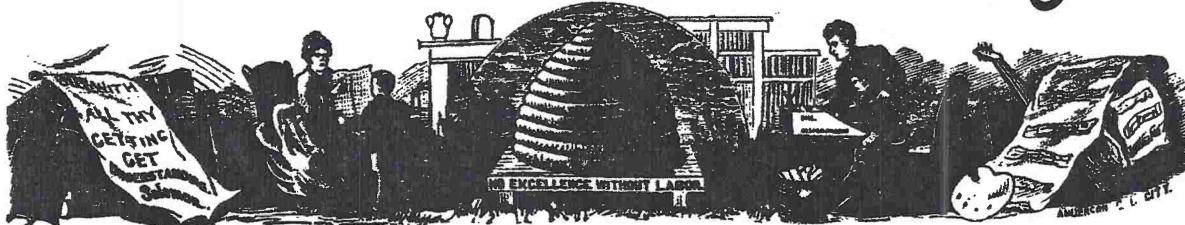


Riverton Yesterdays



Volume 4, No. 9 April 2005

A Monthly Newsletter of Oldtime Stuff about Riverton, Utah

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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: George F. Beckstead lived down here on 1300 West where the road broke over and went down through Tithing Road over to D&RG Railroad.

Merlin: Right on the corner?

Wilford: Yes. I think the north corner.

Merlin: There used to be a big house back in there, right on the corner.

Wilford: Yes. That's where this George Beckstead lived for years. He had sheep. He run sheep there. My oldest brothers, Louis and Lionell, worked for this George Beckstead. He told my dad, "They're the only boys around here that I'll hire." He says, "The other boys around here won't work. Your boys work all the time." He says, "I can go off and leave them for a week and come back and the sheep is takin' care of." He always had a bunch of sheep around there.

Merlin: Louis and Lionell went to the BY Academy rather than up to the U.

Wilford: Lionell was eleven years older than me. Louis was fourteen years older than me.

Merlin: Did Nellie go down there, too?

Wilford: Oh, yes. Nellie went down there. My sister Nellie was an exceptionally bright girl. She had a tongue and she could use it! Boy! She would jump on some of us and when they got out from under her, they knew that they'd been talked to! Boy! How she could use that tongue!

She had a tongue and she could use it!

Merlin: Who was in charge of the stove in the school? Was it Charlie Lovendahl?

Wilford: Yes. He was the janitor.

Merlin: And Charlie put the coal in the stove and let it blow up that time?

Wilford: Charlie didn't put the coal in. Pinder put it in. Charlie seen that the coal was always by the stove.

Merlin: So Charlie just brought the coal in and Pinder put too much in the stove. It built up gas in there and all of a sudden it blew and everybody ran out.

Wilford: He put a whole scuttle of coal in that had a lot of slack and the fire was down pretty well. It was laying there smoldering. All of a sudden it went "schwoof!" Boy! It blew the doors off the stove! The kids all got up, running to get the windows open. Charlie Lovendahl was kind of a simple guy. He stood there grinning. This Pinder was an Englishman. He was the music teacher. A nice little fellow. He says, "Don't stand there like a kissy cat! Get around here and do something!" That's what the teacher told him. I heard it myself.

He says, "Don't stand there like a kissy cat!"

Mel: Do you remember German Ellsworth who lived here?

Wilford: Yes. He taught me in school. When I went in the mission field, he was my mission president. I believe he lived down on the Lower Road, south of 12600 South. I thought he was a nice teacher. When I got back there in the mission field, he heard that name Myers. He says, "You're from Riverton, huh? Remember me teaching school out there?" I said, "Yes. I remember you." German E. Ellsworth was quite a spiritual man. He could really use language. He spoke from his mouth like he was turning a tap on. In the classroom, German E. Ellsworth was pretty strict. He kept the kids from talking. He used discipline. He had punishments. Like maybe make them stay an hour, two hours after school and write their name three or four hundred times.

[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:

I was coming home from work one night. Joe Peterson from South Jordan was on the midnight shift. I was on the afternoon shift. Joe pulled up in front of my house about 126th South, right there by the red light. I looked through the mirror and a car went zooming through the red light going south on Redwood Road. So I turned around and went after it. It was really moving! I had a Police Interceptor so I knew I could catch him. I didn't catch him until I got down into Lehi. I got down there. I pulled 'em over.

I asked him, "Where do you think you're going?"

He said, "My wife is going to have a baby."

