Looking Forward or Looking Back?

Illustration from the Colville Examiner, November 16th, 1907.

Join the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society, and do a little of both.

The CDPHS 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 C/DPHS meets at 9 a.m. every second Saturday of the month. Join us at the Clayton Drive-In, Clayton, Washington.

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We recently located a webpage produced by the Washington State Library system that suggested images of Clayton’s second newspaper, the Clayton News-Letter, had been preserved on microfilm in the library’s collection. Prior to this, we’d assumed all copies of this publication had been lost. In mid-June, I sent an email describing the State Library’s webpage to the Mortarboard editorial group.

Society member Ken Westby, who resides in Vancouver, Washington, followed up, and a day later sent the editorial group this note. "The newspaper appears to be part of the State Library’s collection, and is listed in the library catalog as ‘available.’ The resource is on microfilm. Whether it’s viewable online or must be viewed onsite at a microfilm viewer is not clear.”

Regarding the News-Letter’s place in Clayton’s history, we are aware of an earlier...
Since you live in Vancouver, it seems like online search apparently traced a link to that copy first. The librarian in Olympia continued, “inter-library loan might be the best option for you.” Ken verified that the Vancouver library’s viewing machine could save digital copies to a memory stick, and put in a request for the film. On July 8 that the microfilm had arrived at the local library, Ken wrote, “This afternoon I went to the library. A librarian showed me how to use the viewer and how to save images to a thumb drive. It got easier with a little practice, and in about two hours I was able to get 13 issues saved as PDF files. Tomorrow I shall return and continue. All the issues thus far contain 4 pages. The format is very similar to the old Deer Park Unions. After a day’s work downloading the rest of the issues, Ken burned the collected files to DVDs, and mailed a number of copies to Pete Coffin for distribution to various researchers, and inclusion in the archive.

… two entangled newspapers … It turns out that Clayton’s News-Letter and the newspaper serving the resort community just five and a half miles to the northwest, the Loon Lake Times, shared a common history, at least in the latter part of their short lives. It’s a complicated tale, with a moderately large cast of characters. Our current understanding of the story begins with a one sentence announcement in the December 29, 1912, edition of the Newport Miner. “Stevens County has a new newspaper, the Loon Lake Times.” Meanwhile, Ken was enmeshed in the kind of tangle that sometimes occurs when a library attempts to retrieve seldom accessed materials. Namely, the Vancouver library was uncertain as to the microfilm’s actual location — the library at Olympia, or the Washington State University library at Pullman. The issue was quickly settled when Kathleen Roland, head of the Interlibrary Loan unit at Olympia intervened.

Pursuing the Clayton News-Letter lead, Ken sent this inquiry using the “Ask a Librarian” function on the Washington State Library’s website. “Searching your online catalog, I find that a newspaper of possible interest to our historical society is listed as available, but is on microfilm. It was published weekly for about a year in 1912 and ’13. What are our options for viewing and printing pages from this resource.” The library replied, “Your options depend on where you are located. If you are able to visit the Washington State Library in Olympia, you’re welcome to make an appointment to come in and view the microfilm in question. Our microfilm readers have printing capabilities and several of our microfilm readers can also create digital images of the film (that can be saved as PDFs, JPEGs, TIFFs, etc.).”

“If you are not able to come to the library, you can request an interlibrary loan of the film through your local library. Make sure the local library has a working microfilm reader/printer.” As Ken considered this, I dredged the following mention from a vintage regional newspaper, the Colville Examiner — a limited number of years of which are available for viewing on the Library of Congress’s Chronicling America website. “The July 27th, 1912, edition of the Examiner reported, “Clayton now has a newspaper, F. M. Corbell having issued the first number last Thursday. Its name is the News-Letter.” Meanwhile, Ken was enmeshed in the kind of tangle that sometimes occurs when a library attempts to retrieve seldom accessed materials. Namely, the Vancouver library was uncertain as to the microfilm’s actual location — the library at Olympia, or the Washington State University library at Pullman. The issue was quickly settled when Kathleen Roland, head of the Interlibrary Loan unit at Olympia intervened.

