

# Does History Draw Your Interest?

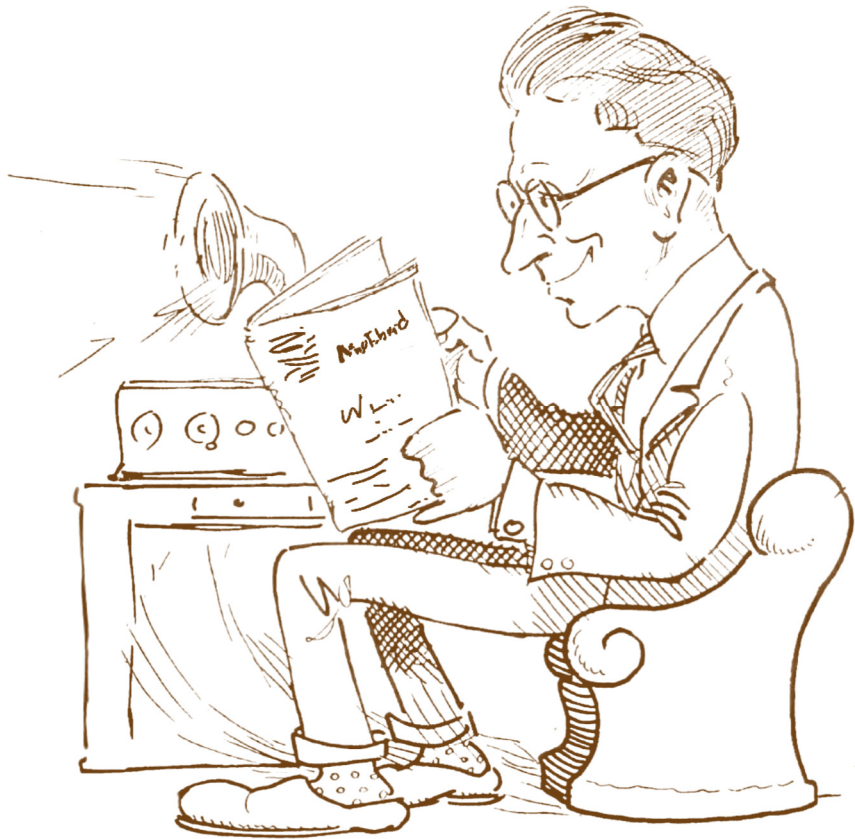


Illustration modified from the February, 1926 issue of Radio Age Magazine.

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THE  
**CLAYTON/DEER PARK  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**Mortarboard**

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## Lewis Cass Gemmill — Early Wild Rose Prairie Settler —

by  
**Peter Coffin**

Lewis Cass Gemmill was born in January 1849 as the second of eight children to the farming family of James E. and Leonora A. Gemmill in Jackson, Jay County, Illinois. In 1875, he moved to the farming town of Corning in the northern part of California's central valley a little over 90 miles north of Sacramento. By 1880 Mr. Gemmill was established as a well to do farmer. The United States Federal Census Non-Population Schedules, he listed him as owning 1,920 acres of farmland worth at an estimated \$17,200, with farm machinery estimated to be worth \$1,500 and livestock valued at \$200. His farming operation produced an estimated annual income of \$525 — about \$11,700 in todays dollars.

According to his family he moved from California to Colfax (or possibly Dayton) in 1881<sup>1</sup> and worked there as a carpenter. He moved to Spokane shortly before the Northern Pacific Railroad was built through there in 1883 and worked in the lumber industry. During his time in Spokane, he filed for a homestead on the eastern edge of Wild Rose Prairie (NE/4 Section 26-Township 28 North-Range

