

The C♦DPHS is an association of individuals dedicated to the preservation of the history of our community. To the preservation of the region's oral history, literary history, social history, graphic and pictorial history, and our history as represented by the region's artifacts and structures. To the preservation of this history for future generations. To the art of making this common heritage accessible to the public. And to the act of collaborating with other individuals and organizations sharing similar goals.

The Clayton ♦ Deer Park Historical Society's

Letters, Email, Bouquets & Brickbats

— or —

***Bits of Chatter, Trivia, and Notices
— all strung together.***

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Experiments in Publishing.

— Wally Lee Parker —

This newsletter — much like our society's prior magazine, the *Mortarboard*, — is an experimental publication. Although the *Mortarboard* is no longer being published, it leaves behind an impressive amount of data captured in an unbroken string of 169 monthly issues beginning in May of 2008, then running through May of 2022 — a total of fourteen years and one month. From the first it was intended that all past issues would remain in print by gathering them into a series of archival booklets. Those booklets, now 50 in total, are bedded under the title *Collected Newsletters of the Clayton ♦ Deer Park Historical Society*, and available as print-on-demand hardcopies.

Just how impressive this archive is will become apparent as Damon Smathers, the society's current webmaster, continues to make progress in creating a comprehensive index of all past issues. This is possible due to the Northeast Washington Genealogical Society extracting surnames from past issues of our magazine, then indexing them in a searchable database. The genealogical society's president, Susan Dechant, sent this database to Damon in a form that allows him to rework and expand it — Damon's intention being to add place-names, company names, specific events, and the like to make our version of the database a truly comprehensive research tool. This brings us very close to the *Mortarboard*'s purpose as outlined in our society's mission statement — that seen beside the masthead of most past issues of the *Mortarboard* — and reproduced on this newsletter's masthead, as seen above. Such an index will ensure that both

the print and electronic versions of the *Mortarboard*'s past issues will remain a significant resource for those interested in local history.

We're hoping to eventually ensure that certain of the region's historical groups have both print and electronic versions of the *Mortarboard* in their archives, thereby increasing the survivability of our group's past efforts.

Regarding this new experimental publication, the first thing that should be evident when seeing such in print is its larger size — the prior *Mortarboards* being digest size. This newsletter is designed to be inked on both sides of standard 8½x11 inch typewriter paper. To allow the pages to be bound into booklets, you'll notice the extra wide margin to the left on odd numbered pages, then to the right on even numbered pages. That extra wide margin — once stapled, spiralbound, or whatever — will become the central gutter in any print version.

Hopefully these layout modifications will lessen the impact deadlines have on publishing. With the old *Mortarboard*'s format of legal-size paper — 8½x14 inch paper folded in half, each single sheet making four pages — the act of adding just one more sheet of paper to continue that last thought or two required we leave an extensive area of blank space beyond the last line of type. If such a white expanse appeared in the *Mortarboard*, filling it with freshly found or invented copy, while racing against the monthly deadline, often required sleepless nights spent pounding one's head against an unyielding keyboard. This proposed single-page double-sided newsletter will hopefully reduce such periods of

insomnolent panic to a more manageable level of fraught by reducing what remains to be filled with new copy to less than a single page.

And it's hoped that eliminating the *Mortarboard's* monthly format will end that ever-present deadline pressure. Henceforth, issues will be released whenever they're judged to be editorially complete.

Hopefully, when a sufficient number of issues have been completed, this layout will permit the binding of a rather nice-looking booklet under the tentative title *Continuing Collected Newsletters of the Clayton ♦ Deer Park Historical Society* — volume whatever.

Doubtless there are going to be problems

with — and possibly extensive editorial revisions of — the above intentions. What we can say is that the society's publishing endeavors in both print and online media have to date served the exact functions they were originally intended to serve — that of suggesting to the public that this community has a rich history. And that both those who were once residents, along with those currently living here now, are all owners-in-common of this ever-growing history. This historical society's job is to make this ongoing story of lives once lived and the happenstances arising therefrom accessible to everyone. It's a massive job, and one we can't do alone.

D. C. Corbin Stocks Loon Lake with Black Bass. The Spokane Falls Review — August 13th, 1890.

— Wally Lee Parker —

Since inadvertently introducing invasive nonnative species is frequently cited as a severe environmental problem, I'm curious how people will react to this vintage newspaper article assuring that nothing will go wrong with deliberately doing so — but if it does, it's not a big deal.

