

# Transcript of Written History

## Verl W. Buxton

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### Life Beginning

My life started at 7076 Highland Drive, Butler, Utah. It has been a great life. My life surrounded 70th South Hyland Drive. My family owned the southwest corner to 7200 South. That is where my father purchased a third acre from Lue Colebrook, our Grampa. Growing up was great. We had several open pasture areas where we played softball and football.

On the corner of 7200 South Highland Drive, they processed peas. We played there a lot until I was pushed off a piece of machinery and was knocked out for some time. I recovered, and we stayed away until it was moved.

Several of my summers was spent on a 20-acre farm in Garland, where I fed 30-50 pigs and 3-500 chickens. When school was out, I headed for Garland and would come home about a couple of days prior to school. I did this for about 5 years. I drove a tractor at 8 years old. I also had a lot of fun fishing in a canal on the property. Fish was cat fish and was great to eat. During the week I played, worked and had a lot of fun. On Sunday we were in church.

When we were in our late teens, we all had cars and would drag race on 2300 E. When the sheriff was called, Capt. Occie Evans would call my dad. He would find us and stop the racing. Occie knew all of us and was a friend to all. There was only about 5 deputies in the county, and they had to depend on my dad.

When we were 14-18 years, we would ride on sleighs from top of Butler Hill to Highland Drive, hitch a bumper and ride back up to top of hill. Also as teens we would ride our bikes down the 8-foot concrete pipe coming from Deer Creek in Provo Canyon. It comes across Bengal Boulevard at 3300 E and across cemetery (property down over hill by Nuttree Chaple (3350 E) about 50 to 100 per foot per day. We would use flashlights and ride for miles after work shut down.

When I was 25 years old, I joined the Sheriff's Department and was assigned to the canyon a month later. There I patrolled our canyons, along with Morgan, Wasatch, Tooele, and Utah counties. I went to surrounding counties only when needed. Many times I would get off shift about 5:00PM and was called back out at 6:00 PM. It could be an auto crash or lost hiker, drownings, or lost person.

In my tenure (twenty years) in the canyon, I handled or assisted in over three hundred major rescues, also about three thousand to four thousand minor and major accidents. One accident involved thirty-five vehicles.

I loved the Sheriff Department. Back then everybody showed respect for an officer. Now its drugs, guns, or fights. Many times I went into group parties of motor cycle gangs or Mexican groups and was not bothered or feared for my safety. I would patrol about two hundred miles a day. My duties were accidents, rescues, suicides, family fights, or overdue people and general info.

In my school days, grades first through fourth, my teacher was Mrs. Dearden. She was good --but don't goof off! She would come up behind you and hit you with a ruler. In grades fifth through sixth, I had Harold Blair. He was great, but mean. I was out of line once in the hall. He came up behind me and gave me a boot. I tumbled down six stairs, but was okay. I told my father about the incident. He called Harold, and I got spanked again. Harold and my Dad were very good friends. I finished 5th and 6th grades without any problems. Harold and I stayed friends until he passed away.

I loved Butlerville. In 1948 we had a wild winter with roads closed and schools shut down. Fort Union Boulevard (7000 South) was closed for a week with five foot snowdrifts. The wind blew the roof off the west side of the ward house. We had to cover it with canvas and plastic until repairs could be made. My father was the Bishop with 258 members from Midvale to Brighton, Cottonwood to Granite.

## **START OF LAW ENFORCEMENT**

My first taste of winter started when I was borned. Blizzard--could not get to hospital. We were on a visit to Garland. Since that time, winter has been my love.

I started my law enforcement career in the early 1960s. After a month on the job (County Sheriff), I was assigned the mountains, over nearly 20 years in the

canyons. I investigated several hundred serious vehicle accidents with about forty D.O.A.s (Dead on Arrival) also during that time, and about 300 rescues.

In the early 1960s and 1970s I covered Salt Lake County, as well as Morgan, Summit, Wasatch & Tooele counties. (They did not have 4 x 4's, and we would get calls for our equipment.)

I started rock climbing in 1952 and was very good at it. Many times I went on a rescue and would not see my home for days. I was sent on a plane crash west of Camp Williams and was there for 3 days--charter plane-- 2 pilots and 13 doctors dead.

- My most painful rescue was two young boys who drowned in a pond, 6500 South 2600 East. Both were D.O.A. and were in my scout group. In the twenty years, possibly forty people dead and had to be brought off mountains, or out of water.

On one rescue in Big Cottonwood, we flew in with Bob Hoskins (Hoskins Helo Service) coming in we hit trees and had to crash land (no injuries).

## **SHERIFF CALLS AND INCIDENTS**

We had a cave rescue in Neff's Cave. We were 2 ½ days out, Neff's cave is 1,154 vertical feet. A male got stranded near the bottom and had to be hoisted to the surface by ropes. He survived.

In 1968 I was assigned to clean out all mines and shafts along the Wasatch mountains from Utah County to Davis County. There are about 40 miles of tunnels, and about half are caved in. I, along with 62<sup>nd</sup> Ordinance from Fort Douglas, spent 2 ½ weeks going through all known tunnels and shafts.

Each day I would come home with 50 to 100 pounds of old dynamite and caps (using my own pickup). On the last day we ended up with 1,350 pounds of dynamite. We decided to set it off above Alta in a mile square open area. We prepared a 10-pound charge of TNT and piled all the old dynamite and caps in the open area.

We had lookouts surrounding the area. We lit the fuse and took off up a lookout one-quarter mile above to observe. When it went off, it blew our hats off and put

ringing in our ears. It blew a hole 12-foot deep by 20 foot square. We had 125 complaints come in to the Sheriff's Dept. Some said it was an earth quake.