Image #1



**Lewis Cass Gemmill**  
Photo from "A History of Spokane & Spokane County," published in 1900.

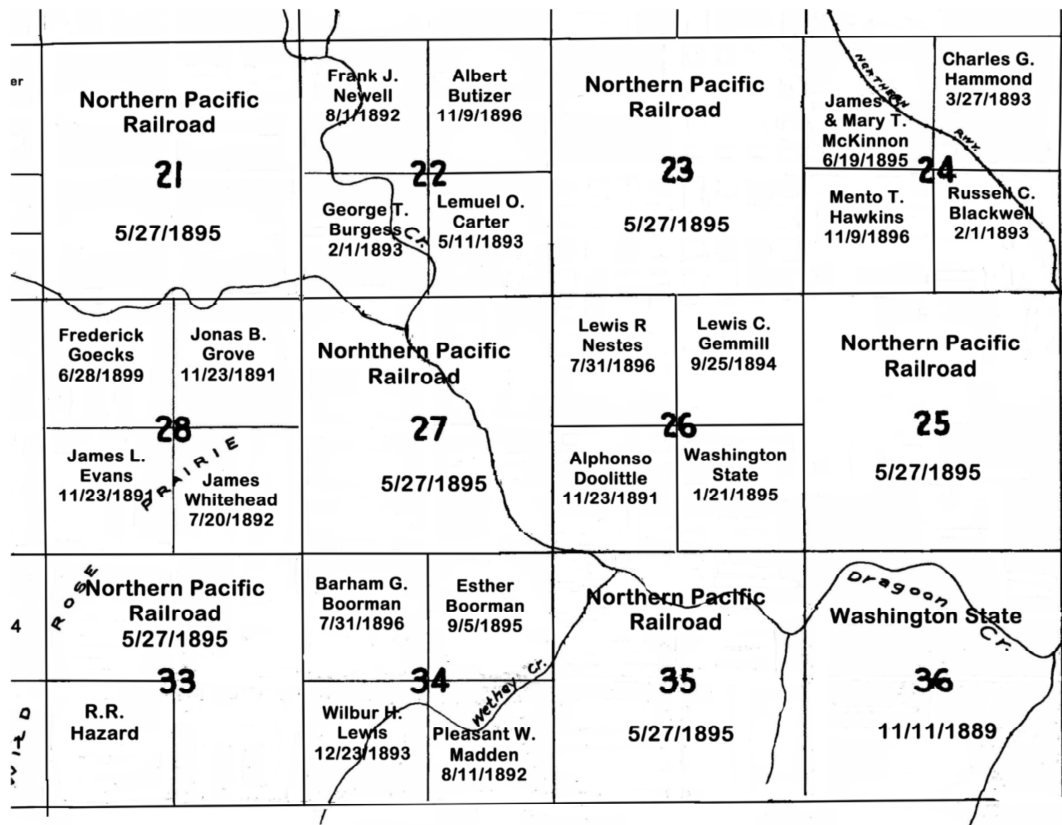


Image #2.

A southeastern portion of Township 28 North-Range 42 East WM Homestead map showing the location of Lewis C. Gemmill's homestead. Dalton Road is located on the western side of the location of his homestead (see image #3).

42 East WM) three miles south-south-east of Deer Park and soon went into the lumber business near Wayside<sup>1</sup>. The serial patent (deed) for his homestead was issued on September 25, 1894.

According to the 1900 Federal Census, Lewis Gemmill married Louisa L. (Kaiser) Wilbur, a widow, in 1887. He was working in the lumber industry at the time. By 1900 the Gemmill family was composed of

two daughters: Hazel S. (November 1889 — October 29, 1967), and Carrie Leonora (January 23, 1895 — January 24, 1990) and two boys: Ward L. (March 4, 1893 — April 9, 1946), and Bryan W. (October 21, 1896 — August 30, 1971). Two more children were born after 1900, Leonard C. (June 17, 1901 — October 2, 1990) and Elizabeth K. (1908 — July 7, 1935). Carrie Leonora married Joseph House and is perhaps better known as the Deer

