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**

**Mortarboard**

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**Growing Up On A “Stump Ranch”**

by Wey Simpson

(Part Two)

As I write this I find I’m mostly letting my memories flow as they occur. Earlier I noted the impact the change from gas driven to electric powered equipment had on our lives. So, the advent of electricity comes to mind.

A farm about a mile to the south of us had electricity. But the power utility told us that if we wanted to have the electricity they provided, we’d have to pay to have the line built. In the early 1930’s, sure we could do that. Wait for the laughter.

My dad was a strong Republican, but when FDR’s New Deal came up with the Rural Electrification effort, he was one of the first to go to work signing up others in the area to form a cooperative that, with federal support, would build power lines to serve the farms that did not have the blessings of electricity. And that was most of our neighbors. As a result we had our house wired for electricity quite a while before the power lines were energized. I remember looking at the light fixture in the ceiling and I would wonder what it would be like when it came to life.

Our only source of illumination at night on the farm had been the kerosene lamp or lantern, or the Coleman lantern or lamp that used gas under pressure to provide the gas in a form that would illuminate a mantle and thus provide a much brighter light. All of the power to operate our equipment was provided by either hand or horse. There was, for example, a lot of pumping of water by hand to meet the various needs of the family and the farm.

I’m uncertain of the year, but it seems to me that it must have happened about 1936. Suddenly one day, the light in the ceiling came on and we had joined the Electricity Age.

I still recall the first appliance we bought. Dad went to Deer Park and came home with a Philco console radio. I was really happy about that. Before that our radio had been powered by batteries. Well, batteries have a way of running down. As a result we listened very selectively. And often when the
Above: Winter, mid-1930s.

After driving a 1920’s Ford Model T that was missing its side curtains, that had a factory installed hand operated windshield wiper, and that had to be started with a hand crank, the Simpson’s enclosed Hudson Terraplane with powered wipers, with a heater, a radio, and an electric starter, was like a miracle.

Below: The winter of 1936.

Back then the roads were maintained by the township. Only the school bus and mail routes were cleared in heavy snows. Our house was on neither. In this photo Marrel Simpson is using a scoop shovel to make a path wide enough for a team of horses and sled to make the quarter mile to a plowed road.

The winter of 1936:

This photo was taken on the section of Short Road — commonly called Swamp Road back then — in front of Herb Reiter’s farm. The snowdrift was estimated at seven feet high. This was the only way into town for groceries and other needs, as well as to deliver our cream — the source of the family’s income — to town. The horses offer a clear reference to the magnitude of that winter.

batteries died, the radio remained dead too — since we didn’t always have the spare money to afford new batteries. Now we could listen to the radio any time.

The console also included a record player that played the 78 rpm discs that were common at that time. We did have some records that my folks had bought previously. Before this new radio-phonograph we played those records on a spring powered phonograph, which of course required winding by hand in order to drive the turn-table. The spectrum of mechanically reproduced sound was fairly limited. With the Philco’s electronic amplification we could hear high and low frequencies in those records that we had never before experienced.

A personal note here: I was fascinated by radio, long before we had electric power. Now that I could listen to it when I was free from the chores of the farm, I was ecstatic. I could hear music, dramas, news, and entertainment and information programs of every type. The more I heard of what radio had to offer, the more enamored I became of the broadcast industry. One day as the three of us were driving into Spokane I simply announced to my folks that I was going to be a radio announcer. To me they were the stars of any broadcast. (I never really strayed from that path. I would spend nearly 60 years in various aspects of broadcasting and I loved nearly every minute of it. However, that’s not really part of this story)

There is one radio memory that is still with me. Every evening about milking time there would be a series of 15 minute programs, supposedly aimed at the young. There were such programs as “Little Orphan Annie”, “Jack Armstrong” and “Sky King”. Adventure stories that were meant to appeal to kids my age. I’d linger in the house as long as I
could, listening to the latest episode before I knew I’d be in trouble if I didn’t make to the barn to do my chores.

I mentioned our car. We drove a Model T Ford until it nearly fell apart. But, it met our basic needs, including our rare sojourns to Spokane, which in itself was an adventure for me. Finally in the mid-30s we acquired a Terraplane that had been driven by one of my Mom’s sisters. It would carry us through the years of World War II.

I’m guilty of digression here. Back to the important life on the farm.

