He gets lonesome. On Memorial Day, he gets up to the cemetery right away. He wants to meet everybody who's coming up there.

Wilford: He's a queer guy! He surely is queer! No question about that!

He's a queer guy! He surely is queer! No question about that!

Merlin: Sometimes it's better to say "strange" rather than "queer." "Queer" used to have a special meaning. But he is a little different. He's strongly, strongly opinionated — well, like we all are, I guess. Did Meredith go on a mission?

Wilford: Yes. Then he quit the Church and said that if he was really a honest man, he'd go back there and tell the people what he talked to that he was lying when he was back there on his mission.

Merlin: That's why he has this label.

Wilford: Yes. He's sure a queer guy, that fellow. Gad! He's a big fellow, I'm telling you! He's a big man! His mother was a small woman. She's a Frankland. He was the last child she had. But the Pages, generally, were pretty nice people. Gwynne was county commissioner for awhile.

Merlin: Yes, he was. Two terms, actually.

Wilford: Yes. Gwynne was a nice, mild, pleasant fellow. But Meredith up here — he's a fluke! That's all!

Merlin: It's interesting about Meredith. He was the youngest one and they called him "Little Punk." That was just a little nickname they gave him. "Little Punk." And that name — Punk — stuck with him all his life. They called him Punk Page. After he took over the store, they called it Punk's all the time.

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Mel: Who was John Hansen who went in with Tom Page in the Page-Hansen Store?

Merlin: John Hansen's dad was John, too. Which one was it that went in with Tom Page? Was it John's father or was it the younger John?

Wilford: It was the school teacher.

Merlin: It was the younger one, then. Where did John Hansen's father live?

Wilford: About straight east of here (11800 South) and quite a bit east of 1300.

Merlin: Where did young John get that place on the corner up there?

Wilford: He moved up there in Jim Blake's home on the southwest corner of 12600 South and 1300 West.

Mel: One of the Withers own it now.

Wilford: Richard Withers bought old Nick Silcock's place, down in the field, east off of 1300 West. They called him Dick Withers.

Merlin: Young Dick moved over there by the D&RG Riverton station over toward Draper. Bruce Peterson's wife was a Withers. She lived over the river.

[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:

Later in the '50s they talked the mayors into a city police department. The county sheriffs were moved out for awhile while they had the city police

They could go up in Riverton and do what they wanted and speed and everything.

department. That lasted for four or five years. They didn't have any authority in South Jordan, Bluffdale, or Herriman, and so forth. All they had was Riverton. They couldn't arrest anybody. The kids down here in South Jordan found out that they could go up in Riverton and do what they wanted and speed and everything. All they had to do was run across the line. So anyway, they finally decided to get the county sheriffs back. The county sheriffs moved out and then they moved back. Another thing they did, very few days did you ever find a police car in Riverton in the daytime. The city people in the office, they would use the sheriff to take them up to the capitol building and things like that. The police car wasn't in the city very often in the daytime. Of course, it was there all night. Eventually that went by the way and they came back to the sheriff again. Now all these towns are trying to do the same thing. But our biggest problem there was with the city police. They had their radio and they could call them, but one of them could be chasing somebody through Riverton and he couldn't call for help in South Jordan because he didn't have contact with them. It's still that way. South Jordan doesn't have the radio system. They can't move over and talk to them. "We're making a turn here. We're going there." In my opinion, they should have facilities or at least one station they can turn over to if they come through and pick up the town that they're going through. They still have got that problem. They try to get the whole community in one system, but it hasn't gone through. Most of the problem is the city fathers. They want to control the officers.

I had a call. I was up in Bingham at the time. I was coming out of the town of Copperton. Joel Patience was over in Draper hollering for help. Somebody was fighting with him. I'm clear up

there. If we had a radio, we could get in contact at that time. We were so far away, we weren't a bit of good to him. We went over as fast as we could get there. He finally overpowered the person, but he bent his flashlight. He was an Indian. He got him down.

At night time we'd check buildings. We'd cover from Lark over into Holladay and everything south of 6200 South. Of course we had a lot more people. We had nothing to do with the city at that time. We was county officers. We might had ten guys out here at the time. But we had that much that we were responsible for. We went to Copperton and Bingham and took any problems up there. We also went up to Alta and those places. Police work at that time was a lot of travel.

Now let's get to a few things that happened here in your big city. We had a Halloween party at what is now the community center in the junior high. Everybody was there. Moms and dads was there. We had people out in the parking lots—helping the kids to get across the street. Two little Indian girls went across the street and a fellow backed out from the tavern. It's still there. This was a dark night. Real dark. He come up there and he didn't really know what he was doing, I guess. But he run over both of 'em. Killed 'em. Very, very, very sad.