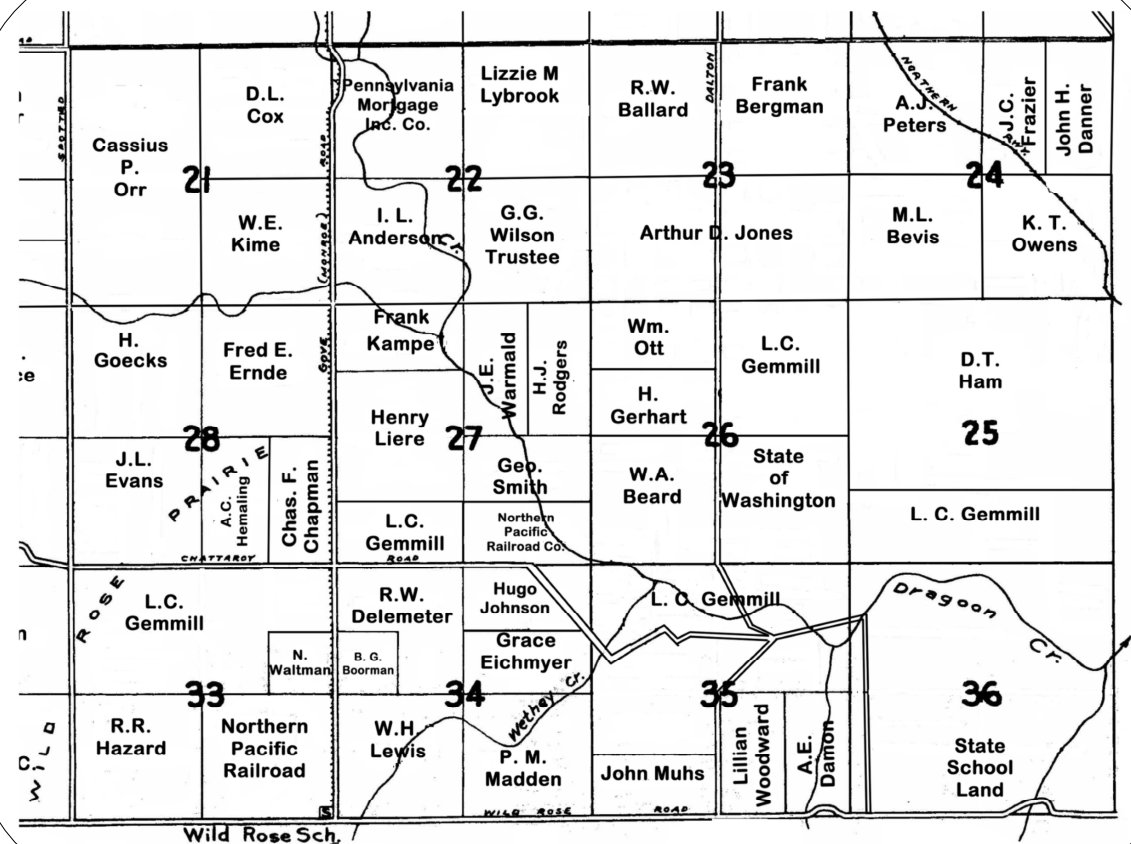


Image #3.

Land ownership in the southeastern portion of Township 28 North-Range 42 East WM from the 1905 Ogle map.

Park Elementary School fourth grade teacher Leonora House. The 1900 Census indicates that Louisa had six children, two of which were deceased.

Lewis Gemmill expanded his land holdings beyond the homestead quarter section and became a lumber mill proprietor. His business plan was to buy state land for \$0.25 per acre, log off the land and let the land revert to the state for non-payment of taxes. The

1905 Ogle Spokane County ownership map (Image #3) shows that he owned over 1080 acres in the southeast part of Township 28 North-Range 42 East WM (S/2 S/2 Section 25, S/2 SW Section 27, NE Section 33 — excepting the SE NE — and the W/2 and N/2 SW of Section 35), in addition to his homestead tract.

In the fall of 1883, Lon Carter and

Text continued on page 1522.



Image #4.

**Images, This and Facing Page.**

**Image 4: Louisa (Kaiser, Wilbur) Gemmill.**  
*(Photograph courtesy of Gerald Gemmill.)*

**Image 5: A corner of the Gemmill saw mill after a flood had washed away the flume carrying water to the water wheel.**

**Image 6: The Gemmill saw mill. The flume in the middle ground brought water from Dragoon Creek, on the right, to run the mill by waterwheel. Mr. Gemmill could be in the carriage in front of the mill building (see inset).**

**Image 7: The Gemmill house on the mill site. According to Gerald Gemmill there was no proper foundation under it.**

**Images #5, #6, and #7 from the Lawrence Zimmerer collection.**



Image #5.