I recall one time my mother’s parents, Charlie and Della Johnson came to visit us. Before they left we had running water in the kitchen. We had an electric well pump and water system, which would provide water for the livestock. Now, we had running water in the kitchen. In time we had an electric hot water heater, which meant that we no longer had a large container of water sitting on the kitchen stove. Eventually we acquired an electric stove. I recall Mom swore she would never learn to cook on it. It was certainly different than cooking with wood. A refrigerator eventually joined the impact of electricity on our lives. In time we’d have an inside bathroom, no more trips to the outhouse. We never went into debt, we could run warm water and take a bath. No more filling the round iron tub in the middle of the kitchen and pouring water from the large container on the stove to keep us living. And, of course, electricity would slowly change the way we farmed, the way we kept the rodents. The dog would be my frequent companion as I played. The cats were not very people friendly, for the most part, but once in a while one would be open to being petted.

I recall taking a ball, throwing it at the end of the barn and then try to catch it, pretending, of course, that I was a professional baseball player. I would even hold conversations with myself as I would enact some imaginary scenario. (Maybe I was a ham, even then). There was room to run, but not much company, just my pet dog.

I suspect I’ve always had a vivid imagination. I recall one (rather embarrassing) incident. Acting on a dream I’d had, I convinced my friend Howard Reiter to join me in digging for treasure. Right in the middle of the road. Needless to say, there was no treasure, but there was a hole in the road, which did not please the people who took care of the road. We filled it up.

Our house was a quarter of a mile from the mailbox and the school bus stop. So every day there was a hike to get to the mailbox when school was out and if there was anything in it, I could take it home. The stop was of that period of time. One year, Dad apparently was hit in the face with something when a horse reared its head up and he was too close. It broke his nose and he bled profusely. He was rushed to the hospital in Colfax where he spent several days. We learned all of this after the fact. Apparently he nearly bled to death. And he was pretty weak for a time afterwards. It was an event that would deeply impact a boy who was probably not even 10 years old.

A few personal notes: As staff of an only child.

The closest neighbor was nearly a quarter of a mile away. I mostly had to find ways to amuse myself, all by myself. Of course we had the horses and we would work with them. We would keep down the rodents. The dog would be my frequent companion as I played. The cats were not very people friendly, for the most part, but once in a while one would be open to being petted.

This article was obviously written for a farm audience, but I think it provides a vital insight to what was like for us and many other farmers in those days.

There is one story of life during our early years on the farm that I want to tell. Before we moved out of the Palouse Country, Dad had developed the ability to handle the large number of horses that would propel the heavy machinery require to get the grain out of the field and threshed. Money was obviously in short supply. So for several summers Dad would leave Mom and me to run the farm while he went to work in the harvest, earning income that I’m sure we desperately needed. One memory still remains —— Text continues on page 1009 ——

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Issue #81 — January — 2015

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Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society Newsletter
Issue #81 — January — 2015

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Deer Park Grade School
Baseball Team
1939 — ‘40

(left to right)

Front Row:
Milton Whipple
Don Richardson
Harold Welch
Dan Larson
Bill Hauber
Gordon Durrell
Ervin Stolp
Conrad Walth

Back Row:
Mr. Cosgrove
Don Gibson
Jim Onstad
Leroy Wood
Art Hunt
Howard Reiter
Howard Ellis
Wey Simpson
Dick Martens
Mr. Lloyd
at the northeast corner of the farm at the intersection of Montgomery Rd., which ran by the house, and Grove Road which ran north from Montgomery. In later years, as more people moved into the area, both the school bus and mailman came by the house.

In those days, thanks to rural mail delivery, what was in the mailbox was often our link to the world beyond. We subscribed to the Spokane Daily Chronicle, an evening newspaper, it would arrive the next day and the news from late the previous day was fresher than reading a day old Spokesman-Review. For me, the arrival of the Christmas catalogs from Sears-Roebuck and Montgomery-Ward was the highlight of the fall. I could pour over the pages, dreaming of having all of the wonderful toys, yet knowing full well that 99% of my dreams were just that—dreams. But, there was joy in dreaming. And, yes Virginia, people actually wrote letters to each other. Not many of us had telephones, for us it didn’t happen until World War II was over and military demands had diminished. So the mail could be the highlight of the day.

I alluded to the old Arcadia Orchard irrigation flumes that had in earlier years run in front of our farm. At each road that the flume had to cross, large concrete structures were built to channel the water under the road and then back up above ground level. There were two such structures at this intersection funneling under Grove road. They long stood as reminders of the dream that dried up. In inclement weather they also served utilitarian purpose for me. The size of flume was such that I could stand inside of the concrete form and stay out of the weather while waiting for the school bus. On good days, I could sit on a bench down the middle. Before long however, school busses, not unlike those in use today came into use. Much more comfortable and practical!