And I says, "Where you going to take her?"

"Down to Provo."

Of course, the next question, "How far apart are the pains?"

"Five minutes." It could come any time.

I said, "Where did you leave from?"

"Ogden."

I said, "What's the matter with you?" I said, "OK. We'll get you down there. I'll lead you down." So I led him down. When we got down there, I pulled in the parking lot and I says, "After you get her booked in and get her taken care of, I'll be waiting for you out here." So he came back out and I gave him a ticket.

"Don't I get any consideration for what happened?" he says.

I says, "No. I didn't get any consideration. " Because I was up above ninety mile an hour trying to catch him. Any time I go over eighty, I figure as far as I'm concerned, I'm taking a chance on my life.

We had a New Year's Eve dance up to the gymnasium in the junior high school. I was off that night. Me and my wife went to the dance. While I'm

dancing up there, somebody come up and says, "You better go out in the parking lot. There's a fight down there." So I went down there. I didn't have any badge with me or anything. Everybody

He said he was going to tackle me. I says, "I don't think you better."

knew me. I thought they did, but he didn't. He was a lot bigger than me. He said he was going to tackle me. I says, "I don't think you better."

He says, "Why not?"

I says, "I got a lot of friends here."

He says, "None of 'em is going to stop me."

So I turned around and I says, "Well, we'll see." Gene Fullmer was there and his two brothers. They walked out of the group and says, "I think we can help you." He turned around and got back in his car and left.

On another occasion, there was a tavern — Jennie's. I went down there. That happened to be when I was checking taverns. I went down there and walked in there. I went behind the bar. I says, "You know you're only supposed to be selling beer here, don't you?"

He says, "Yeah. That's all we got."

So I went back in the back and I got down on the shelves underneath and there was the liquor. I didn't arrest him or anything like that. There was

eight guys sitting at the bar there, drinking beer. I took those bottles of whiskey and turned them up and dumped them in the sink. One of the guys that I knew very well, he says, "Oh, don't do that! Don't do that!"

I had another opportunity down at the rodeo grounds down here at the park. I happened to be working that day. There was some noisy guys over on one end of the bleachers. I was sitting in the bleachers with my family. They were over there standing at the end of the bleachers. They was cussin' and drinkin' and yahoooin'. They were there drinking from bottles. Now what am I gonna do with them? So I did about the same thing with them. I went over and showed 'em my badge. Now, everybody's watching at that time. The whole place was watching. I went over there and took the liquor away from 'em and I poured that on the ground. Everybody clapped their hands and we sent 'em on their way. Some of it you had to take care of on your own.

There was eight guys
sitting at the bar there,
drinking beer.

[to be continued]

"Right Here in Our Little Old Town of Riverton": Crime and Police Matters

Max Parry served as a sheriff in Riverton in the 1950s. His memories of law enforcement in Riverton fifty years ago may spark forgotten moments and events of the local past. We often tend to picture the past as idyllic and different than the present with its many problems and troubled social conditions. Max's memories help us recall that crime and other social ills were part of life in Riverton in the near past. As Max phrased it, crime even happened "right here in our little old town of Riverton." There was a need for law enforcement well before Max's time. In this and future issues, we will reprint news articles about police and criminal matters found in old newspapers.

Riverton Postoffice Robbed

Burglars robbed the Riverton post-office early Friday morning January 27, and were prevented from robbing the store of Seth Pixton by the courage and ready wit of two young men who slept in the place.

About 1 o'clock the young men were awakened by the noise of a door being broken in. They waited in silence. When the burglars masked and armed, appeared, one of the boys, Heber Frankland, tried to shoot with a pistol he had. Four times he drew the trigger, but the weapon failed to explode. "Hand me the shot gun" he cried to the other, referring to a weapon that existed only in his imagination. This alarmed the burglars and they ran, pursued by the boys. At some distance from the place the burglars turned and one of them shot at Frankland, tried again and this time his gun exploded. One of the burglars fired a parting shot at him before disappearing in the darkness. An examination afterwards disclosed that the post office had previously been robbed. A searching party failed to discover any trace of the men though articles they had dropped in their flight were found.

Four times he drew the trigger, but the weapon failed to explode. "Hand me the shot gun," he cried.

American Eagle, 28 January 1905.

"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: Do you remember the end of World War II here?