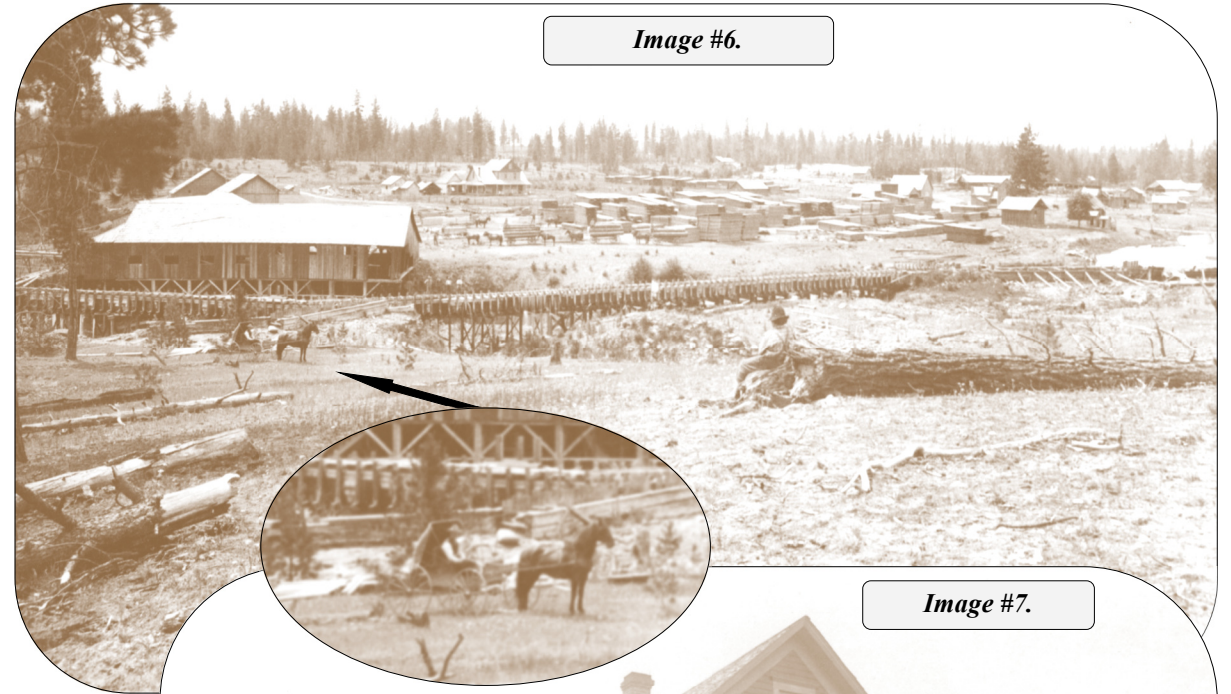
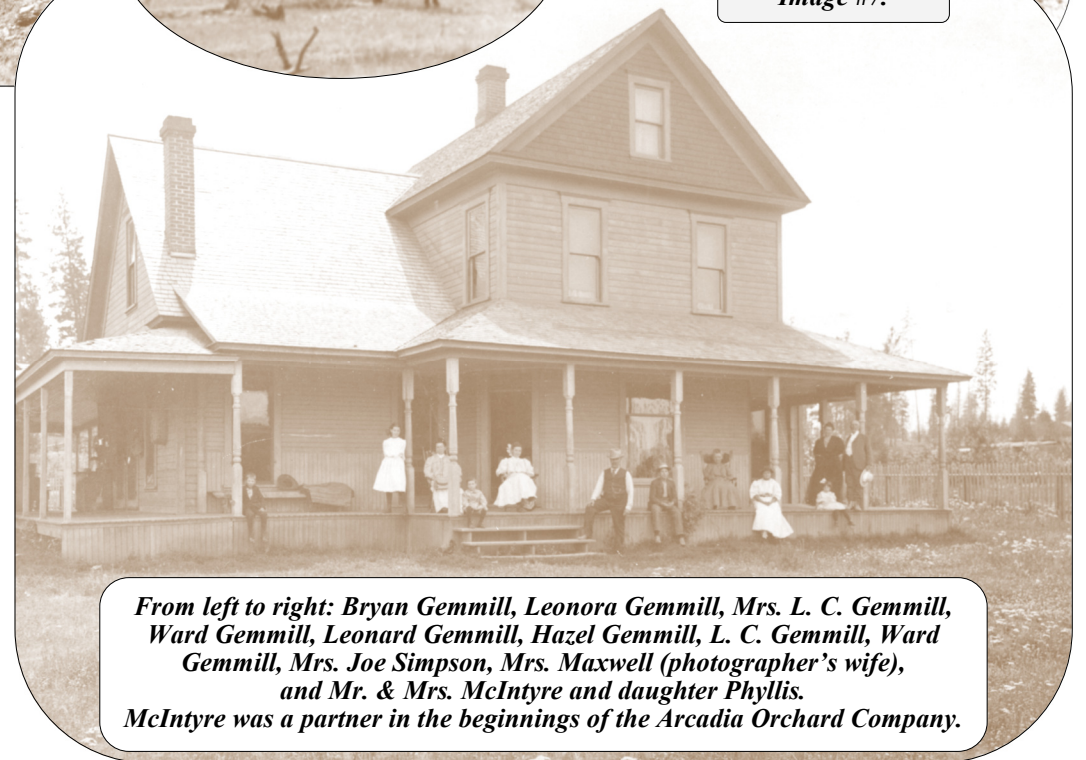


Image #6.



Image #7.



**From left to right: Bryan Gemmill, Leonora Gemmill, Mrs. L. C. Gemmill, Ward Gemmill, Leonard Gemmill, Hazel Gemmill, L. C. Gemmill, Ward Gemmill, Mrs. Joe Simpson, Mrs. Maxwell (photographer's wife), and Mr. & Mrs. McIntyre and daughter Phyllis. McIntyre was a partner in the beginnings of the Arcadia Orchard Company.**