Of course being close to the prison, whenever they had somebody walk away from the prison or a

Just before they got to him, he blew himself up.

break, they notified us. We would go down around the river bottoms and watch. They generally come down through the river bottoms and try to get away. I was working down around the river bottoms with field glasses and was trying to find 'em. I got a call. They says, "Go up to 13300 South." The prison guards saw a guy walking down the road and he had old clothes on. Of course, you didn't know how they would look. They'd go to somebody's clothesline and get clothes. They got out of their car and went up to talk to this guy. Just before they got to him, he blew himself up. We never did find out what was the matter or even who he was. When he got blown up, of course, he wasn't standing there anymore. They went around gathering up parts of him for a couple of days before they got everything. He strapped explosives around himself on his belt. Things do happen in a small community. We never did find out who he was. We didn't find any identification or anything.

[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.]

Mel: If I walked into the Page-Hansen Store, what would I see?

Betty: I remember Leah May who married Cal Osborne, her father, Harry, ran that Page-Hansen Store. They were really clean. They had good-sized aisles. You could go in that front door and almost spot any section of the store that you wanted to shop. If you wanted to browse, you could browse. Personally, I always felt like if I went in there, I better buy something. For some reason I just felt like, he’s watching. I’d better buy something.

I always felt like if I went in there, I better buy something.

Mel: Who was watching?

Betty: Harry. Mr. Page. That’s Leah May’s dad.

Mel: It was different from the feeling you got when you walked into the Stringham Drug.

Betty: Yes. It was different than the Rol-Save, too. I never worked there, but it had those little, tiny, crowded aisles. There was so much merchandise everywhere that you didn’t know what you were looking at really. There was so much everywhere. But it was still a pleasure to go to the Rol-Save store. It was just different. It was crowded.

Mel: Were there a lot of shoppers in the Page-Hansen Store? Was it busy?

Betty: I think they had a good business, but it was never really crowded. Not a lot of people in there. I honestly didn’t go there that much. My mother shopped more in Midvale or even the city. She went into Sears in the city. They just didn’t have the selection of goods

out here. They had nice stores, but they weren't carrying the bigger products. If you wanted your appliances, other than Ron Page's store, they would go out of town. I think my mother and dad bought most of their things from Sears.

Mel: Where was Ron Page's store?

Betty: Do you know the corner where Harry Page had his repair shop? Ron Page's store was right down to the end of that. That's where Ron was before it separated over to the other buildings.

Mel: What did he sell?

Betty: He had appliances, vacuums, and I think, televisions, washers and dryers. Things of that nature. He was a quiet man. You'd go in there. He wasn't a real congenial host. He wasn't pushing anything on you. He allowed you to just look and decide and leave without saying a word if you wanted. But he had a good business, I believe.

Mel: Did you go to high school at Jordan?

Betty: I did.

Mel: How did you get over there?

Betty: I rode the bus, of course. Claude Densley, one of my best friend's father, drove our bus. He spoiled me. He would drive up around my block and drop me off at my house. Everybody on the bus would say, "Bus driver's pet!" I loved that Densley family.

Everybody on the bus would say, "Bus driver's pet!"

Mel: What years did you go to Jordan?

Betty: I graduated in '47, so three years from '45 to '47.

[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:

Harry Page put in apartments in the back of his store so they could live in the back of their store. He and his wife lived there for a good many years. Then they

He only had one arm because it was cut off in an accident.

bought the old Orgill home. Edward Orgill lived down on the Lower Road. He only had one arm because it was cut off in an accident over in Europe. He had the job of taking the mail from here over to the D&RG depot and getting the mail and bringing it back over. He wanted to get a home up closer to where his work was so he bought an acre of ground off the Turner brothers. They sold him an acre of ground 2 rods wide and 160 rods deep. He had to build his home on a rather narrow tract of ground. When Harry Page moved up here, he married an Orgill girl who had been married to a Jeffs. She'd lost her husband. When she married him, they acquired this Orgill home. They had the home there. Then they built 2 or 3 rental homes at the back.

When the railroad came through, they had to make a right-of-way across the track for every place that they went through. There was a little piece of ground off the Page property that was on the west side of the track. Tom Page owned it. It was maybe an acre and a half. Tom didn't want to bother with that so he sold it to the railroad company. He made them buy that acre and a half on the west side of the railroad. The same with my father. He had 20 acres of ground. The railroad cut through it and there was only about a half acre left of the 20 acres. By the time they took out their right-of-way, there was about a half acre on the east side. He told them to buy it. So they bought it. Then I bought it back from the railroad when the railroad went defunct. The railroad came in in 1913 and went out in 1946. The people were able to buy the land back that they had on the railroad right-of-way if they knew where it was.

[to be continued]

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