Kathleen wrote Ken to say, “We do have the reel of microfilm that is described in the catalog entry you provided. I went through the reel to determine its contents earlier today. It contains issues from July 18, 1912, through August 29, 1913. However, the following issues were not microfilmed and are missing from the reel: July 25, 1912; August 29, 1912; September 19, 1912; December 5, 1912.” Apparently, the confusion over which library possessed the film arose from the fact that WSU has its own copy. Vancouver’s online search apparently traced a link to that copy first. The librarian in Olympia continued, “Since you live in Vancouver, it seems like inter-library loan might be the best option for you.” Ken verified that the Vancouver library’s viewing machine could save digital copies to a memory stick, and put in a request for the film.

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As Ken reported, “The 35mm film reader is on my left, and one of the newspaper’s images is on the monitor screen.”
The Washington State Library has several years of the original run of the Loon Lake Times on microfilm, but only those issued between May 12th, 1911, and October 25th, 1913. The other source at hand is Google’s online newspaper archive, where a series of issues of this newspaper, June 16th, 1911, and May 3rd, 1913 — less than the span covered by the above microfilm — can be viewed. Since the Times appears to have changed hands just prior to the earliest issue archived on microfilm, it’s unlikely the masthead in the first several of the microfilm issues will reveal the name of the prior owner and editor.

In the six months after the first issue of the Loon Lake Times came off the press, the Colville Examiner announced that “Elmer Burrows, recently editor of the Springdale Reformer, has purchased the Loon Lake Times and will henceforth wield the pen for that growing vicinity.” No mention was made of the prior owner.

On April 19th, 1912 — just under a year after Burrows took over — the following appeared on page four of the Loon Lake Times. “We are enabled to announce the sale of the Times plant and business to H. P. Moody, an experienced newspaper man and practical printer of Chicago, who assumes immediate control,” stated the undated saying goodbye and retiring with this issue. “Sincerely yours, Elmer W. Burrows.”

A hint as to the reason for Mr. Burrows’ departure is found on page five of the following week’s newspaper. “Elmer W. Burrows, former editor of the Times, will leave shortly for Seattle, where he intends to take much-needed rest. Mr. Burrows has made many friends in this section, who all wish him abundant success and a speedy and permanent recovery.”

That same April 26th issue also contained the new owner’s editorial introduction to the community.

“In assuming the ownership and management of the Times, the undersigned desires to say a few words by way of introduction. After a careful investigation covering a period of over two years and extending over a large portion of the Northwest, I became attracted by the many advantages offered by Loon Lake, especially its irrigated fruit lands, where everything considered, in my opinion are far superior to any other point in the Northwest. To my fellow editors of the great Inland Empire; Our latchstring is on the outside. Pull it, walk in and help yourself. Truly yours, Herbert P. Moody.”

… and then Clayton’s newspaper appears …

Two months after Moody’s takeover of the Loon Lake Times, another newspaper, with the rather plainly stylized nameplate The Clayton News-Letter, entered the area’s market. In its very first edition, dated Thursday, July 18th, 1912, the new publication’s editor, F. M. Corbell, began his personal introduction with the statement, “In assuming the editorial management of the Clayton News-Letter, I realize that I have also assumed a heavy responsibility to not only the town of Clayton and its excellent people, but to the entire county; for what stands for the upbuilding and the general good of one stands equally for the other.”

Arguably, the most interesting line in the above quote was “In assuming the editorship of the newspaper.” Several paragraphs on, Corbell asserted, “The News-Letter has come to you to stay, and I am justified in saying that all arrangements have been perfected for the near future this paper will issue from our own press, but until such time, the exclusive matter contained in its columns will be edited at home devoted to home interest, and pertaining to the general welfare of our great commonwealth.”

This seems to suggest that the News-Letter wasn’t being printed in Clayton — that as Corbell understood it, at some point it would be. Also, with the phrase “the exclusive matter contained in its columns will be edited at home,” Corbell seems to be implying that some percentage of the content would originate elsewhere. As for where, under the heading “Clayton Notes,” the first page of the first issue also contains the follow-up: “According to the Examiner, that dictate was issued at the November 6th meeting of Stevens County’s commissioners. Corbell’s continuing activity within the community during his tenure as the editor was suggested when the February 15th, 1913, edition of the Colville Examin-er appeared in the Clayton News-Letter. In its very first edition, dated Thursday, July 18th, 1912, the new publication’s editor, F. M. Corbell, began his personal introduction with the statement, “In assuming the editorial management of the Clayton News-Letter, I

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an extent that I feel unable to give the paper the attention due both to it and its patrons.  

