

February Historical Question:

What incident prompted the installation of the first stop signs at the intersection of 2300 East and 7000 South (Fort Union Boulevard)?

February Historical Answer:

In the early 1930's, the area known as Butler was very rural and sparsely populated, and the majority of the residents lived on top of the hill. This made the two main routes for visiting the neighboring communities of Union, Midvale, Murray, Holladay, and Salt Lake City via either Butler Hill (70th South, now Fort Union Boulevard) and Brown's/Colebrook's Hill (2300 East). Traffic was very sparse and views at the intersections were unobstructed. The need for any type of traffic control appeared to be unnecessary.

On the morning of October 25, 1932, two girls from Danish Town (now the Danish Road area), Ila Green and her sister Verda Green Reed, who had married a month earlier, rode into Salt Lake City with Dr. J. B. Wallace of Granite to spend the day with their sister Zelma. On the return trip that evening, while traveling south on 23rd East and approaching the intersection of 70th South, they saw a truck coming down Butler Hill. Unfortunately, each thought they could beat the other through the intersection. According to the investigating officer both vehicles were traveling at a high rate of speed when the truck hit the car broadside.

Mrs. Reed was thrown from the car and the car came to rest on top of her. She died of her injuries later that evening at the hospital. Her sister, who had been sitting in the front seat, was thrown into the back seat and suffered a broken arm and internal injuries. Dr. Wallace was also injured. The truck driver was not injured.

There were no witnesses to the accident, but Alonzo Green who lived on 23rd East close to the intersection heard the crash and rushed to the scene to find two of his nieces were involved. He drove to his brother Reuben's house in Danish Town to tell him about the accident and take him to the hospital. This was not only a tragedy for the Green family, but for the whole community.

About two years earlier another fatal accident had occurred at the same intersection and the burned out remains of that vehicle had lain for months in Parley Blair's field (Now Hillside Plaza). The second fatality prompted the installation of the stop signs for the north and south bound traffic on 23rd East at 70th South.