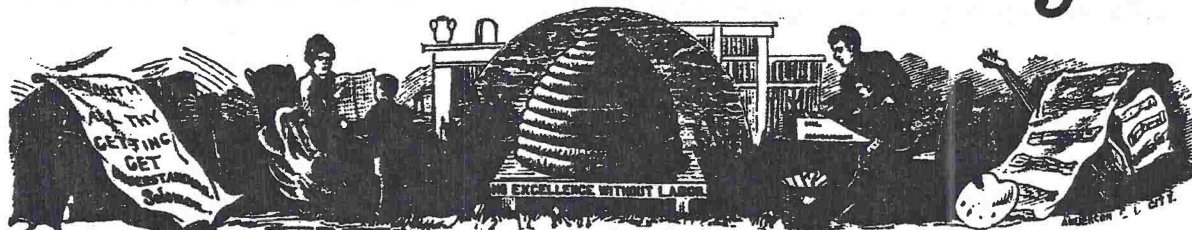


Riverton Yesterdays



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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. This concludes this series of interviews.]

Merlin: People were known for their ability to stack hay. There were men who were really good stackers. They were in demand. You wanted them to come and help you make a stack. You had to weave it in so you could fill up the center and bind it in to keep the sides from falling out. There was a real art to that.

Wilford: Yes. You had to keep you middle full and have your hay stacked so it would slope out. When the rain and snow would come, the water would run right off the stack.

Merlin: You built the stack up just as high as you'd want and then you topped it. You had a gable almost.

Wilford: That was quite an art. Old Oscar Nell was a master of stacking.

Merlin: He was known all over this end of the county for his ability to stack hay. They used derricks to stack them.

Oscar Nell was known all over this end of the county for his ability to stack hay.

Wilford: A lot of these Nells had long lives.

Mel: How about the Myers? Did your brothers and sisters live long, too?

Merlin: They've all lived to be in their eighties and Aunt Lillie lived to be ninety-eight.

Wilford: My dad was just the picture of health when he got killed. I take my health after him.

Mel: Why is this called Myers Lane?

Merlin: My grandfather built it. There was a wagon trail there. He and his boys built the road. Jens Neilson on the corner was here first. Then it was Myers all the way up there. Then your dad sold this to Niels Madsen.

Wilford: Yes. He practically give it to him.

Mel: Did your mom and dad speak Danish in the house?

Wilford: Not too much. My mother would speak more than my dad would.

Mel: It seems there were a lot of Danes here.

Merlin: I think the English dominated. All these Danes couldn't speak English and so the English people held the day here. They had an obstacle. That put the English people in kind of an ascendancy in the town. Hamiltons, Butterfields, Newmans, Silcocks, and Blakes were all English. They could express themselves in a way that the Danes couldn't. They did have some ascendancy in the town. You can see the dominance of the English. John Hansen had to do something about it. They were geared to getting into college so they could offset the disadvantage that was there because of the language. My dad's two brothers went and his sisters. They just had to somehow overcome this obstacle. You can see forces like that at work in the social life of the people.

Mel: Do you think there were feelings between the Danes and English?

Merlin: Oh! No doubt about it! My dad told about this little Hamilton girl that used to come up and ride their horses. The girl's sister said, "I wouldn't hang my hat at that place. They speak

"I wouldn't hang my hat at that place. They speak Danish and we're English."

Danish and we're English." You see little things like that that indicate that the English held the day. They controlled things. It was their language ability that certainly put them in that advantageous position. Morgans were English. Densleys were English. Cranes were English. It was nothing really fierce but it was there.

[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: Utah Poultry came in about 1920-22. They put in a potato cellar in about the same time. Then the railroad run another spur back off from that where they used to dump coal. Originally the coal was picked up off from the tracks by the canning factory. They'd unload the cars there. Later they raised the track up so they could run the cars up in the air and then dump the cars down so they wouldn't have to pitch the coal out of the cars. It could all be dumped on the ground. The railroad had small box cars. You'd put three hundred sacks of potatoes in and that was a load. The railroad bought the land in 1913 and started construction in 1914. They first used diesel engines until they got the Lionel electrified. Then it was all electric line. Practically everything that went to Salt Lake was hauled by the railroad. That changed in about 1925 when they got bigger and better trucks.

Scott: Was the train noisy or quiet when it came through?

Elvoy: The train went through without too much noise except for the whistles. The passenger train was always as accurate as could be. You could set your watch by it. You could tell what time it was by the whistles of the train. There was one come through at noon so you could tell when dinner was. The freight run in between. There was no accuracy on the freight, but the passenger cars was really accurate.

The passenger train was always as accurate as could be. You could set your watch by it.

Scott: Was the freight electric, too?

Elvoy: Everything was electric.

Scott: Were there steam trains that came through?