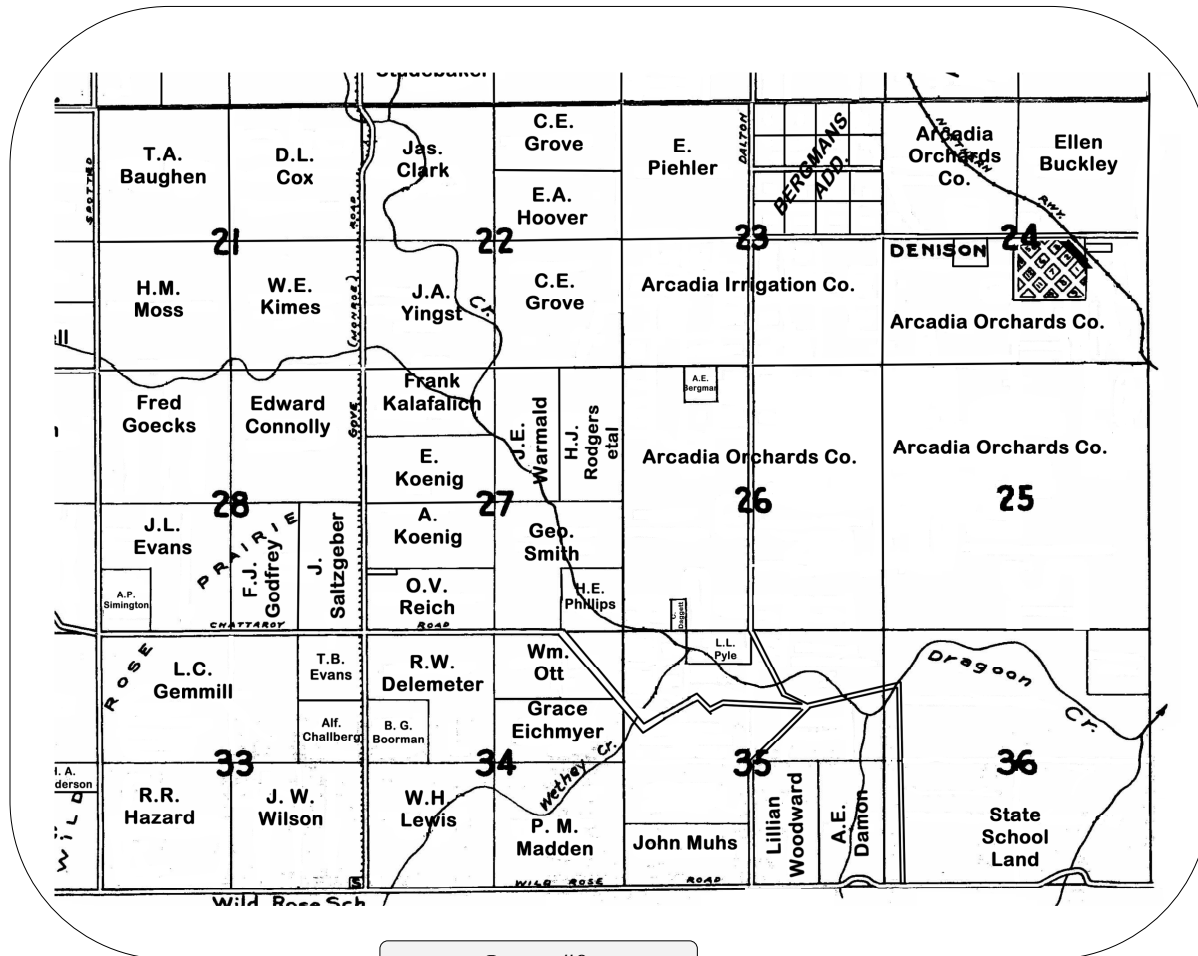


Image #8.

A portion of Township 28 North-Range 42 East WM from the 1912 Ogle map showing the expansion of the Arcadia Orchards land ownership in this township and Mr. Gemmill's land in section 33 just north of the Hazard townsite.

Text continued from page 1519.

George Brown built a sawmill (NW/4 Section 35 Township 28 North-Range 42 East WM) just southeast of the intersection of Dagoon Creek and Dalton Road. Lewis Gemmill and James Titus purchased and operated this sawmill. In the late 1880s Gemmill and Titus

also operated a factory on Wild Rose Prairie manufacturing horse sleighs.

The sawmill was very busy and lumber produced by it was shipped across the United States. Lewis would go on selling trips, and take his daughter Hazel to manage the business. He would buy hardwood lumber in the eastern states and have it shipped west

for sale in the Spokane area.

In addition to being a busy businessman, he served a term as a Spokane County Commissioner from 1896 to 1898<sup>1</sup>. Testifying to his success he purchased the first automobile on Wild Rose Prairie, a one-cylinder Cadillac<sup>2</sup>.

During the financial "Panic" of 1908, he sold his homestead to the Arcadia Orchard Company to help pay off his debts. He had refused an offer from the banks holding his notes to trade his homestead land for a tract of land in Spokane west of the Spokane County courthouse, possibly in the Jenkins Addition.