“Mr. Moody will assume entire manage-ment of the paper hereafter, and while thanking my friends for their support and loyalty, I ask them to give that support to Mr. Moody, who will leave nothing undone to merit their approval.”

—F. M. Corbell.

… and still more changes …

On September 20th, 1913, the Colville Examiner reported, “W. A. Lee has leased the Loon Lake Times and Clayton Critic from H. L. Moody and will conduct the papers. Mr. Moody will retire from the business by proof reading on the Spokesman-Review.

“Mr. Lee is an old-timer in the busi-ness, formerly located at Deer Lodge, Mont., and the Examiner editor was pleased to renew his acquaintance this week and to welcome him to the Stevens County fraternity.  

The most startling comment in the above article is the statement, “W. A. Lee has leased the Loon Lake Times and Clayton Critic from H. L. Moody” — specifically the refer-ence to the Clayton paper as the “Clayton Critic.” More on this later.

According to the edition of the News-Letter in our image file is dated August 29th, 1913. At that time, the paper’s nameplate was un-changed, and nothing in that issue of the paper suggested either a change of name or a change of publisher was in the offing. The issues of the Loon Lake Times reproduced in Google’s online newspaper archive ends with the May 18th, 1913 edition. It has much closer to Mr. Lee’s stated takeover exist in other archives, we may eventually gain some insight into demise of both the Times and News-Letter.  

There is no idea whether either survived the indicated transition.

We may have found an earlier refer-ence to W. A. Lee. The May 9th, 1904, edition of the Evening Statesman, a paper published at Walla Walla from 1903 to 1910, recorded, “Mrs. W. A. Lee, wife of W. A. Lee, editor of the Connell Statesman, died at that place May 4. A child was born to them early in the after-noon and a short time afterward Mrs. Lee passed away.”

Likely founded in 1903, scattered editions of this Connell Statesman extending into 1904 are preserved on microfilm. Beyond that we yet to find anything else regarding Mr. Lee.

…the Clayton Critic …

Our search through various databases for a newspaper named The Clayton Critic has so far produced just three traces. We have the Examiner’s above short clip mentioning W. A. Lee’s leasing of Moody’s Loon Lake Times and Clayton Critic from H. L. Moody” — which may be a typesetter’s or editorial error consid-ering that the town’s first known newspaper carried the Critic nameplate. That said, we have no reason to believe that the Critic’s nameplate was still in existence when Mr. Lee took over. The second mention of the Clayton Critic so far located is from the June 11th, 1910, edition of the Colville Examiner — some three years before W. A. Lee’s takeover. In what appears to be an editorial discussion of Stevens County politics, the Colville paper states, “And now two more papers have drawn their subscription from the Rev. Ananias E. They are the Ione Record and the Wilson Creek World. In a few weeks the Index and its accompanying sheet, the Clayton Critic, will be the only ones left — except the Index stock-holders.”

It appears Colville had three itera-tions of newspapers named the Ione. One of those, the Stateman-Index, reportedly was in print beginning in 1897, and continuing (possibly spottily) into 1923 at least. This is likely the Index that Colville’s Citizen is referring to. The term “accompanying sheet” in reference to the “Clayton Critic” seems to suggest the Clayton publication was corporately bound to the Colville paper, and may in fact have been printed at Colville. That said, the masthead in the Critic’s single known issue does mention the editor, but not the publisher. So, the above link can not yet be confirmed.

The last mention of Clayton’s Critic so far found is in the 1911 edition of the Ayer & Son’s Newspaper Annual, “Ayer & Son’s Newspaper Annual of American Newspapers.” That publication notes that the Critic was established in 1910. Our 4-page digital copy of the April 8th, 1910 edition of the Critic is listed as issue #10. Reckoning back from that date, the Critic’s inaugural edition should have appeared on Friday, February 4th of that same year. As of the release date of 1911’s Newspaper Annual, the Critic was reported as being edited by Louis J. Bowler. The Annual added that Clay-ton’s paper was released every Thursday on a 22-inch wide (18 inches by 22 inches when unfolded). It’s interesting to note that the one issue of the Critic known to exist consists of only four pages, and states in the line below its nameplate that it was pub-lished on Thursday, not Friday. Since that issue doesn’t carry page numbers, it’s impossi-ble to determine whether or not an inner fold containing four extra pages has been lost. It’s also possible incorrect information was sup-pied to Ayer & Son’s, or that an error of fact was introduced by the Newspaper Annual’s editors or typesetters.

