

Historical Question

Question:

Who owned and operated the first service station in Union?

Answer:

Mike Milne and Gil Hilton owned and operated Milne and Hilton Service near 1300 East and South Union Avenue, close to where Walmart stands today. Gil Hilton married Mike Milne's sister, so as brothers-in-law they started the service station together. They lived about one block from the station on what is now Milne Lane, which made it easy for them to walk to work.

The first station was about sixteen feet by sixteen feet and was made out of rocks from the creek. The grease rack was outside. They would check the oil, wash the car windows, and pump gas for about 25 cents per gallon. Later, they moved across the creek and built a new and larger station. The grease rack was housed inside as was a service bay where they could work on cars. Their sons, Art Milne and Gene Hilton, also helped at the station.

July 2010 Valley Journal Historical Question

Question: Cottonwood Heights has an interesting ethnic heritage. What African-Americans were early settlers in Cottonwood Heights?

Answer: Four African-American settlers made their homes in the Cottonwood Heights area: Daniel Freeman, George Stevens, Green Flake, and Hark Lay Wales. In 1855, Freeman was the first non-slave African-American born in Utah Territory. In the 1870s, he homesteaded 160 acres in the heart of what is now Cottonwood Heights. His land extended from Chris Lane (later the Stelter property) over to the land owned by Charles Boyce and then up to 23rd East (later the John Antczak property). Stevens originally owned the land that became the property of William Panter, first president of Brown and Sanford Irrigation Company. Flake and Wales were in the vanguard company of pioneers, entering the Salt Lake valley on July 21, 1847. All four men owned several mining claims in Big Cottonwood Canyon Mining District: Union Blue Lode, Abraham Lincoln Lode, Wales Lode (named after Hark Wales), O. K. Lode, and Poor Man's Friend Lode. In 1872, Freeman and Flake signed the memorial of Utah citizens to Congress against Utah Territory becoming a State. Green Flake and Hark Lay Wales are buried in the Union Pioneer Cemetery.

Historical Question:

This year's Butlerville Days historical display will focus on the mining history of this area. What was one of the oldest, largest, and richest mines in Big Cottonwood Canyon?

Historical Answer:

The Maxfield Mine. In 1872, John Maxfield and his brother Robert (father of R. D. Maxfield, Jr.) were bringing logs out of Mill A Gulch to the sawmill they had built at its mouth when they uncovered a vein of ore. They filed for and staked claims on what later came to be known as the Maxfield Mine.

The Maxfields were primarily lumbermen, so they traded their claims for a wagon, a team of mules, and \$80 cash. The buyer, a Mr. Price, sold the claim once more in 1879, and the Maxfield Mining Company was incorporated. The Maxfield Mine became the only regularly producing mine in the canyon. At one time, the company was shipping an average of two carloads of ore every month with a workforce of twenty men. By 1906, more than \$1 million in high-grade silver-lead ore had been taken from the mine.

Had the Maxfields been able to foresee this, it might have convinced them to change their occupation.

Historical Question:

Which Cottonwood Heights resident:

- Was born in 1854 in a log cabin where the Salt Lake City and County Building is now located?
- Worked for several years on railroads, helping to build four railroad lines in Utah, one in Wyoming, and one in Montana?
- Served as a trustee on the old Fifty-seventh District School Board for 12 years and served for three years on the Jordan School District School Board when it was first organized?
- Was one of the organizers and served as a director in the Brown and Sanford Ditch Company?
- Worked for three years as a road supervisor for Salt Lake County and fulfilled one term as a constable?
- Spent ten years as a counselor in the Butler LDS Ward bishopric and then spent six years as bishop of the ward?
- Engaged in farming, milking his cows daily even when he was 86 years old?
- Married Sarah McGhie in 1884?

Historical Answer:

Charles Colebrook. His property became known as Colebrook Corner. Today in Cottonwood Heights, it is the location of the Chevron gas station on Fort Union and Highland Drive.

March Historical Question:

At the turn of the 20th Century, the gold rush "town" of Gold City appeared for a brief time near the mouth of Poulson Canyon, south of Little Willow Canyon (renamed Deaf Smith Canyon), which is now the site of the Golden Hills housing development. What is the history of this mining-era boomtown?

Answer:

In 1894, rich gold discoveries were made in the foothills between Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons at the New State Mine in the vicinity of old Emmaville. The ore was white quartz thickly studded with gold. News of the discovery quickly circulated and it was not long before the foothills were dotted with prospectors and miners. The "town" of Gold City was located a half mile from where gold was discovered in the New State Mine.

By 1905, there was a shaft house, blacksmith shop, assay office, two-story bunk house, boarding house, store, and stables. The buildings and mine were lighted by electricity generated by a 250 to 400 horsepower water power plant located on Willow Creek, 2,000 feet from the mine.