Elvoy: During the war years in the 1940s, they brought out several light

steam engines and pulled passenger troops up to Camp Williams. The troop trains went up to Kearns too on the D&RG Railroad.

Scott: Where did the railroad go from Riverton?

Elvoy: It was from Salt Lake to Payson. It would take about an hour and a half to go from Salt Lake to Payson. The biggest part of the railroad grade has been leveled through the area here. We haven't leveled ours off because there's so much gravel in it. When Redwood Road was built in 1920, they hauled the gravel from Taylorsville up to our place. Wiberg built a big cement mixer there. They would unload the gravel cars. They had an elevator that would take it up into bins and drop it down into their mixer. The cement was all mixed there with the gravel, concrete, and water and then dumped into the solid-tower dump trucks. These solid-tower dump trucks had twenty minutes to get to their destination. All the cement used to pave Redwood Road from the South Jordan hill on 10400 South up into Bluffdale was mixed at our home and hauled down our lane.

Scott: When was the train station torn down?

Elvoy: They pulled the rails in the spring of '46. Somebody bought the station and they moved it and made a home out of it. I don't know just where it went to.

Scott: Why did they discontinue the train?

Elvoy: Two reasons. The automobile came along and took the traffic for the passengers. The truck took the traffic for the freight. While you were loading it on to the truck, you might just as well haul it to Salt Lake as bring it down and load it on a train car. The only business the railroad had left was the sugar beet business and that was getting so the trucks was taking that. As the trucks came into the picture, the railroad went out. When it got so the trucks was hauling the beets into the sugar factory, then it wasn't profitable. It went into the hands of the receiver and they decided the best thing to do was to junk it out. There were very few

It went into the hands of the receiver and they decided the best thing to do was to junk it out.

passengers. It got to a point where you could get on and not ever be crowded.

Scott: How much did it cost to ride?

Elvoy: Around 35 cents to go to Salt Lake.

Scott: Can you tell me about the Crane home?

Elvoy: When Hebe Crane built his new barn in about 1915, he had a herd of dairy cows. He had about as good a herd of dairy cows as any of the farmers around here. He

Hebe Crane sold his cows in the Depression when everything went to pot.

had Ed Tea milking cows for him for awhile. Ivan Jones from Lyndyll worked for him for a good many years until he sold his cows. He sold his cows in the Depression when everything went to pot. I guess it was about 1933 when the government came in and bought the cows. They paid the big price of from \$12 to \$20 for dairy cows. Hebe Crane sold out then and never went back into the dairy business. A short time after that, Hebe passed away. His farm was leased out and things were changed. When the parents are gone, things are scattered and lost and that's what happened to Hebe Crane's property. Mary Jane kept it pretty well intact until after she died. The Crane people had a well on this property, but it was hard water. Mrs. Crane used to hook up the horse on a sleigh with a barrel on it and come over to our place to get the water for the house. They would use their well for washing utensils. They used our water for culinary water until the pipe line came in in 1908. We had running water in our home earlier than that because Dad had a pipe from the tank that he had over the home. You could turn on the tap and get the running water in the house. After the pipe line came in, they plumbed the homes. In 1912, the power came in. They had to rewire all the homes. It was kind of awkward to do.

[to be continued]

**"We Had Good Times and Bad Times":
Owen Seth Hamilton**

[Note: These excerpts, edited for readability and clarity, are from an autobiographical sketch written in 1986.]

My brother, Everett, was cleaning a gun in the house. Edith, Mother, and I were sitting in a row. Edith was sitting in the middle. Everett was sitting at the piano stool when the gun went off. He fell off from it and the bullets went right between Edith's legs and blew a big hole in the floor.

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We lived in the horse-and-buggy days. I remember Dad making regular trips by wagon, taking wheat to the South Jordan flour mill. The mill was situated at the bottom of the hill on the west side of the river bottom. He also hauled coal from the coal yard east of the river.

We didn't have an electric refrigerator. We had a box affair built outside up on a stand with a screen around it and a big pan on top with ladies' stockings or any kind of rags we could put in it with water in the pan that would run down the cloths and gradually drip onto the ground.

We had neither a telephone nor telegraph in my young years. As I grew up, in about 1915, they installed the telephone.

We had a cooler filled with water and we would put the cans of milk in it overnight. In the morning when we got through milking I would cool it in the cooler and then we would have a couple of 10-gallon cans of milk to throw in the old Model T Ford truck they had there. We would go on up the road to Bluffdale, where they had a cooler there and leave them. It got so I would stop and pick up LaVetta. She enjoyed that. She would watch and when I would stop, she would come out and jump in and we would deliver the milk. I got so I liked to deliver the milk more than I ever have in my life. At that time I was about 21 or 22 years old.

There wasn't many sports. Parents didn't have to dig up money to send us here and there. In those days we didn't have an automobile to jump in so we did the things kids usually did. We played kick the can and baseball and just about everything we could do on our feet.