The Clayton Critic’s sole known editor, Louis Bowler, appears to have been a teacher by profession. According to an item in the August 18th, 1910 edition of the Newport Miner, his name had been listed in Stevies County’s September pri-mary as a Republican candidate for the coun-ty’s Superintendent of Public Schools. The paper listed his residence as Clayton. We do know he eventually became the Superinten-dent of Schools at Ferndale, in northwestern Washington State.

…original sizes …

When confronted with an actual copy of one of these classic newspapers, the first thing that usually draws attention is the physi-cal dimensions of the pages. As a rule, these vintage newspapers are noticeably wider than today’s standard newspaper, though changes in the length are less apparent. Since almost all searches through vintage newspapers are done on digital or microfilm copies nowadays, the researcher is not knowing the source’s origi-nal document’s size. Not having access to that data excludes the ability to determine such matters as font size, column widths, pixels-per-inch within photos, and other bits of data that may at some point prove critical to under-standing the methods of production used in creating various publications. There’s also the simple fact that the source’s origi-nal dimensions prohibits reproducing images of that source at the original size.

The historic Loon Lake Times and Clayton News-Letter were both seven column newspapers, as were that era’s Spokane-Review and Spokane Chronicle — meaning the stand ard was to run seven vertical columns across each page. The Ayer & Son’s Newspaper An-nual has proven very useful in obtaining the physical dimensions of these papers.

Each of these dimensions describes the width and length of a single page. Unfolded, the width will double. Ayer & Son’s states the early Loon Lake Times was 18 inches wide and 24 long, as was the Clayton News-Letter. As of 1910 Spokane’s Spokane Chronicle was 15 x 22 inches, this from the Newspaper Annual’s 1911 edition. The Newport Miner and Colville Examiner are reported as having the same measurements. All these were 6 col-umn papers.

As noted previously, the Clayton Critic’s measurements were listed as 15 x 22 inches. It’s assumed progenitor, Colville’s Statesman-Index, measure 16 x 22 as of 1911, according to Ayer’s.
In Search of The Deer Park Union’s First Editor.
by Wally Lee Parker

The first issue of the Deer Park Union our society currently has in its digital archive is dated Friday, July 7th, 1911. It’s also identified as the fifth issue of the sixth year of the paper’s publication. The lack of morgue issues of the paper prior to that date may not be coincidental in that such is also the first issue published under the ownership and editorship of J. H. Johnson. As far as we know, other than the possible surfacing of an occasional stray issue, it’s probable everything printed before that date, everything back to the paper’s inception in the summer of 1906, has been lost to history.

Without its inaugural issue, or some other form of documentation, we can’t say for certain when the very first issue of the Union appeared on the newsstand. The best we can do is to place the origination or the oldest issue in the society’s digital collection states “Entered into the post-office at Deer Park, Wash., as 2nd class mail-matter, June 12th, 1906.” While it’s tempting to use the date from the volume and issue number stated on the first issue in our digital collection does take us back to June 1906. Further documentation regarding that time period would be understandable with the Times and News-Letter, both likely printed on a press located in Loon Lake. But we continue to assume the Union was printed on its own press located in Deer Park.

We — or at least I — have always visualized these early newspapers as self-contained industries; a printing press, boxes of type, a small staff engaged in endless hours of setting type, inking plates, running off a few hundred or thousand copies, breaking and repeating the whole process with the next week’s news. If that weren’t enough, in those early days there were probably frequent delays in the arrival of vital supplies such as paper, ink, and replacement parts for the equipment.

The heavy workload may have presented the necessity of inventing stories or poaching news from other sources when nothing else was readily available — and there’s ample evidence of this. These somewhat laxed attitudes towards journalistic accuracy and plagiarism may have elicited an occasional literary criticism, sometimes in the form of a shot or two through the newspaper’s front door — there’s evidence of this, too.

And while this wishful and doubtless romantic view of small town newspapers may have been true at one time, by the early 20th century not only was the technology involved in printing advanced a good measure beyond my romantic assumptions, but it’s likely an intricate support industry using the railroad and freight companies to transport news from communities that had evolved to service this flock of independent presses. And one application of that technology resulted in the creation of these quite similar pages of state, national, and international news.