Adding to much of the information in this manuscript, Gerald Gemmill, Lewis' grandson shared some personal stories about his grandfather. Because Deer Park was voted "dry" before Prohibition many area citizens, such as Mr. Gemmill, would go to Spokane to get a drink as well as gamble. Winning at gambling he would show up at home in a new

suit of clothes. If he had lost he would immediately go to the blacksmith shop and begin building something. One time his son Leonard had traveled to Canada, which was not "dry", and brought back two cases of beer and put them in the Gemmill ice house. Later that summer Leonard came back from a logging job and thought a cold beer would taste good. However, the beer cases in the ice house were empty, his father had drunk it all!

In the period from 1910 to his death he lost money; part in the 1920 "Recession" and part in his considerable investments in the Arcadia Orchards Company. The sawmill was sold and moved to Montana. Mr. Gemmill lived out his years on his land in Section 33 (Township 28 North-Range 42 East WM) north of the Hazard townsite. Lewis Cass Gemmill and Louisa L. Gemmill are interred in the Wild Rose Cemetery.

— end —

NOTES:

1. Edwards, Jonathan, 1900, *An Illustrated History of Spokane County, State of Washington*: (page 364).
2. *Deer Park Union*, March 30, 1922 column titled "Deer Park's First Auto."

## Historical Research: Searching for Old Newspapers in Washington State.

by

Ken Westby

Some newspapers, even dating from the late 1800's, can be researched through resources available at the Washington State Library in Olympia through their online catalog. The following illustration outlines the steps that I followed to locate and view the

"Clayton News-Letter" from 1912-1913.

The following web address, <https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/catalog.aspx>, opens a page that features the Library's various search tools. Among these, look for "Washington Newspapers" under the heading "Additional

Options.” When you select that item, an “Interactive Map” will appear. Click on the map, and a new map will appear, showing each County.

Select “Stevens County” by clicking on it. A list of the State Library’s newspaper resources for Stevens County will appear, many of which are listed as available on microfilm reels. The sixth item in this list is the *Clayton News-Letter*, with a notation that the issues on microfilm are dated July 18, 1912 through August 29, 1913. Click on that newspaper. The “Call Number” and the film’s availability status will be displayed.

While one could travel to the State Library in Olympia to view these microfilms, most public libraries in Washington can borrow the microfilm for you via “Inter-library loan” and provide the means to view the films at your local library. More information may be found at: <https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/libraries/interlibrary.aspx>.

You’ll need to provide the “Call Number” for the microfilm containing your desired newspaper. For the *Clayton News-Letter*, it is “NEWSPAPER 6/38.” Be aware that images of many other newspapers may be stored on the microfilm as well, and you will likely have to search through the microfilm reel to find the images of interest to you.

Your library will need a “microfilm reel viewer,” so check with your local librarian

to see that one is available. Many of these viewers are able to print copies of microfilm images, or to store the images digitally on a customer-supplied USB “thumb drive.” Your librarian should be able to instruct you in the use of their viewer.

While nearly all the newspaper resources of the State Library are on microfilm, you may find that a few are directly accessible from online archives. An example is found in the Spokane County newspaper listings, item number 26 the *Liberty Lake Splash*. Click on this publication and then click on “View online archived issues.” All available issues are displayed. Click on the issue of interest to open it.

Of course, many newspaper publishers can help you directly by supplying paper copies or scanned digital images online or at the newspaper’s office. For example, the *Tri-County Tribune* offers a few online archives at: <http://tct.stparchive.com/archives.php>. But if you are searching for archive copies from newspapers no longer in operation, the Washington State Library may be your best resource. And if you’re having trouble, don’t hesitate to use the Library’s online help, by clicking on “Ask a Librarian” at the top of the Library Catalog web page. You should receive a friendly reply within a day.

———— end ————

## Letters, Email, Bouquets & Brickbats

— or —

### Bits of Chatter, Trivia, & Notices — all strung together.

... the Weeks of Loon Lake ...

On July 7<sup>th</sup>, I received this out-of-state inquiry from one Claudia Clark. Claudia

wrote, “My great grandfather was Lucius Weeks. His wife was Carrie Mae. According to the United States Census, my great grandparents lived in Loon Lake with their four

children, Lucius was a farmer. He moved his family from Minnesota to Loon Lake. I also have or had family in the Spokane/Davenport/Reardan areas, but have lost touch with any in the current generation. My grandfather would have finished his education in Loon Lake. His name was Paul D. F. Weeks (1893-1969). I remember my father, also named Paul D. F. Weeks Jr., speaking fondly of visits to Loon Lake. Any information you may have of my family would be greatly appreciated.”

I sent a note regarding Claudia’s inquiry to select members of the society’s online membership. Society vice president Pete Coffin replied with a selection of data sheets from Ancestry.com. This data explained that the Lucius Weeks family consisted of Lucius, his wife, Carrice “Carrie” Mae (Fenlason) Weeks, and their children, Lucius Albert, Helen I., Paul D., and John D.