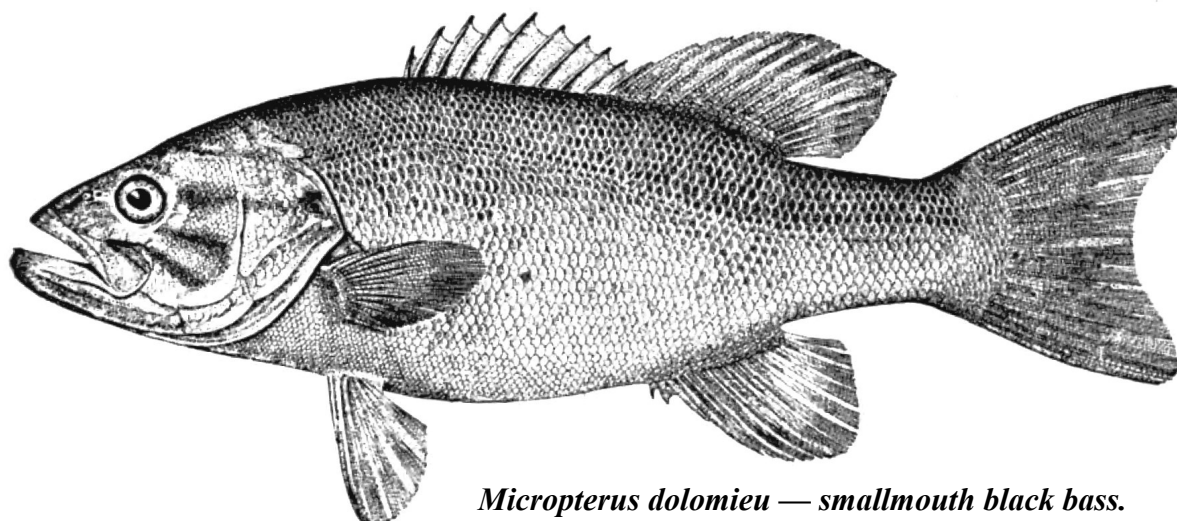
Under the headline "*Those Black Bass*," this page-3 article states, "*Today or tomorrow two United States fish commissioners will arrive in the city with a carload of black bass fry, destined for Loon Lake, which beautiful body of water Mr. D. C. Corbin had decided to stock with the famous eastern game fish.*"

"*The matter of introducing black bass into the waters of Washington and Idaho has*

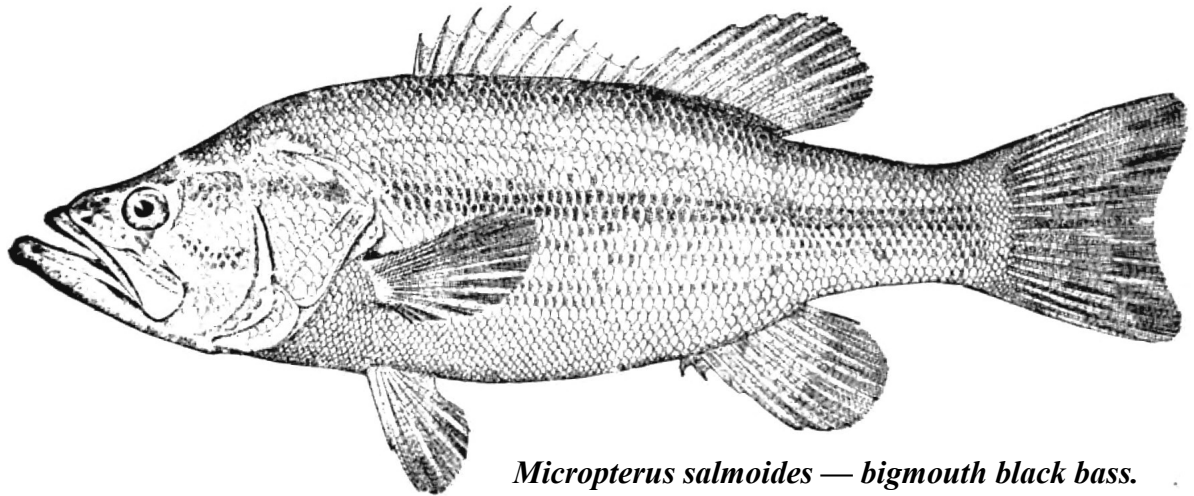
been a subject for much adverse criticism on the part of the trout fishermen, but as it is now definitely known that Loon Lake has no outlet, except at very high water, and as a fence is to be put in the lake at that point to prevent all chance of the fish escaping, the matter can be looked at only in one light.