That is currently speculation. Hopefully we’ll see at some point gain a better understanding of how the newspaper business functioned when papers such as the Deer Park Union, Clayton News-Letter, Clayton Critic, Loon Lake Times, Newport Miner, and Colville Statesman-Index were in their prime.

A few, like the Deer Park Union/Tribune, have continued for over a century. Many are known only from references in other publications — not a single physical example of their early days exist. Some are known from a scattered copy or two — it’s quite possible the Clayton Critic fits in this category. Some are well represented in various archives. What we do know is that each of these newspapers, by virtue of every surviving copy, represents a unique and priceless insight into the daily life of the community they represent — and as such need to be digitally preserved and made available for research.
Ketchum last Saturday and left on Monday's train. Mr. Sheppard has been running the Challis Graphic, which has stopped, and has shipped the plant to greener pastures.

The next place we find this particu-
lar Frank T. Sheppard grows cold. We can't say whether this was the Sheppard that founded the Union or not. We simply don't know where those "greener pastures" were.

With this next newspaper article, we have a very high probability of having a match to the founder of the Deer Park Union. The September 24th, 1905 edition of the San Juan Islander reports, "The Farmington New Era is the latest addition to the journalistic world. It is edited and owned by Frank Sheppard, until a few months back pointBlank. His sons, who are practical printers, will assist him in the new venture."

The October 21st, 1904 edition of the Colfax Gazette, notes the following under a listing titled "Conditional Bills of Sale." "B. M. Price to Frank T. Sheppard, printing outfit, $200.

Six months later, Mr. Sheppard was on the road again, as the March 17th, 1905 edition of the Colfax Gazette explained. "Frank T. Sheppard has sold the Farmington New Era to the News Publishing Company, who have assumed the name of the paper to the Farmington News."

We're assuming a high probability of the above being our editor Sheppard since one of his obituaries lists a weekly paper at Farmington, Washington, as one of his posts.

At this point our tracing of the edi-
tor's travels move from probable to certain. The September 24th, 1905 edition of Aver & Son's Newspaper Annual, under the listing for Kettle Falls, records that the Valley Tribune, a 4-page, 15 inch by 22 inch page size paper founded in 1905, was edited and published by F. T. Sheppard.

Again, Mr. Sheppard didn't stay long. In about March of 1906 he moved to Gown, in Lincoln County, and started the Gown Argus. Three month later, in mid-June, the no-
tice appears in the Leavenworth Echo that Sheppard "has started a new paper, the Deer Park Union."

It's not known how long Mr. Shep-
pard stayed at the Union — and likely will never be unless certain critical early issues surface somewhere — but the first issue in Aver & Son's Newspaper Annual appears in the 1908 edition. Likely representing the paper's con-
figration in 1907, the Annual reported that W. D. Phillips was editor and publisher. It states the paper, released every Thursday, con-
tained 8 pages, each page being 15 inches wide by 22 inches long.

As for Mr. Sheppard, the next trace we find of him is in the April 2nd, 1909 edition of Idaho's Rathdrum Tribune. To quote, "John J. Schick, formerly a newspaper man of Moscow, has recently moved to the Post Falls Ad-

It almost appears as if Mr. Shep-
pard's business model was to start small-town newspapers, and then, sell them — assump-
tively at a profit — and move on.

Regarding the Union, and the dizzy-
ing turnover in ownership and editorship of the Union during its first four years of life, this can best be explained by an article clipped from the August 13th, 1910 edition of the Col-
ville Examiner.

"The Deer Park Union is now under the editorship and proprietorship of A. T. Brownlow, formerly of Chewelah, who recently purchased the plant from A. M. Wood. The Union was started four years ago by F. T. Sheppard, who some time later sold out to W. D. Phillips, who later took in A. M. Wood as a partner. Later Mr. Phillips retired, leaving Mr. Wood in control. Two years ago, when Mr. Brownlow took charge of the fi-
nances of the Arcadia Irrigation Association, he bought the paper under contract in the name of the Allen-Haynes Company, putting Dwight G. Stratton in charge. Brownlow is a good printer and a capable newspaper man, and Deer Park ought now to have an excellent paper."

The next place we find Frank Shep-
pard's name is an editorial reproduced in the January 23, 1911 edition of the Tacoma Times.