I’ve spent a number of words on the process of harvesting, storing and feeding hay to sustain our animals. And, as you may have noted, summers were busy, especially for a kid who might have liked to be doing something a bit more pleasurable. But, the children of farmers in those days were part of the survival process, so we all learned to work. But, I assure you, I was forward to going back to school. Imagine that!

My dad was a strong supporter of a good education. He had only finished the 8th grade. In his growing-up days many boys were needed on the farm, so school was given a short shrift. Thus he left the classroom and went to work.

There was one brief interruption in my attendance at school in Deer Park. Our farm at that time was actually in another school district. The area was dotted with small one-room schools. Reivers were in the Deer Park School District and we were in the Olson Spur District, the dividing line running down our property line. Somehow, I managed to go to school in Deer Park with no problem, until the 3rd grade. One day I was unceremoniously removed from class and deposited in the one-room Olson Spur school.

I don’t know how many trips Dad may have made to the Spokane County School Superintendent’s office, but after about six weeks we got sent over into the Deer Park school district. In the meantime, I had quite a hike to school; we lived a good two miles from the school. It was also late in the year, and not the kindest weather to be making that trek. It seems Olson Spur was upset that they were not getting ‘the attendance money due the school’ because I was attending class in Deer Park. But, times were changing, and by the time I was in high school most of the small school districts had been consolidated into the Deer Park District.

We are the result of many things, our
genetics, our experiences, our reactions to the events we encounter, the environments in which we have lived, and, I’m sure, the people who have intersected our lives.

However, I’ve come to be, these forming years were the foundation to all that followed. It was not an easy life, and after the passage of so many years I suspect that the memories become less sharp, the challenges more muted and the impact of this life less emphatic. But, much of how I view life, how I react to it and how I live is the result of the experiences that was formed in these years.

At the time, I didn’t recognize that who I would become was being formed by this life. Yet, I realize that these events and experiences that helped make me the person I am. Farming is an easy life, and it has changed exponentially over the past century.

But, certain facts remain. Hard work, perseverance, dedication, honesty and reliability were necessary then and still valuable today.

I’ve tried to tell the story of growing up on a ‘stump ranch’ during one of the most difficult periods of the 20th Century. In spite of the hardships that we obviously endured, I look upon it as a good time. My parents tried to shield me from the cares of the time and I never doubted I was loved and cared for. Even so we were all aware that there were friends who had more things, lived in nicer houses, and had better clothes. But, thankfully, it didn’t seem to matter. As a result, my view of life is seen through a prism of optimism, hope and belief that, with God’s help, we can each be a contributor to a better world.

——— end ———

Letters, Email, Bouquets & Brickbats
— or —
Bits of Chatter, Trivia & Notices All Strung Together

… Dr. Searight & the flu …

This tidbit regarding Clayton and the early 20th century’s Great Influenza Pandemic was found in the November 22nd, 1918, issue of the Deer Park Union.

“School commenced again on Monday, and by Wednesday nearly the entire attendance was again on hand. One or two families — not to still be hit with the flu, but it is not certain that Clayton has had a single case of the disease. In fact, this place has been so free from the disease the Dr. Searight left for Trail, B. C., a couple of weeks ago to aid in the trouble there. He was called home several days ago in the reported case of Curtiss Small. He has returned in disgust to Trail, declaring Mr. Small’s ailment bronchitis — not the influenza at all. The patient he left behind is now sitting up and on the high road to recovery.”

Reading the above, one would wonder about Dr. Searight. The statement, “He has returned in disgust to Trail,” suggests a rather gruff individual not particularly committed to his own community. But would such an assumption be correct?

First there’s a first-person recollection of Dr. Searight recorded in the March, 2008, issue of the Mortarboard. (“That would be Issue #11.) On page 139, within an article titled “Clayton’s Sadie Mae Huffman-Fischbach: Her Story,” Dr. Searight is recalled as a quintessential county doctor — attentive and compassionate.

Secondly, while Clayton was at the moment reporting few cases of influenza, Trail, British Columbia — according to Dr. Searight — was being particularly hard hit. Though we’ve yet to find any specific statistics for Trail, we do know that the final death rate for the entire Province of British Columbia was 6.21 per thousand. And that that death rate among the peoples of the First Nations was much higher — reaching 46 deaths per thousand for Canada as a whole.

