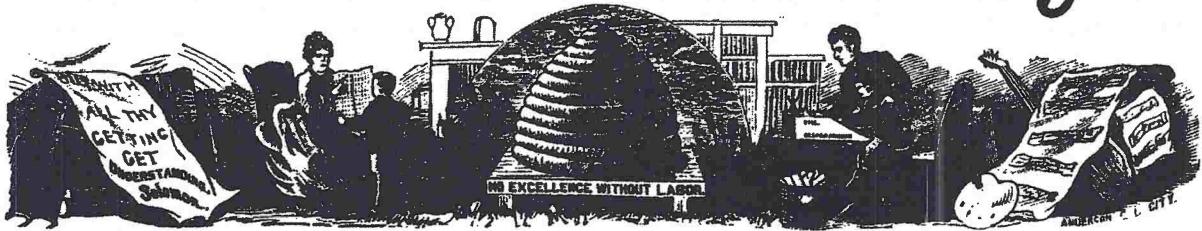


Riverton Yesterdays



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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 the concluding installment of 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: My Grandfather Crump used to say there was a real rivalry in the 1920s between Herriman and Lark and Riverton.

Elias: That's when we had guys playing like Ren Howard, Morris Butterfield, Jeff Bills, and Tom Callicott.

Bob: I'm sure there was a rivalry. Ren Howard was one heck of a ballplayer. Another one that was a heck of a ballplayer Erd Park. He taught me how to catch when I was a kid. He was probably the first tutor or coach that I had.

Elias: Shug used to pitch and Erd used to catch. Arch was their older brother.

Bob: Shug used to play! I remember catching him. He had an old, roundhouse curve. It started curving way out here and come right down to you. It wasn't very fast.

Shug had an old, roundhouse curve. . . . It wasn't very fast.

Mel: Did you follow the major league teams in the sports pages?

Bob: Everything back then was the Yankees.

Elias: Ed Morgan used to go back to the World Series. He was a sheep man. He had quite a bit of money. He'd get on a train and go back for a couple of weeks.

Karen: That's a serious fan!

[concluded]

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.]

Wilford: There used to be a station there on the Rio Grande Railway on the road to Draper. Richard Withers lived just west of that on the north side. Carl Wiberg married a Withers, too.

Merlin: Was the place where Ike Freeman lived a Blake place?

Wilford: I think so.

Merlin: He had a big brick barn.

Wilford: That was a nice house.

Merlin: Was that built by Isaac or was that built by Jim Blake?

Wilford: That was a Blake building. Freeman came here from Fort Herriman. He got into the sheep business and run his sheep in Idaho. His wife come from Idaho.

Merlin: That's how it is then. Mabel. She died just a year or so ago. How much older was Mabel than you?

Wilford: Three or four years, I guess.

Mel: It's a shame that George Beckstead's old horse barn isn't still standing. It looked like a castle.

Wilford: Yes. He put quite a lot of money in that. George Beckstead was quite a promoter. He liked to talk. He liked to get in the limelight. George wasn't a bad fellow. He's part Indian.

George Beckstead was quite a promoter. He liked to talk.

Mel: Is he the one they called Black George?

Wilford: Black George was his uncle. There was a Hamilton's come in here. They come from Millcreek southeast of Salt Lake and this [Charley Mormon] Nokes, he married one of the Hamilton girls. The one this George Beckstead married, her name was Charlotte. That's George F. Beckstead.

Merlin: Is he the one who built the barn?

Wilford: No. Warren Beckstead is the one who built A.T. Butterfield's house and barn.

Merlin: How was Warren related with George? Were they brothers?

Wilford: They were cousins, I think.

Merlin: Where was the big barn?

Wilford: Just about 100 feet west and about 200 feet south of A.T. Butterfield's house.

Merlin: That was a great barn. I think he put \$6,000 into that barn. George had a number of children. Lawrence Beckstead was his oldest one. Then there was Virginia

He was so damn lazy he wouldn't get out of bed in the morning.