"*Black bass will be a great acquisition to the game fish of the country. They are strong, weighty, a good table fish, and are hard fighters; moreover, they grow rapidly and attain good size, often running as high as ten pounds.*

"*There have been but few trout ever caught in the lake, and they were of the variety known in ordinary language as bull trout.*



Micropterus dolomieu — smallmouth black bass.



Micropterus salmoides — bigmouth black bass.

"Should the bass ever break through the fence and escape into the Colville River, even then the damage to the trout would be very slight, for the Colville is a muddy stream and affords very poor trouting.

"Black bass are very gamy. They will rise at times as freely as the trout to a well-placed artificial fly, and can at any time be caught with minnows, commonly known as live bait. When struck the tactics of the bass are much different from the trout. He goes to the bottom and sulks for several minutes before commencing his fight, and rarely breaks water. His rush resembles the trout, and he is much easier hooked.

"Should the worst fears of the trout men

be realized, and the bass get into all the streams and lakes, it will take fifty years for him to complete the inevitable defeat of the trout, thanks to the thousands of lakes and streams where the king of game fish can take refuge.

"The black bass, as far superior to all his family as he undeniably is, is but a sorry second to the trout. It is the difference between the pedigree draft horse and the clean-limbed, mettlesome thoroughbred."

This article drew to mind a quote from the first Jurassic Park movie. When assured that the dinosaurs couldn't reproduce because they were all female, Jeff Goldblum's character cautioned, *"Life finds a way,"*

In Search of Loon Lake's "Witch" — Daniel Chase Corbin's Naphtha Powered Launch.

— Wally Lee Parker —

Daniel Chase Corbin, general manager and president of the Spokane Falls & Northern Railway during its construction stage, began exerting a significant influence on the general development of the northeastern segment of the Washington Territory — soon to be the State of Washington — shortly after his 1889 arrival in the area. One spot of particular interest to Mr. Corbin was Loon Lake, a picturesque and — at least during the pioneer era — remarkably pure body of water some 28 miles north by northwest of downtown Spokane Falls.

On March 30th of 1889, the *Spokane Falls Review* noted that the task of surveying the Spokane Falls and Northern's route from

Spokane to Colville was well underway. This included delineating that the tracks would cross from east to west over the Little Spokane River, then north *"along Dragon Creek (Draoon Creek) and from Loon Lake down Sheep Creek and two miles up the Colville Valley."* The May 16th addition of the *Review* added *"The graders on the Spokane (Falls) & Northern have reached the (Colville) valley at a point nearly fifty miles out from Spokane Falls."*

Regarding the laying of the tracks as far as Loon Lake, on August 19th, 1889, the *Tacoma News Tribune* reported that *"President Corbin, of the Spokane Falls & Northern, announces that a passenger coach will be put on in a day or two*

to run through to Loon Lake, and that the time will be changed so that the train will leave in the morning instead of in the evening, as at present.”

But it wasn't just building a railroad that interested D. C. Corbin. After his arrival, the gentleman set to gathering control of large tracts of land throughout the region, including along the shores of the above noted Loon Lake. An article appearing in the July 23rd, 1890 edition of the *Spokane Falls Review* clarified Mr. Corbin's designs toward his holdings at Loon Lake when it stated he “intends to make the lake one of Spokane's resorts.” And an article in the *Review's* August 19th edition reveals something of what that intention entailed.

The article states, “The lake, which is beautifully situated, is about five miles long and one mile wide at the widest part. It is as clear as crystal, and the sun shining across the expanse of breeze-stirred, sparkling water made a golden pathway from one shore to the other.

“The hills slope gradually back from the eastern and southern shores, and are covered sparsely with pine trees, making a picturesque and pleasing scene, while across the lake the land lies level and the tall trees scattered here and there give a grateful shade, while further back they merge into an unbroken forest.

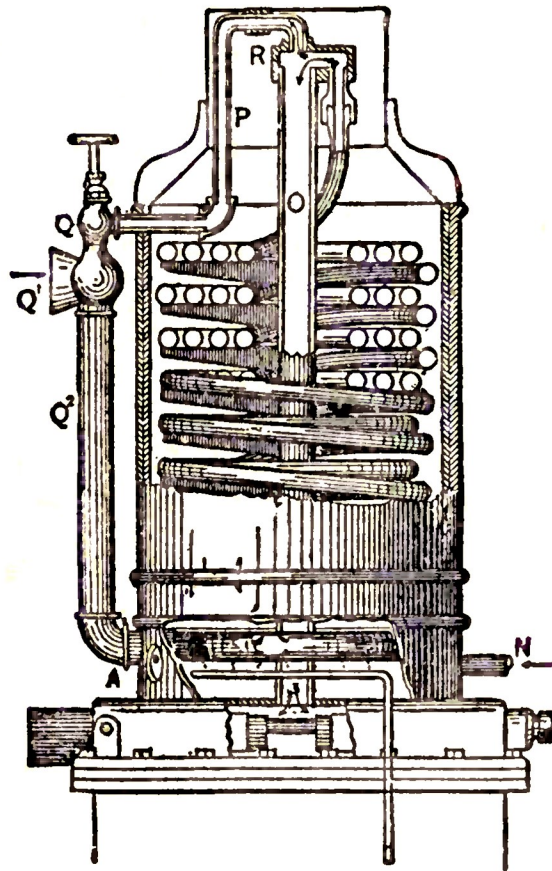
“The Spokane & Northern Railway Company has built a large pavilion near the lake, in one end of which is a commodious floor for dancing, and the other end is provided with tables and seats.