The New State vein discovered by Daniel and William Wolstenholme locally assayed to several hundreds of ounces of gold per ton at the surface, but thousands of feet of tunnels and shafts failed to find major ore bodies. By 1903, only two major claim holders remained in the area. One, an old hermit named Clayton, had a cabin on the Blue Jay claim. The other, Nicholas R. Schmittroth, kept his wife and seven children busy on his Jefferson and Josephine claims. Schmittroth, a Bavarian-born baker-turned-pro prospector, had worked in the district for a decade sinking and tunneling on promising veins, financed partially by the sale of a bakery in Salt Lake City.

Schmittroth finally had the opportunity to purchase the New State property for \$20,000 but had no resources to do so. So, in June 1902, he formed the Consolidated Jefferson Gold and Copper Mining Company and took a job on a cattle train going to Chicago. In Chicago and Omaha he sold \$35,000 in stock. He returned to Utah and put a crew to work deepening the New State shaft. A five stamp mill was erected, and the Jefferson Mercantile Company below the mine at the site of Gold City supplied the various needs of the miners.

While taking his daughter to Munich to study voice and elocution, Schmittroth met a New York crockery merchant named Getz who invested heavily in the mine, a necessary move since the Jefferson Company was often in debt. When Schmittroth asked his stockholders to approve a \$250,000 loan for further development, they refused, and A.W. Nieman, a Chicago grocer, was elected company president. Schmittroth, thus removed from the directorate, left to open a bakery in Ely, Nevada.

In 1908, Nieman reorganized the property as Wasatch Utah Mining Company. Two mills were built but neither was successful, and Schmittroth repurchased the properties a decade later. Work ceased when he died in 1937 and Gold City became another relic of Utah mining history. The area is now known as the Golden Hills housing development.

Historical Question: Can you identify the present day locations of the following ea
Butlerville areas:

1. Brown's Hill
2. Butler Bench
3. Butler Hill
4. Colebrook Corner
5. Colebrook's Hill
6. Danish Town
7. Emmaville
8. Pepper's Hill
9. Poverty Flat
10. Union Fort Road
11. Will Dyer's Road

Historical Answers:

1. The hill on 2300 East between Fort Union and Bengal Boulevards.
2. The area beginning at the top of Butler Hill (approximately 2700 East) to tl
Big Cottonwood Canyon along Fort Union Boulevard.
3. The hill on Fort Union Boulevard between 2300 East and 2700 East.
4. The southwest corner of the intersection of Highland Drive and Fort Union
5. Also known as Brown's Hill (see #1).
6. The Danish Road area.
7. The area above the south end of Danish Road where the road makes a shar
east to Wasatch Boulevard.
8. The hill on Creek Road between Danish Road and Little Cottonwood Cree

March 2010

Q. What two historical sites, located in Cottonwood Heights, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places?

A. On April 16, 1971, the Granite Paper Mill (Old Mill) was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. When built, it was owned by the Deseret News and housed the latest in paper making machinery. It burned down in 1893, destroying the equipment.

On April 6, 2000, the Alvi Ruben and Annie Green home on Danish Road was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in recognition of its architectural and historical significance. It is one of the few remaining historic buildings from the Danish Town era.

April 2010

What two schoolhouses were built in the 1890's in Cottonwood Heights?

On December 15, 1877, the Salt Lake County Court/Council created the first school district in Butlerville, District # 57. The 1893 Butler School was built on the north side of Fort Union Boulevard, across the street from the present Butler Elementary School. It was a large, one-room, brick building, adjacent to a one-room, log school built in 1881-82. Later, this room was known as the "Big Room" where the upper grades were taught. The Trustees subsequently added four classrooms for use by the lower grades. A bell tower was also erected. In 1905 consolidated districts became law and Jordan School District was created. In 1922, a committee of Butler residents met with the Jordan School Board to petition for a new school. In 1925, properties were exchanged and the Butler Ward became the new owner of the 1893 Butler School. The old church was torn down and a new school and house for the principal were built on the site of present-day Butler Elementary. The original bell from the 1893 Butler School can be seen in a recreated bell tower dedicated in 1997 in front of the church.

South Butlerville School was built about 1892 at 8200 South 2235 East Creek Road on the north side of the road. The school was built of brick and the foundation was granite rock, hauled from Little Cottonwood Canyon by horses and wagon. After this school was closed, all but two of the children went to the Union School. The children who went to Union were transported by a horse-drawn covered wagon. In about 1919 or 1920 the school was torn down and the brick was hauled to build the Burgon Market on the corner of Union Avenue and 9th East.

May 2010

Who was the architect for the Old Mill?