Beckstead. Then there was one that studied medicine. He became a doctor and moved out to Nephi. Dr. Hosmer down here in West Jordan wanted to work with this Beckstead. But he was so damn lazy he wouldn't get out of bed in the morning. He wouldn't take care of his customers. I went to school with him. He and I were in the same grade. His mother was a Hamilton. She thought she was a whole lot more than what she was. They had a big family. Charlotte Beckstead. She had a daughter named Virginia. Oh. They thought they were something else! She had another daughter — Violet. She kind of took a liking to me. She come into our place nearly every Sunday and have a ride on a horse. My dad had a lot of nice horses. Charlotte Beckstead told Violet, "I hope you hang your hat higher than that Myers boy."

[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: We had a lot of problems with the water. Somebody would call us and say, "Get up here. My husband's out in the field and him and the neighbors are going at it." Somebody stealed somebody's water. They'd stand there and go at each other with their shovels. Water was important to them. You know how it is when you put water in a furrow. If you turn it off and somebody takes it away from you, then you got to start all over again. We had a lot of that. Had a lot of it up in Herriman, too. We've had suicides of our own people in the town. Down on 118th and just about that same location as that grade for the railroad, there was a suicide. When they was putting that road up through the bottom, they had that dugway they was digging where we go up now out of the river bottom and up to on top. It wasn't finished at that time and I got a call to go up there. There was a man that had stopped up there in the construction zone. He put a hose in the exhaust pipe and run it into the car and committed suicide. Now this was all on one day.

They'd stand there and go at each other with their shovels.

Mel: Two suicides in one day?

Max: No. Three suicides.

Mel: On the same day?

Max: Yes. The one that I just told you about up on 118th, that was a different period of time. The one I'm talking about now was on a Sunday. I'd just settle back because Sunday's always a quiet day. I had three suicides that day in a little area. One of 'em was up about 3200 West and 118th I guess it was. We had another that had a hose in his car, too. I guess one of them wasn't suicide. He was out trying to start his tractor. He had a John Deere tractor. When you started it, you pulled that wheel on the side to get it to go. They'd open the petcocks on both sides so the compression

wasn't too great. Then they'd pull that wheel and twist it. That's what he was doing when it started. It was in gear. He parked it right next to a tree and the tractor started up and squashed him between that tire and the tree. That was three of 'em. I had to go tell three people all at once of the deaths. We had the newspaper come out on it. He talked to me. He says, "Can you tell me what went on?" I says, "Yes. But I don't want you to print anything or get it out in the news." I had to run over to Murray to talk to his wife. I went over and found the place. It was in a community of trailers. I went to the door. I knocked on the door. The kids were there—probably three and twelve years old. "Is your mother here?" This is the one that got killed by the tractor. She says, "No. She's out shopping." I says, "Can I wait around? I want to talk to her." She came home and walked in the door and the kids had the TV on. Just about the time she walked in they'd broke the news over the TV. That's where she found out about it — on the TV. I didn't even get a chance to talk to her. Needless to say, I was pretty upset with that reporter. But those things did happen. We had right down here to 126th and 27th West where Glen Butterfield used to live, right on the corner — we had a whole family of Japanese people come through the intersection going north and hit a car in that intersection and killed three of 'em. Right here in our little old town of Riverton. They were from out of town. They weren't local people.

During the beet season when all of the farmers hauled beets down to West Jordan, these farmers had their beet trucks. Things were tough. They had the side dump that they'd lift them up with a cable and tip the beets out the side. They come down through here. They didn't buy large plates for 'em. At that time, you had a tonnage on your license plate that showed just how much you could haul. It cost more money for more that you hauled. At the time that they was hauling beets, they'd have twice as much in them as you should do. I was a sergeant at the time. I had one of my men stop me and say, "This guy's overloaded." So I went and talked to him. I says, "You forget about it. Don't you bother those guys. It's only for two weeks out of the year that they load that much up in there." I says, "You let them go. If their lights are out or if there's something wrong with the truck, fine. But if it's overload, let 'em go, at least until they get their beets hauled." Farmers really appreciated it because they'd have had to spend a lot of money to get the heavier plates on it.