### **INCIDENTS FROM SHERIFF'S CALLS**

I had a reported plane crash out in the flats near Great Salt Lake. We could only get to within a half mile. We had to track in mud and water. When we arrived at the scene, we discovered the lone pilot was the husband of "Miss Julie" of KSL fame. It took six of us to remove him and track back to our truck. He weighed 260 pounds.

I was called on a plane crash to Parley's Canyon. It took 3 hours to hike to the plane. Two pilots with serious injuries had to be packed to I-80. It took most of the night. The plane was loaded with ammunition. It took the next three days assisting army and bring out. The plane is still on ridge.

### **CHURCH SERVICE**

During my church service, I was involved in scouting for 20 years. I found an overlook up Mt. Olympus west face and would take our scouts 2 miles up the west face to the camp area. I would take a police scanner so we could follow calls around valley below. The kids loved those camps. We followed a police chase from Murray through Midvale, West Jordan, Bingham, Herriman, and Riverton and into Draper. Over the scouting time we advanced about 20 eagles and many other awards.

After my scout days, I was in the High Priest Group leadership. I then was called to 2<sup>nd</sup> counselor to Bishop Doug Calder. I then accepted the 1<sup>st</sup> counselor call to Bishop Heber Maughn. My time lasted 3 years, wherein I moved to my present location at 3414 East 7000 South, Cottonwood Heights, Utah. My move was my chance to buy my mother-in-law's house and property. We kept her in her house until she passed away in 1992. I hope I stay here the rest of my days. My next movers will be Jenkins & Soffe.

The night I was born, we were in Garland, Utah on a visit. Weather got bad, and we could not get back to Salt Lake. My mom got so excited she went into labor, and my life started there. It was a blizzard. Winds and 18 inches of snow. Could not get to hospital, and I arrived at a residence. We were there for a couple of days, and then returned to Salt Lake.

About the time I joined the Sheriff's Dept., I was working as a construction worker. My description was Special Metal Contracting. I gained a good name for myself and did work on Larry H. Miller's house. I also did work for John Stockton, President Gordon B. Hinckley, Jeff Hornacek, Karl Malone, Mark Eaton, and Jon Huntsman.

- #1- Larry H. Miller (Mrs. Miller nicest person)
- #2- John Stockton (a nice, nice, family)
- #3- Jeff Hornacek (another nice family)
- #4- President Hinckley (wonderful man)
- #5- Jon Huntsman (nice fellow but much too busy)

- I kept my license and it is still current today with the state.

### LIFE SPAN

1. 25 years as a full-time officer
2. 53 years doing snow plow work for wonderful friends and neighbors
3. 50 years owning and working a business in the metal industry
4. High school basketball referee for 20 years
5. Tour guide Yellowstone Park for Yellowstone Tour and Travel
6. Life-long member L.D.S. Church
7. Two terms Planning & Zoning County
8. 30 years Search & Rescue, Salt Lake County

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Verl W. Buxton was born on 7 February 1936 in Garland, Utah, USA. His father is Clyde Vernal Buxton, who was born in Garland, Utah. His mother is Vivian Colebrook Buxton, and she was born in Union, Utah. Her childhood home was on 7300 South 1300 East. His mom called him "Willy" and "Buck". Verl has two brothers and one sister.

He attended church at the old Butler Ward on 2700 East Ft. Union. His father is the only person to be bishop of three different wards.

He has great memories of his mother's cooking, and especially her homemade bread. Their family went to Yellowstone Park and Big Cottonwood Canyon for fun.

Verl attended Butler School, Union Jr. High, Jordan High School, and graduated from Jordan High School in 1954. His favorite place to "hang out" with friends

was Smith's Inn @ 6200 South 2800 East. He's known Dick Boyce most of his life. His least favorite chore as a child was digging a new outhouse hole

He participated in softball, basket ball, and football. The old Butler Ward Junior Softball team won the All-Church Championship in 1950. He said, "We were just a bunch of farm boys who went to school together and played together."

The most beautiful place for him is Yellowstone Park from 1943 to present. He has been there at least 200 times. When he was young, he wanted to be a park worker and a fireman.

At eighteen, he started to date, and his first date was going to a church dance. He met his wife to be, Mary Lee Wilkinson, when they were in Butler Elementary School. His proposal to her took place in Big Cottonwood Canyon where they were taking a hike.

Their wedding ceremony was held at the Old Mill on August 6, 1957. They, of course, went to Yellowstone Park on their honeymoon and stayed in Room 110 at the Canyon Village. He states that his wife is as beautiful today as she was then. They have three boys and 1 daughter. The birth of a child has been his most memorable event in his life. They lost one boy to S.I.D. (Sudden Infant Death syndrome).

Verl has worked as a furnace installer, plant operator, police officer, high school referee, and park guide (in Yellowstone, of course).

His father and also his sons have ridden with him in his police cruiser hundreds of times. They saw a lot of people injured and also death. They also saw a lot of great things.

Dogs have been his pets. His favorite was his shepherd dog, "Smokey". Smokey was with Verl on all rescues for eight years. He could rock climb, swim for hours, kept them warm at night, and even ice climb. Smokey found many people and bodies buried in snow, or people that were lost, or dead.

Verl loves history books. He went to Southern Utah – North West traffic at the University of Utah. He studied law and served in the military at the National Guard, with honorable discharge after eight years.

His hardest choice to make in life was retiring as County Sheriff.