Historical Question:

Which former resident of Cottonwood Heights is among the 13 members of the Salt Lake County Sheriff's office who have died in the line of duty, beginning with Deputy Rodney Badger who died in April 1853?

Historical Answer:

Melvin Charles Colebrook, Jr. was born in 1931. He spent his youth in Butlerville and then moved closer to Salt Lake City. He attended high school at Davis High School in Farmington, Utah. He served in the U. S. Army during the Korean War and then worked for the Union Pacific Railroad for 20 years. After that, he became a Deputy Sheriff for Salt Lake County.

In 1973, Deputy Colebrook was killed in the line of duty during a family fight in the home of one of the vice presidents of Walker Bank. He left behind a wife and three children. He was the great grandson of Charles Colebrook. Deputy Colebrook's name appears on the Officer Down Memorial Page of law enforcement heroes. We honor all those who wear the uniform and dedicate themselves to helping people in their community.

November 2010 Historical Question

Question:

What resident of Cottonwood Heights was a B-24 tail gunner during World War II?

Answer:

Eugene W. Price of Union entered into military service on November 23, 1943. He flew 24 bombing missions over Northern Italy, Yugoslavia, Austria, Germany, and Czechoslovakia before World War II ended on May 8, 1945.

"On my eleventh mission we had the most combat damage done to our plane of any of my missions," Gene said. "One of the engines was hit and put out of commission, the hydraulic system of the plane was hit and made useless, and we had hundreds of holes in our plane. We thought we would need to bail out over enemy territory, but our pilot decided to try to make it back to our base. We ran off the runway because of no hydraulic system to slow us down. We were lucky to make it back without any injuries."

Gene was honorably discharged on November 13, 1945. Cottonwood Heights salutes Gene and all of our veterans for their service to our country.

November Historical Question:

What home, built in 1948 (in what was then Butlerville), was the first show home open for public tours at 50 cents a head? (Clue: It was later home to the St. Thomas More Parish.)

Historical Answer:

Cannon Mortuary, established by Don and Jackie Cannon, occupies the famous Meyer-Lawn Home built by Dutchman Albert Meyer-Lawn. Albert married Jean Bowthorpe, cousin to Don's mother Margaret Staker Cannon.

In this unusual home, Albert featured ceramic tiled walls and ceilings, archways, an inner courtyard, and a heated swimming pool. He advertised it as "The home that is different."

Don and Jackie purchased the 32-year-old home in 1980 and began renovation "on a shoestring and doing the majority of the improvements by themselves." They opened the doors of Cannon Mortuary to the public in November 1981.

At that time, Father Maurice Moran, first pastor of the newly formed parish of St. Thomas More, was looking for a temporary building to house his congregation. The arrangement benefitted both the Cannons and the Catholics until their new church could be built in 1984.

Don and Jackie Cannon have preserved a beautiful property, raised their family of four children, maintained good relationships in the community, and built a solid respectable business that has survived economic and political downturns. We are proud to have Cannon Mortuary in Cottonwood Heights.

September Historical Question:

Which former Cottonwood Heights Resident was the first Japanese-American public office in Utah?

Historical Answer:

Dr. Dan Oniki, who received his medical degree from the University of Utah, opened a family practice in Cottonwood Heights in J. Thomas Fyans' home after Fyans was LDS mission president in Uruguay in 1960. Before Dr. Oniki moved to Cottonwood, he opened up a family practice in Park City in 1949. In 1955, he was asked by Park City Republicans to run as a Republican for the Park City Council. He refused, and decided to run as an Independent instead.

However, Dr. Oniki needed three people to form an Independent Party in Park City. He was a member of the Kiwanis Club, so he recruited three friends and formed an Independent Party. Additionally, he found out he needed fifty people to sign a petition of support.

September 2010 Historical Question

Which resident of Cottonwood Heights was a world wrestling champion?

Delbert Kunkel was born in 1905 in Salt Lake City and lived in Butlerville where he operated a plumbing business when he wasn't wrestling.

In the wrestling world, he was known as "Dynamite Del." Boasting the title of Light Heavyweight Champion of the Pacific Coast and Canada, Kunkel was a feature attraction at the McCullough Arena in Salt Lake City.

In Oregon in December of 1934, Kunkel defeated World Welterweight Champion Jack Reynolds. Reynolds had ruled as king of the welters for nearly 14 years. After a fight in which he used such moves as the Boston Crab, Kunkel lifted the champion sky-high in a terrific Australian Pile Driver that ended the match. Mat critics rated this bout as the greatest exhibition of grappling since a match in Albany in 1927.

With 10 years of grappling experience, Kunkel was rated among the top five middleweight wrestlers in the world. In 1937, having beaten every wrestler of importance under 200 pounds, Dynamite Del was named World Tigerweight Champion.

Kunkel passed away in 1980.