My own search of regional resources drew up the following newspaper clippings.

The June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1908, edition of the *Colville Examiner*, in a piece headlined “News from Loon Lake,” noted that “Lucius Weeks and his cousin have begun work on the Holland-Horr donkey engine.” No indication is given as to whether the Lucius named is the father or the firstborn son. Lucius Albert Weeks would have been about 21 at that time.

The March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1911, edition of *The Ranch*, a Seattle based newspaper, in a piece written by the Washington State Grange, stated, “During February there have not been as many new granges as usual for that month, but we have the following new and reorganized granges for that month.” On the following list was, “Loon Lake, 448 — Jas. T. Storm, master; Mrs. Otto Schmidt, lecturer; Lucius A. Weeks, secretary, Loon Lake, Stevens County. Organized, February 4, by W. W. Mokler, with 54 members.”

By the above account, the Loon Lake grange’s “secretary” would have been Lucius and Carrie Weeks’ first child, Lucius Albert, who would have been about 24 years old at the time of the grange’s formation.

Also regarding the above account, a

correction would be needed. According to data found in a volume titled *Proceedings of the Twenty-Third Annual Session of the Washington State Grange* — held at Snohomish Washington from June 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>, 1911 — Loon Lake’s grange was actually #449, not #448 — the latter being a number that belonged to a grange in existence in Snohomish County’s community of Granite Falls at that time.

The above “Proceedings” states 1911 ended with 64 members in Loon Lake’s grange. Published notes from the Washington State Grange’s twenty-fourth annual convention indicate the membership at Loon Lake had declined to 46 by the end of 1912. As for the Loon Lake group’s fate, data archived during 1913’s twenty-fifth annual statewide gathering — held in Colville during the summer of that year — indicate that the Loon Lake group had zero members; suggesting the Loon Lake community’s grange had dissolved by the time the records were finalized.

And one final set of clippings, a series of legal notices regarding Lucius B. Weeks, were found in a consecutive number of summer editions of 1917’s *Colville Examiner*. The notices were a Stevens County Superior Court summons stating that “Lucius B. Weeks, and Carrie M. Weeks, his wife, plaintiffs,” were seeking a judgment regarding a property ownership dispute. The property in question was “The southeast quarter (SE¼) of section thirty-two (32) in township thirty (30) north, range forty-one (41) E. W. M.,” and in specific, “that the ... named defendants ... have no right title, lien, equity, interest or estate in, to, or upon the above described lands.”

We have no idea of the outcome of the court appearance. What the above article does do, as far as Claudia Clark’s email to the society is concerned, is suggest where her family was living while in the Loon Lake area.

If anyone has any further information regarding the Weeks family, please forward it to the society, and we’ll forward it to Claudia Clark, or put you in direct contact with her.

———— Wally Lee Parker ————

## Minutes of the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society — July 8, 2017 —

In attendance: Bill Sebright, Pat Parker, Wally Parker, Mark Wagner, Lorraine Nord, Sue Rehms, Ella Jenkins, Mary Jo Reiter, Mike Reiter, Roberta Reiter, Pete Coffin, Denny Deahl, Judy Coffin, and Don Ball.

Society President Bill Sebright called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. He reported that: 1) He received a phone call from former Williams Valley resident, Tammy Peterson. She was searching for information about who was in charge of the Williams Valley Cemetery. She was given Betty Burdette's and Don Ball's phone numbers, and received the information she needed. 2) After the last DPSD board meeting Greg Schuler talked to Bill. He now lives in the "Don and Marilyn house." Bill gave him a C/DPHS card with email addresses and directions to our website. Greg is the son of Jake Schuler, and is a member of DPHS's School Board. He's interested in the history of his home and would like to keep it historically correct. 3) Joyce Reiter Wolfe (Don and Pete's older sister) sent a 1916 Deer Park High School yearbook to Mary Jo Reiter. Mike Reiter picked it up from Mary Jo. We now have 1915 and 1916 yearbooks.

Society Treasurer Mark Wagner reported the main checking account ended the month at \$6,970.39. There were deposits of \$630.00. One check was written to Discount Sign Warehouse for \$506.55 for shirts for Brickyard Day. The web hosting account ended the month at \$705.86 with a withdrawal of \$10.95 and \$16.99 for web hosting. I have also submitted our 2016 tax return, it has been accepted by the IRS.

Society Vice President Pete Coffin reported that: 1) I'm working on a manuscript

describing the early settlement of eastern Washington and northern Spokane County prior to 1880. 2) I scanned the Koehler pictures and returned them to Heather McGrath.