We had a baseball park at school. It was all dirt—no grass—out in the dirt field. I was third baseman. All the schools had a team. After school we would go from one school to another. We couldn't just close school and go and do things that was called sports. We had regular holidays. We went to school at 9:00 and got out at 3:30. It was the same from one day to the next with no

variations. My favorite subjects were reading, writing, and arithmetic. My friends were mostly relatives—Eldred, Everett, and Rex Hamilton. My close friends were Floyd Butterfield and Hen Bills.

The school was right where it is now. At that time, it was just a four-room school. It was torn down and rebuilt. S.F. Stephenson was my teacher and was principal of the school. I went to school at Jordan High. They had buses that had

We were made to study. It was either study or get out!

curtains—no glass. Clyde Merrill drove the bus. We were made to study. It was either study or get out! I went as far as two years in high school and then quit because Dad needed help on the farm. Later on I went to college at Salt Lake for two years and caught up on that. I went to the L.D.S. Business College. I liked school.

We had about a hundred acres of land. Dad would buy a farm and sell it and buy another. We always had about a hundred acres. Uncle Reuben Hamilton and Dad were brothers. They farmed together all their lives. As we boys got older, they decided it would be better if they split up. We took part of the old farm that they had when Grandfather came out here and Uncle Reub took part.

We had fun vacations. Dad and I always used to go to Strawberry. The old boat that we would rent was made out of plank. It would leak. We would haul the line out to fish with one hand and bail the water out with the other one. We didn't have motors. We would row out. It would get foggy on cold mornings. One morning we got lost out there and Uncle Reub said, "One of you fish and the other one keep track of where your boat is so you don't get lost." It was impossible. The first thing we knew we were all tangled up and didn't know where we were. Uncle Reub blamed Eldred and called him an "old block head." It was common to hear it because Eldred was a smart fellow. Later on we would go up Provo Canyon. We would have mattresses and springs to go to bed at night. We would spread a blanket or quilt on the ground on the side of the road. At Upper Falls there was no pavement on the road. It was cold when we would get up in the mornings, but we didn't care. We would go fishing in the river. The thing is, we enjoyed the outdoors. We didn't have to take the comforts with us. Even at home we would sleep outdoors on the lawn in the summer. Any old thing would do to be different.

We didn't have enough bedrooms so we moved another building in against our old home. It was about the same as my garage. It didn't have any ceilings. It had a door on the south side and it had a big hole in there that we used for a drain on the outside. Everett went out to see what the dogs were barking at one night. I couldn't hear the dogs because he was yelling. I went out and he had fallen in the hole. I put a ladder down so he could get out.

I used to work on the farm a lot. Everything was done by horses. There weren't any tractors then. Every now and again we would have a run away. One time I was working up in the field. Pete and Joe Green farmed up near 2700 West. I saw their horse and wagon with no driver coming down the road. I ran out and jumped across the ditch and grabbed the back of it just as it was going by. I got up and reached over and got the ladder and got one of the lines and pulled it over into the ditch and tied them up there.

I had a run away once. My brother, Wes, and I were coming down from the farm up where Gwynne Page lives now. They had the canal bridge torn out and enough of it left there that the rake could barely go over it. They left a big bump right in the middle. As I was coming down, Wes was riding a horse along and we decided to have a race. The single tree on the rake came loose and all I could do was put my foot against the back end of the horse and let him go. I wondered how we were going to get across the canal. When we hit that bump in the middle of the road, I went up in the air and come down and was sitting under the rake. I got on the horse with Wes and we rode it home because mine had gone home. When we got home, I went to take my shoe off. My foot was numb. Three wooden pegs had been driven right through my shoe and out the top of my foot. We cut the shoe off. They took some pliers and pulled the wooden pegs out.

Another time I was coming down out of the field on a horse. I was going on a lope with it. It veered off to the side and jumped the ditch. It hit the barbed wire fence. The barbed wire cut me across my eye. I still have the scar.

My parents were faithful to the requirements of the Church. They had me baptized at age eight. I was baptized by Bert Adamson in 1912. I was confirmed by Thomas Mark Hamilton. I do not remember of being asked if I would like to be a

We passed the sacrament with a cup and a big pitcher.

member of the Church. Before I got old enough to pass the sacrament, we went to church where Lova Coy's home is now. That was our church house. In those days it was only about two rooms in the whole thing. When we got out of school, we walked to the corner. We called it "graveyard street." We would go down on 1300 to church. Later on they built the building that had the big dome on it. We thought we really had something there. We passed the sacrament with a cup and a big pitcher. At the end of each row we filled it full of water and passed it along. The babies, the old men and old ladies and young ladies would all take a drink out of it. I remember so well when they came out with the individual cups. I thought that was so much better. It wasn't as healthy as it could have been so we appreciated that change.

[to be continued]

RIVERTON YESTERDAYS

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