In the final tally, an estimated 4.5% of Canada’s total eight million people died from the flu during 1918-19’s pandemic.

Throughout the world — besides the usual children and elderly — this pandemic caused an unusually high number of fatalities among otherwise healthy and wore better and stronger than 20 and 40 years of age. Those deaths were usually induced by secondary pneumonia — with the patient slowly suffocating on his or her own lung secretions. The peculiarities of this demographic left notable hollows in most every community’s business and social heart.

Currently we know very little about Clayton’s Dr. Searight, whether he may have had some type of personal connection to the area of British Columbia to our immediate north, for example. However, considering that Deer Park and Spokane appear to have had adequate care available during the pandemic, it seems likely that Dr. Searight — following the highest standards of medical tradition — went where he was most needed. And as he saw it, he was needed in Trail.

… regarding Joshua Luther Wallace …

Society president Bill Sebright recently received a phone call from Minnie (Westby) Hayworth — a member of Deer Park High School’s class of 1949 currently living in California. Minnie said that Margaret (Gibson) Daugherty had recently sent her a bundle of eight prior Mortarboards, which she is “certainly enjoying.”

When reading the “Letters/Brickbats” column in issue #72 she ran across an inclusion regarding former Clayton resident Joshua (or Josiah) Luther Wallace. She noted “I remember him also, but vaguely. Someone said that he had a sister who lived in the Addy, Chewelah, Valley area. Maybe someone could check that out.”

We’re always hoping for more material about Mr. Wallace — one of the few African-Americans known to have lived in the area. Just as we’re always hoping to hear comments and additions on any subject from our readers — by phone, email, or letters, whichever they prefer.

As for Minnie’s bundle of Mortarboards, Bill says measures are being taken to insure that Minnie receives her copies in a more timely manner.

… historic Deer Park postal logs …

Society vice-president Pete Coffin sent the following to the Mortarboard for in-
the 1940 Census lists, H. H. Evans' profession was druggist and store owner. I am tempted to think that this money was Washington State Liquor Control Board remittances. The only other money order customers who made such large orders were the bulk oil dealers, Associated Oil and Shell Oil. These are daily lists and digging through them is tedious.

I have scanned examples of some of the pages into my computer if anyone would like to see one. Some of these files are so large that I would have to email them out one at a time.

… an even earlier bowling alley …

In last month's Letters/Brickbats column we had a segment titled “bowling and a barber shop.” Said segment outlined several Union/Tribune articles from the 1950s and early '60s dealing with Deer Park’s Main Street bowling alley, and also with Spud Zaccheto’s barber shop.

Threaded throughout that segment were pieces of the discussion between members of our online editorial group—a particularly rich discussion since most of the editorial group recalls the old alley—though with varying degrees of clarity.

Well … one of those above noted articles made it clear that there had once been an even earlier bowling alley in Deer Park. So we went looking, and found this in the August 1, 1940 edition of the Deer Park Union.

"Frank Pipan, of Spokane, leased the O. A. Peters garage building on Main street next to the Deer Park Union office Wednesday, it was made known by the property owner."

"It is understood that Pipan and his father plan to open a bowling alley as soon as the building can be conditioned for that purpose. It is also stated that later, billiards and pool tables may be installed."

In attendance: Sue Rehms, Wally Parker, Pat Parker, Don Reiter, Mary Jo Reiter, Mike Reiter, Roberta Reiter, Betty Burdette, Mark Wagner, Bill Sebright, Sharon Clark, Marilyn Reilly, Lonnie Jenkins, Ella Jenkins, Pete Coffin, Judy Coffin, Grace Hubal, Don Ball, Roxanne Camp, and Lynn F. Wells.

Society President Bill Sebright called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. He reported:

1) He picked up the copy of the Fort Walla Walla to Fort Colville Military Road book. If anyone is interested in borrowing it, just let Bill know.

2) A check was sent to Stevens County Historical Society for $55 for the Fort Walla Walla to Fort Colville Road book. Deposits were a total of $64.00. The web hosting account stands at $1,039.47 and a withdrawal of $10.95. The memorial fund is at $2,080.00. The Brickyard Day fund is at $874.17.

Society Treasurer Mark Wagner reported:

1) The ending balance for the main checking account as of November 28th was $6,323.82. A check was written to Stevens County Historical Society for $55 for the Fort Walla Walla to Fort Colville Road book. Deposits were a total of $64.00. The web hosting account stands at $1,039.47 and a withdrawal of $10.95. The memorial fund is at $2,080.00. The Brickyard Day fund is at $874.17.