Betty: You know, I do. I remember the joy of it. I was picked up on the streets of Salt Lake and hugged and kissed and handed from arms to arms. During World War II, they would bus us young teenagers from our Mutual classes at the church. We would go out to Kearns and dance with the service men. The buses would bring us home.

Mel: Was that when you were living up in Salt Lake then?

Betty: We were living out here still.

Mel: Did you just happen to be in Salt Lake when you heard about the end of the war?

Betty: We just went in there for the big celebration on VE Day. My girlfriends and I grabbed the bus. It was fun. Everybody was packing their flags. You didn't even mind who was picking you up and throwing you around. Everybody was so happy!

You didn't even mind who was picking you up and throwing you around. Everybody was so happy!

Mel: It meant you didn't have to scrimp on all of the food.

Betty: Right. I went through all of that. There was a period of time when we had the coupons that we had to save for butter and everything like that. For gasoline. Some of the older girls could get their boyfriends to help them with gas. They'd give their gas coupons to the girls. The girls would get their dad's cars and we'd run the guy's gas out with those coupons. I was one of the younger girls that got to ride around with them. The war didn't penetrate me as really serious at that time. You can tell it's the light-hearted side I'm remembering. But of course, I thought it was terrible.

[concluded]

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 junior high and elementary school buildings were separate. The same heating system heated the whole thing. They had big boilers down there and they piped the heat into all of them. This old school that was first here had pot-bellied stoves in it. The boys would have to go pack the coal upstairs out of the coal room over to put in the stove. Every once in awhile you'd put the coal in the stove and you'd hear a pop-pop-pop. Some kid had throwed in some .22 shells in the coal.

Every once in awhile you'd put the coal in the stove and you'd hear a pop-pop-pop.

Scott: Did all the students go to Jordan High after they graduated from junior high?

Elvoy: Yes. However along about my time when I graduated, those that was aristocratic so to speak — for instance, Morris Butterfield, young Tom Butterfield, Verve Butterfield, and the Crane family — they went into the LDS High School in Salt Lake. I think that school was discontinued in '29 or '30.

Scott: Why did they do that instead of go to Jordan?

Elvoy: They had all the programs at Jordan, but there would be more dignity to graduate from the LDS High School than there was from the Jordan High School. They had to catch the train every day at 7:20 A.M. to go to Salt Lake.

Scott: How long did it take to go to Salt Lake?

Elvoy: About 35-40 minutes. The schedule was pretty good, pretty accurate, too. I've heard Morris say he heard the train whistle and then he'd run just as hard as he could to get up to the station before it got there. I don't know whether he could or not. The train used to come through going south at 6:40 and it would come

back north at 7:30. They had to catch that 7:30 train to get into Salt Lake before school at 9 o'clock. The next train came through about 9 o'clock. That would put you in Salt Lake after the stores was open at 10 o'clock.

Scott: Can you tell me about the 1st-3rd Ward church?

Elvoy: There were two homes between the church and the school. Swenson lived in one and Gwynne Page in the other. In back of the church on the north side was a orchard. Thomas P. Page had a big orchard here. He used to let us kids go over and pick up the apples off the ground in the fall. The Riverton 1st Ward decided to build them a new building along in the late '30s because of the hardness to heat and maintain the old domed church. It was almost an impossibility to heat it in the winter. I think they started the building in '40. They saved the benches and pews from the old domed church. They even saved the glass windows, but the Church wouldn't let them put the glass windows into the new building.

Scott: Why not?

Elvoy: I don't know. They stopped construction on the building after Pearl Harbor came in [December 1941]. It sit there for several years without being able to do anything. They continued to hold their meetings in the school house. The ward used to use the gymnasium in the school house for playing basketball, shows, entertainment, and dances. The school house has been used an awful lot by the community as well as a school. It has functioned well in the community. Then they got the 1st Ward church house built. A few years ago, they had to add onto it. They changed it around an awful lot. T. P. Page gave the ground here where the school house is and the church house. As I understand it, he gave two acres of ground. It must have been close to four acres all together for the school and the church house and the baseball park at the back. They used to have a grandstand and a race track. There was a race track here that you could run horse races around.

There was a race track here that you could run horse races around.

[to be continued]

RIVERTON YESTERDAYS

C/O KAREN RASHORE

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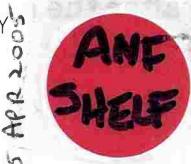
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Death Notices

Donna Jean Densley Bills (76); wife of Ray C. Bills; parents were Willard LeRoy and Louise Nielsen Densley; 3 children