

Mayor Evan L. Colledge-37th Mayor of Lehi 1974-77

By Richard Van Wagoner

Richard M. Nixon and Vice President Spiro Agnew were inaugurated for second terms on January 20, 1973. Nine months later Agnew resigned after pleading no contest to a charge of income tax invasion. The move foreshadowed President Nixon's own fall shortly thereafter as a result of his involvement in the Watergate scandal. The disgraced republican president, facing almost certain impeachment and removal from office, announced his resignation on August 8, 1974.

Against this political background Republicans were not popular in the 1970s. This was so even in Lehi elections. During October 1973 nominating conventions local Republicans named local dentist Kent B. Davis as their mayoralty candidate along with city council hopefuls Phebe Innes and Dee Ray Russon.

The Democrat ticket was headed by mayoralty candidate Evan L Colledge, Jr., holdover council member JoAnn Brown and Melvin Kirkham.

The Republicans, campaigned on the slogan "Busy People Get the Job Done!" They promised to improve the position of existing business and encourage new industry, expand sewer facilities, develop a master plan, and reduce the mill levy.

The Democrat's campaign slogan assured that the candidates embodied Loyalty Energetic Honest Integrity. The three candidates, who stressed their love for Lehi, promised an improved sewer system. The trio also advocated the continuation and expansion of the youth recreation programs, pledged their efforts to secure the site of the old State Road property for the development of a city parksheds, and promised a new swimming pool.

Lehi voters, like the American populace, had had their fill of Republicans, at least for the time being. All three of the local Democratic candidates were successful in their bid for public office.

Mayor-elect Evan Leroy Colledge, Jr., was born in Lehi on December 4, 1921, to Evan LeRoy Colledge and Lenore Jones. In 1924, the family moved to Magna where his father found work at the Utah Copper Company's Magna Mill. The family later moved to Salt Lake City where Evan graduated from West High School.

The Colledges moved to Lehi in 1941. Young Evan, who had been working at the mine in Bingham Canyon since 1939, became acquainted with Lehi girl Ruth Turner. They were married on March 18, 1942. That summer, during the heat of World War II, Evan received notice that he had been drafted into the U.S. Army. After receiving training in Ft. Claiborne, Louisiana, he whipped out from San Francisco on December 7, 1942 headed for the Persian Gulf. To avoid the heavy hand of military censors he wrote Ruth, "I RAN out of cigarettes." His wife quickly realized that her non-smoking husband was en route to Iran.

Evan had worked on railroads prior to his military experience. In Iran he spent the next 2 1/2 years of his life serving in the 730th Railroad Operating Battalion which supervised all railroad activities between Tehran and Qum, the line which supplied the Russians with gas, oil, and other war equipment.

His specific assignment, while stationed at Camp Atterbury, was with the round house and car shops where locomotive engines and rolling stock were serviced and repaired. Aside from activities as a supply clerk, the future Lehi mayor became the company bugler (he still likes to get up early), and also gained a well-deserved reputation as a tough little boxer.

Following his November 4, 1945 discharge, Evan returned to Lehi. After working at various jobs, he found employment at the new U.S. Steel works at Geneva. He completed a pattern-making apprenticeship at Utah Technical College in 1951 and followed this trade until his 1980 retirement from the steel plant.

In 1965, Evan unsuccessfully ran for a seat on the Lehi City Council along with fellow Democrats Art Sabey and mayoralty candidate B.J. Lott. Undaunted, Colledge became convinced by friends to run for the mayor's seat in 1973.

Despite the demands of the mayorship, which was and is basically a full-time job, Mayor Colledge maintained his employment with U.S. Steel. His supervisors at the plant were extremely cooperative allowing him to work his forty-hour work week at his convenience. This allowed him the flexibility to attend the many day meetings required of elected city officials.

During Mayor Colledge's term many changes occurred in Lehi. A crowd of more than 2,500 people, the largest religious gathering in the history of Lehi, assembled in the Stake Center on May 5, 1974 as the Lehi Stake was divided into two units. Dean T. Worlton was sustained as president of the Lehi Utah Stake and F. Russell Hakes as president of the Lehi Utah North Stake. Groundbreaking ceremonies for the new North Stake building at Ninth North and Twelfth East were held on September 21, 1974.

Events occurring in 1975 included the January opening of a new convenience store, Circle K, at Fourth East and Main, the opening of Mr. Eggs Old Fashioned Breakfast House in the Wattie's Cafe Building (February), a pre-dawn fire which destroyed the Powell Laundry and Car Wash at 350 East State Street Road in April, and the July 1 burglary of the Hutchings Museum. This resulted in the loss of many precious and semi-precious gems, gold and silver items, and historic guns, including one of Butch Cassidy's rifles.