Print editor Wally Parker reported: 1) One hundred and forty copies of the July *Mortarboard* (#111) have been printed for distribution, and the online version has been submitted for posting. The sixteen-page issue features a piece by this writer titled "Clayton Burns: The Clayton Fires of 1897, 1908, and 1957." 2) Ten copies of the *Collected Newsletters, Volume 31*, have been printed. This issue combines *Mortarboards* #109 through #111. 3) A computer meltdown required some technical intervention and the purchase of a new device. All the data was saved, and Print Publications is up and running. The days lost put a significant squeeze on the construction of July's *Mortarboard*, but my Editorial Group came through in making sure issue #111 presents as well as it does. If anyone would care to join in the Editorial Group's future efforts, just drop me an email. Also note, membership in the society is not a requirement for participation in the Editorial Group. 4) Plans are in the very initial stage for a possible expedition to gather photos and measurements of the remains of the vintage turn of the century motor launch Gwen; its hull, or at least a portion thereof, known to reside just a short distance beneath the surface of Loon Lake. The exact date the craft sank has yet to be documented, though eighty to ninety years is probably somewhere within reason. Stay tuned for more on this. 5) On June 20<sup>th</sup> of this year, the society purchased a decorative Leno Prestini illustrated gold pan.



The above Leno Prestini gold pan painting is an addition to the society's collection.

The price, \$76.60, including shipping. I first noticed the item being offered on eBay several weeks prior to purchase, the asking price at that point being \$250.00. How long it had previously been posted online is unknown, but within a week of first being noticed the price was lowered to \$69.99, at which point Bill Sebright was notified of the pan's existence, and shortly thereafter, with the consent of several members of the society's board of direc-

tors, the purchase was authorized. After purchase, I sent a note to the seller requesting information on how the pan came into the seller's hands. The seller's reply was that they bought the entire estate-sale contents of the basement of an older home on Spokane's south hill. They didn't recall the address. The first name of the prior owner is believed to have been Clarence, but they don't recall the last name. They did say, judging from the

basement's contents, that the prior owner was a World War II veteran, United States Navy, and that he was "into cameras," and photographic images related to the Navy. 6) The purchased pan appears to be typical of Prestini artifacts of the type. Made of light metal, the pan is 1¼ inches wide, and 2¼ inches deep. The flat segment at the center of the pan measures approximately 8½ inches across. The fitment for hanging the pan is tack-welded or brazed to the back of the pan as commonly seen on similar Prestini artifacts. The entirety of the pan — front and back — previously a grey color, has been painted gold (possibly with common aerosol spray paint). The image — the depiction of a classic equal-arm balance scale in the process of weighing gold dust — is confined within the flat portion at the bottom of the pan. The paint media used to create the image is assumed to be similar to that Leno used for the rest of his artwork. The interior rim of the gold pan contains Leno's typical signature, and the date "1961." 7) The essentially still-life image falls within Leno's common theme of gold prospecting and prospectors. Though likely of interest more for its historical than artistic value, the object is none

the less representative of a very limited number of Prestini objects coming to market.

Webmaster Marie Morrill reported that she is in Illinois at a family reunion. All my kids and grandkids will be there, which is a rare occasion. Uploading of the July Mortarboard is expected next week.

Mike Reiter reported he was changing a meter at the Don Keyes house at Stevens and C Street in Deer Park, and was told by the resident that Leno Prestini had done the homes brickwork, including the fireplace. Brad Wainwright stated he'd unearthed some Clayton brick on his Merritt Drive property. Some of his property was once in Clayton's brickyard.

The Brickyard Day committee met Wednesday, July 5, 6 PM at the Real Estate Marketplace. We are having trouble getting insurance this year.

Next meeting: Saturday, August 12, 2017, at 9 AM at the Clayton Drive-In.

Meeting adjourned at 9:51 AM.

The above C/DPHS minutes submitted by Mark Wagner, acting Secretary.

— end —

### Society Contacts

We encourage anyone with observations, concerns, corrections, or divergent opinions regarding the contents of these newsletters to write the society or contact one or more of the individuals listed below. Resultant conversations can remain confidential if so desired.

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— C/DPHS —

From "The Coast" magazine,  
April, 1907



### See Yourself in Print.

*The Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society's department of Print Publications is always looking for original writings, classic photos, properly aged documents and the like that may be of interest to our readers. These materials should be rooted within, though not limited to, northern Spokane County, southeastern Stevens County, and southern Pend Oreille County. As for types of materials, family or personal remembrances are always considered. Articles of general historical interest — including pieces on natural history, archeology, geology and such — are likely to prove useful. In other words, we are always searching for things that will increase our readers' understanding and appreciation of this region's past. As for historical perspective; to us history begins whenever the past is dusty enough to have become noteworthy — which is always open to interpretation. From there it extends back as deep as we can see, can research, or even speculate upon.*

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— the editor —

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is or soon will be  
available in booklet format.*

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"Collected Newsletters: Volume Thirty-Two."*