“A number of swings have been put up on the ground ... while those (guests) who could row availed themselves of the opportunity afforded by the boats, a number of which are kept on the lake.”

The September 6th, 1890 edition of the *Review* suggested, “Loon Lake, which one year ago was comparatively unknown, is now one of the noted health and pleasure resorts of this section of county. Excursions (by rail) to this beautiful and favored spot are of almost daily occurrence.”

Various articles over the next several years indicated that Loon Lake — within comfortable reach due to the railway passing snugly along the lake's eastern shore — had quickly become a summer vacation nexus for Spokane's middle and moneyed classes, as well as a popular daytrip destination for working people. This popularity was boosted by the fact that the rail company was using regional newspapers to actively promote the resort and select pieces of the surrounding real-estate.

Then the January 31st 1892 edition of the



Boiler for Naphtha Engine.

**Illustration from “Modern Mechanism:
Exhibiting the Latest Progress in Machines,
Motors, and the Transmission of Power.”**

Edited by Park Benjamin Jr.

— Published 1892.

Seattle Post-Intelligencer printed a short article regarding Corbin's plans to extend the Spokane Falls & Northern's tracks into the “Okanogan mining country.” As an afterthought, that article mentioned that Mr. Corbin had “purchased a naphtha launch for use on one of the lakes along his road.”

Light motorized watercraft of the era generally used two types of external combustion engines. One was the classic steam engine — using water heated to a pressurized vapor with said vapor directed to act against a piston, after which the steam was released into the atmosphere. The second was the naphtha engine — a cutaway diagram of a typical boiler shown above. The working vapor in this case was created by heating a light petroleum distillate called naphtha to a pressurized vapor, then, in a manner similar to a steam engine, using the resultant vapor to push a piston. In the case of

the naphtha engine, after use the vapor was recondensed to a fluid by exposing the pipe carrying the vapor to the water outside the boat's hull. After condensing, the fluid was returned to the boat's fuel tank. Obviously accidentally exposing a petroleum distillate vapor to an open flame or exceptionally hot surface through — for example — a leak in the vapor's piping would result in what would best be described as an explosion. To find a more comprehensive explanation of the mechanics involved, see the further reading box below.

Late in May, 1892, ads under the heading “*Loon Lake Excursions*” began appearing in the *Review*. Regarding some of the diversions available at the lake, the ad suggested, “*Fine shades and rambles in the woods, large pavilion, naphtha launch and sailboats — each capable of accommodating parties of twelve to sixteen — and light, easy-rowing rowboats.*”

An article in the July 14th edition of that year's *Spokane Weekly Review* gave the sailboat's name as “*Jennie*,” and the naphtha launch's name as “*Witch*.”

An August 13th 1894 ad in the *Spokane Chronicle* described that year's Sunday excursions to Loon Lake thusly. “*The Spokane Falls & Northern Railway will run an excursion train to Loon Lake every Sunday, leaving Spokane at 8:30 a.m. Returning will leave the lake at 5 p.m. Excellent fishing and boating and the finest bathing in the country. Separate bath houses for ladies and gentlemen, with the best woolen bathing suits to hire.*”

“*Sail and rowboats, also a naphtha launch, for hire at low rates. Refreshments served at reasonable prices.*”

“*Fare round trip, \$1.00; children half fare. Weekday excursions on regular trains; fare round trip, \$1.50; children half fare.*”

This additional comment followed the above. “*Yesterday another large crowd of people enjoyed a Sunday's outing at Loon Lake, further attesting to the popularity of Mr. Corbin's resort. A large number of campers are located in delightful nooks around the lake and though the camping season is waning, their numbers are still being augmented daily.*”

But the very next year, things began to change. Nineteen Ninety Five's March 31st edition of the *Spokesman-Review* reported,