One of Lehi's most historic structures, the Bennett/Bradshaw Building at 106 West Main, was demolished in July 1975. Constructed in 1900, the two-story brick building had housed a host of saloons, clothing stores, grocery stores, restaurants, and variety stores. The place attained legendary status after Lehi policeman Charles Trane accidentally shot and killed Roy Johnston in a struggle in the building's doorway in 1908.

America's bicentennial celebration in 1976 was ushered in with a multitude

of patriotic events across the land. A statehood Day program and dance initiated the celebration in Lehi on January 6. And during March, “The Title is Liberty”, a star-spangled musical entertained the community. Bandwagon Park, with a pavilion to preserve Lehi’s historic Silver Bandwagon, was dedicated on July 24. A prominent attraction in local celebrations since 1891, the aged vehicle was retired in 1975. Wishing to preserve and permanently display the memory of the past, Lehi’s Bicentennial Committee under the direction of Betty Fowler obtained a \$14,000 grant from the Utah State Bicentennial Commission. The site of the new park, at Eight North between Second and Third West, had been purchased from the state Highway Commission by Mayor Colledge’s administration in 1975.

In addition to Bandwagon Park, the community received another permanent gift in the form of a large five-by-eight-foot mosaic which was created by students and faculty of the Lehi Elementary School Entitled “200 Years of Freedom,” this patriotic artwork was permanently hung in the school foyer.

In addition to America’s 200th birthday celebration in 1976, other important events occurred in Lehi in this historic year. During a January 20 city council meeting, Gill Van Wagoner was appointed chairman of the Lehi swimming pool committee by Mayor Colledge.

In March, the Lehi High School basketball team won the school’s first state championship in fifty-four years by defeating Morgan 70-54. In April Kevin and Carolyn Kleinman purchased the LaFeria Reception Center from the Greenwoods and changed the name to the Colonial House. And On June 18, after some controversy, the Utah State Department of Financial Institutions granted a charter for the Wasatch Bank of Lehi to begin operations in that city.

“You can’t go on forever,” announced Tom Powers as he and his wife Ora retired in January 1977 after more than fifty years of business in Lehi. Powers Shoe Store which had been located at 68 West Main since 1927, was sold to Marian ream who remade the place into Ream’s Wrangler Shop. She also purchased the old E.N. Webb jewelry Store next door at 72 West Man and merged it with the remodeled Wrangler Shop.

During the 1977, the city council raised Lehi's Sewer fee from \$3.00 per month to \$5.50, the water rate from \$3.00 per month to \$4.00 per month and the garbage rate from \$2.25 per month to \$3.25 per month. In June attorneys Robert Gunn and Kenneth Rushton purchased the Harvard Hinton law office at 46 West Main and restored that landmark. Though best known by Lehi residents as the Lehi Telephone Office, the building had been built for a butchershop by Joseph E. Dorton in 1901. Dr. Donald Worlton also built a new dentist office at 588 East Main in July 1977.

Some particularly welcome news during 1977 was the July 13 announcement by the timpanogos Special Service District that a regional sewer treatment plant would be built on 93 acres south of American Fork. Initially the agency had planned to build a large lagoon-type sewer treatment facility near Saratoga Resort, but public outcry resulted in modification of the plans. An Environmental Protection Agency grant of \$440,000 covered 75 percent of the costs of the new plant which is jointly owned and operated by Lehi, Alpine, American Fork, and Pleasant Grove.

Other accomplishment of the Colledge administration included construction of a frontage road paralleling I-15 from First to Third West, the rebuilding of two and one-half miles of city streets, resurfacing twelve miles of city streets, completion of sixty blocks of curb and gutter and thirty blocks of sidewalks, a \$40,000 upgrading of Lehi City's power sub-station, replacement of old series street lights with mercury vapor lights, lighting and fencing two baseball diamonds at Veterans' Park, reconditioning the Sixth East settling tank, bring a new well at 1200 East and 900 North on line, construction of new restrooms at both Vets and Wines Park, and extension of the sewer collection system to serve the northwest quadrant of town.

Mayor Colledge was not successful in his bid for re-election in the fall of 1977. Following his retirement from politics he continued his work at Geneva, accepted a position on the Hutchings Museum Board of Directors, later serving as chairman of the board, and served as a high councilman in the Lehi North Stake. Following a heart attack in 1980, the former mayor retired from the steel plant, his church work and his position with the museum. He also gave up his treasured

hobby of woodworking.

Once the former mayor recovered his health, he was again able to resume most of his activities. He and his sons Neal and Scott have done a considerable amount of fine woodworking about the city. They were the master craftsmen of the beautiful work done in the Lehi Public Library.

From 1985-1990 Evan served as a commissioner for the Utah County Housing Authority retiring to devote his full energies to caring for his ailing wife. Service to others has been his life-long aphorism in family, church, and civic activities. Wise, kind, and genuine, Evan Colledge is a superb example of how a man ought to be.