[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: Were you going to Jordan High School when the train-bus accident happened?

Betty: That was just before we moved up here. I was just young, just ten. That horrified us all over the state, I'm sure. Then when I get up here and so many of my friends — Violet, for one, lost a brother. So many of them had lost a brother or a relative. That was a tragedy for all of us, even out in Sanpete County. And then to move up here where it all took place. It's just something we've never forgotten. That mass funeral in the auditorium of the school. But Jordan was a good school to go to. We had good times there. I took seminary. We were still singing. Vi sang a lot of times with us, too. She's was also one of our trio when the other two weren't there.

That was a tragedy for all of us, even out in Sanpete County.

Mel: Who were the members of your trio?

Betty: Truby and Doris Densley and myself. When one of them couldn't make it, Vi would join in with us. We sang in seminary and school functions.

Mel: Was Carter Grant still the seminary principal?

Betty: Yes. He was. And Joy Dunyon was there then. He was one of my favorite seminary teachers. My brother taught many years at the Jordan Seminary.

Mel: Any other memories you want to share?

Betty: I had no idea I was going to share all of this.

[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: The old Riverton School was built around 1900. In 1926 they decided to tear the building down. The other school building next to it was still standing. They was going to repair it and fix it up. The southeast corner room at the bottom was where they had all their paint stored. Evidently through spontaneous combustion the fire broke out along in July. The whole building was in flames. The fire department then was in Murray. By the time the fire department got over here to help control the blaze, it was pretty well a disaster. The library was upstairs. Some of the burned pages and covers of those books came down as far as our place which is a half mile away. It was burned and they tore the balance of the building down and reconstructed it using the same foundation. They repaired what they had to here and there, filling in the old window holes because they had ducts underneath the other building. Instead of ducts in this building, they've got the steam pipe that goes through it. They got this ready in about 1927. For a short time, they had to hold the school in the old domed church. We, as the 2nd Ward, held our church in the south building of the school, then known as the junior high.

By the time the fire department got over here to help control the blaze, it was pretty well a disaster.

Scott: Did they build the original building where the south building now is?

Elvoy: Yes. That was the building that was torn down.

Scott: Did they build the building on the north before it was torn down?

Elvoy: Yes. I started school in 1916. The north building was built around 1920. They tore the south building down in the spring of 1926. They was going to build this junior high building.

Scott: So they tore down the south building and the north building was the only one there?

Elvoy: Yes.

Scott: And while they were building the south building — the junior high — the north building caught fire?

Elvoy: Yes. While they was remodeling both buildings.

Scott: So the south building was already built as it was when the north building caught on fire?

Elvoy: It was pretty well up to the square when the north building took fire. The south building was built as a junior high. Then they added the annex between the two buildings after the fire. They added that walkway so you can go from building to building on the 2nd floor. That was in 1926. In fall or spring of 1928, they started to build this junior high building that we have here. I guess they moved into it in '29. That was the junior high then. Grades one to six were in the north building. Grades seven, eight, and nine was in the back building.

It was pretty well up to the square when the north building took fire.

Scott: When was this building in the back built.

Elvoy: That was built in '28 or '29. I think they moved into that in the fall of '29. That was the junior high because they needed this other for the elementary. It's got the big gymnasium up in the top — the basketball court. Classrooms are downstairs. That's where they have their cafeteria now, in the bottom of that building. It was separate for many years.

Scott: So all the junior high moved into the back part and all the elementary took the front part?

Elvoy: Yes. The principal was the principal over both of them.

[to be continued]

RIVERTON YESTERDAYS
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Death Notices

Doris W. Densley Flood (77); widow of Leo Flood; parents were Joseph Aaron and
Aurelia C. Wilson Densley

Reba Griffiths Jardine (86); widow of Ellis Jardine; parents were John H. and Maybell
Buttars Griffiths