“*Evan Morgan, well known in this city, has been engaged by the Spokane & Northern Railroad Company to attend and manage the Loon Lake Summer Resort. Mr. Morgan left yesterday for the lake to begin operations for making it one of the most popular resorts adjacent to Spokane.*”

The next day's edition of the *Review* stated, “*Athletic grounds, foot-racing tracks, lawn tennis court and family picnic grounds are being laid out and equipped for the use of all visitors to the lake the coming season.*”

“*Picnic parties and societies can find no better place for an excursion. The black bass season opens too, which gives additional sport to the angler.*”

“*The bathing wharf is being equipped with springboards, diving pedestal, flyaway, etc., and 50 additional small boats are being built. No Liquors or intoxicating drinks will be sold on the grounds, as the management intends making it strictly a family resort. All mail and the Spokesman-Review will be delivered every morning all around the lake.*”

“*The hills around the lake are alive with game and the wild rice sowed along its shores is already holding the ducks and geese like a charm.*”

“*The beautiful naphtha launch ‘Witch’ and sailboat ‘Jessie’ have been overhauled and painted. The dancing pavilion has been improved and decorated.*”

The May 3rd edition of the *Review* clarified that “*Evan Morgan has leased the grounds at Loon Lake from Mr. Corbin.*”

As time moves on, the June 4th 1898 *Spokane Chronicle* reported, “*In addition to the naphtha launch which was so much enjoyed last year, there will be a new steamer on the lake this season to accommodate the increasing number of pleasure seekers.*”

And then on July 22nd 1899, the *Coeur D'Alene Press* stated, “*D. C. Corbin, the Spokane financier and railroad builder, was a passenger up on the Georgie Oakes, Tuesday. He went up the St. Joe to select campgrounds for and outing. He thinks of bringing his naphtha launch from Loon Lake to this place.*”

The above ‘*Georgie Oakes*’ was a sternwheel steamer.

A piece in the *Coeur D'Alene Press*'s July 29th edition reported that “*The naphtha*

Further Reading:

For a more detailed explanation regarding the external combustion naphtha engine, see “In Search of Evan Morgan's Steam Powered Motor Launch, the Legendary Gwen,” part one. Mortarboard #115, November, 2017 — page 1565 — Collected Newsletters, Volume 33.

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launch owned by D. C. Corbin of Spokane, which has been on Loon Lake for the past few seasons, was shipped here by rail and is being looked after by Johnson and Rosen.”

Beyond this point the history of Corbin’s motor-launch Witch becomes obscure. Nothing more about the watercraft or the Coeur D’Alene company taking charge of it upon its removal from Loon Lake has been found. The search for information regarding the Idaho company’s proprietors, Johnson & Rosen, has yet to draw anything up. That doesn’t mean such doesn’t exist, it just means that continuing to rummage through materials for such details would doubtless require time better spent elsewhere.

As for Daniel Corbin’s backstory, quite a bit has been written about him. But the scant bit of research I’ve done — primarily through newspaper articles — would lead me to suspect that he had specific motivations for the managerial energy he directed at Loon Lake.

In the early 1890s, Spokane’s dailies occasionally reported that Corbin was running special late-afternoon and evening trains to Loon Lake — hosting various events for Spokane’s monied elite. When the parties had run their course, often late in the evening, he’d return the guest to the city in passenger coaches dutifully waiting on Loon Lake’s siding. And considering the number of families living in and around Spokane that drew their wealth from the mines, farmlands, and forest of Washington, Idaho, Montana, and British Columbia, there were more than a few such well-heeled people in the area. Whether Corbin’s style of sociability was primarily related to his various business ventures — selling premium lots on Loon Lake being one — as opposed to simply elevating his family’s social standing is debatable, though most likely his actions contained elements of both. After all, Daniel Corbin appears to have been well connected within New York’s money class — as was his wife. And concern for his family’s social standing, no matter where they were

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*Ad from the Coeur D’Alene Press,
September 16th, 1899.*

living, was likely ingrained in him from birth.

We did find some insights — and as usual, a lot more questions — regarding Evan Morgan’s involvement in and around Loon Lake. We have a very sketchy idea of his early history. Mister Morgan, originally from Wales, was also something of an east coast transplant. We found a clipping from a Scranton, Pennsylvania newspaper, the *Tribune*, dated August 16th, 1885, that says “Mr. Evan Morgan, formerly a West Sider, but now a resident of Montana, was visiting relatives here during the week.” In this instance the term “West Sider” refers to that portion of Scranton on the west side of the Lackawanna River.

From there we’ve found traces of him in Montana, Idaho, and eventually Washington. But that research is just beginning.

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