Society Secretary Grace Hubal reported: 1) The ending balance for the main checking account as of November 28th was $6,323.82. A check was written to Stevens County Historical Society for $55 for the Fort Walla Walla to Fort Colville Road book. Deposits were a total of $64.00. The web hosting account stands at $1,039.47 and a withdrawal of $10.95. The memorial fund is at $2,080.00. The Brickyard Day fund is at $874.17.

Society Secretary Grace Hubal reported:

1) On behalf of the Society, I delivered a Thanksgiving flower basket to Taffy and Randy Long for all that they do for us throughout the year. 2) We are still looking for a Secretary. Contact Grace or Bill if you are interested.

Society Vice President Pete Coffin reported: 1) Gail (Wohrle) Roberts called President Sebright and offered the Society a large box of early Deer Park Post Office log books. I picked them up, catalogued them,

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and reviewed a couple for their contents. I sent a page of my review results to the board and will pass around my page of notes as well as examples of the log books during this meeting. Editor Parker will put my notes in the “Letters” section of this Mortarboard (beginning on page 1011). 2) Mike Layton told me that he had two more books of Herbert Mason’s “Memoranda” (his diary) and he let me copy them. Herbert Mason was Mike’s grandfather Roy Mason’s older brother who lived on the family farm (Keystone Ranch) just west of the Burroughs School house. Over several years I have made digital copies of the books containing his daily notes from 1906 to 1937 (another book of the late 1920s Memoranda has yet to be found). These are historical, daily observations of weather, farm work done, and occasional community events in Williams Valley and the Deer Park area. It is interesting that there is nothing scandalous or of a gossip nature recorded in them. 3) I would ask the group if they have any suggestions or thoughts about the naming of farms and ranches. This comes to mind in the Mason farm which was named Keystone Ranch in that they were from Pennsylvania, the Keystone State. Other names that I know of are: Dunrenton Ranch (the Porters), Long Meadow Ranch, and Meadowmere. I don’t think Stump Ranch (as used in this month’s lead article) is valid and/or unique in that my father called his tract of land such as far back as I can remember.

Print editor Wally Parker reported: 1) Ninety copies of the December, 2014, Mortarboard have been printed and are in the process of being distributed. The lead article in this issue is the first half of newscaster Wey Simpson’s recollections of growing up in the Deer Park area. The conclusion of Wey’s article will appear in the January, 2015, issue. 2) Six additional copies of Collected Newsletters #20 have been printed and are ready for distribution. 3) Just as a random thought from your editor; I took particular note of an article appearing in the November 28th issue of Entertainment Weekly. This article touched on the rise of Internet podcasts as a means of disseminating
both entertainment and information. Think old time radio presentations packaged in lengths from a few minutes to a few hours - presentations that can either be listened to over the Internet or downloaded for listening at a more convenient time via any MP3 compatible device. Such programming is often produced by amateurs with access to and at least a fair degree of competence with audio recording equipment. Some talent for scripting for audio and audio editing would also be needed. It should be noted that nothing is being proposed here. It’s just interesting that should the Society eventually develop the capability of creating audio or audiovisual presentations, the website would be the perfect venue for connecting anyone that might be interested in such programming with — what Entertainment Weekly calls - “The freshest form of storytelling today.”

Webmaster Marie Morrill reported by email: 1) November’s Mortarboard was on the Website before last meeting and she hasn’t received this month’s yet.

We are still looking for ideas and volunteers for the 100th Anniversary of the Clayton School. The first meeting will be in February of 2015. Marilyn Reilly suggested that we take half a dozen copies of the Mortarboard to the Deer Park Library.

Our group shared some dynamite stories. Many in the area bought dynamite at E. C. Weber Hardware.

Wally mentioned reading an article stating that 2 Deer Park men, Guy Enman and Byron Roberts, were killed in World War I. He is looking for other Deer Park soldiers who served in WW I.

We discussed the Pioneer Farm on Swenson Road, just north of Staley Road. It was just sold again. The new owner stated that there were no plans to sell off 10 acre plots. According to Lynn Wells, the farm dates back to 1888 and was homesteaded by J. A. Prufer.

Next meeting: Saturday, January 10, 2015 at 9 AM at the Clayton Drive-In. Meeting adjourned at 9:47 AM. The meeting minutes submitted by Grace Hubal, 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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