The reprint was part of a compilation of statewide editorial responses to the decision of a Seattle judge to jail a group of editors due to their publication of a critical assessment of one of the judge's first decisions. The Tacoma Times indicates the quoted material had origin-
ally appeared in the Medical Lake Mail — a Spokane County newspaper the Tacoma Times identified Mr. Sheppard as publishing.

"In Seattle lives an ancient judge. His name is Gilliam. He holds that it is a crime to criticize a judge, and especially must newspapers never antagonize his court rul-
ings."

He is ancient in that he recently brought into requisition a law abolished in the United States courts more than a half century ago, in arresting and sentencing the editors of the Seattle Daily Star for criticizing a ruling of the judge, and their offense was committed outside the court room, from their own office home, into which a later law forbids such insolent entrance.

"Anyhow, the editors of the Star were humiliated and condemned for the courage displayed in arraying themselves in opposition to the ruling of the judge, and their offense was committed outside the court room."

The Star editors have appealed, and Mr. Gilliam may be searching for another

The State of Washington has al-

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pard's name is an editorial reproduced in the January 23, 1911 edition of the Tacoma Times.
Letters, Email, Bouquets & Brickbats
— or —
Bits of Chatter, Trivia, & Notices — all strung together.

Clayton’s clay still draws interest...

As a matter of policy, one thing the C/DPHS has always tried to do is answer — or at least acknowledge if unable to answer — any inquiries directed to us by phone, email, or letter. More than once over the years we’ve fielded questions regarding means of obtaining samples or supplies of some of the better clays from the Clayton district. We recently received such a request from Robin DuPont, a ceramic artist with a rural home/workshop near Nelson, British Columbia.

After forwarding links to certain published materials on the regional clays, I explained to Robin, “Every so often we receive an inquiry regarding access to the former Washington Brick & Lime clays pits, usually for the purpose of extracting small amounts of clay for various personal projects. This tends to put the society in the rather difficult position of acting as an intermediate in negotiations for permission with local landowners. While the society tries to be as helpful as possible with matters relating to our primary mission of gathering and disseminating local history, we prefer not to be involved in projects that tend to pull our limited resources away from said mission. That said, if any of our members care to follow up on this with you, they will be contacting you directly.”

To enable any follow-ups, Robin agreed to the publication of his contact information, allowing anyone knowledgeable in the matter to pursue it with him directly if so inclined.

This is certainly not the first time Canada has shown an interest in Clayton’s finer pottery and porcelain grade clays — as noted in the following article from the December 20th, 1912, issue of the Deer Park Union.

“Five teams have been engaged to haul clay from the pits north of the city to the new shed built near the old mill (assumedly sawmill) siding, where it is daily loaded into cars and shipped to Medicine Hat, Canada. The Medicine Hat Porcelain Co. are the owners of these pits, and at one time seriously considered locating here, but enough capital and ground could not be secured. The town of Medicine Hat made this firm such a splendid offer that they located there. Three carloads of porcelain clay are shipped weekly from Deer Park to Medicine Hat.”

I wasn’t able to find any mention of the above noted Medicine Hat Pottery Company. I did, however, find mention of the Medicine Hat Pottery Company. This company was in business between 1912 and 1914. In December 1915, the holdings of the failed company were purchased and re- corporated as the Medalta Stoneware Company — a company that continued in one form or another at the same site until finally dissolved in 1954. Eventually the entire intact manufacturing complex was donated to the Province of Alberta, and is now a publicly accessible museum.

Page 45 of the August 2008 issue of Mortarboard (#4) contains the following description of a visit by this writer to the Medalta factory. “Our next stop was in southeast Alberta, where we toured Medicine Hat’s ‘Historic Clay District.’ The district includes the remains of a clay working factory with its original terracotta kilns. The local historical group has preserved and is restoring much of the old factory and its equipment — plus they have collected several thousand examples of terra cotta and stoneware produced by the factory, objects varying from giant sewer pipes to chicken watering devices.

“Historic Medalta porcelain was manufactured in 1920, but due to the late arrival of equipment, the factory didn’t go into actual production until 1913 as a corporate extension of the Western Porcelain Manufacturing Company of Spokane. The founder was an American, John A. McIntyre. Since Medicine Hat didn’t have any pottery grade clay — only brick grade — the clay for the factory was imported from Wash- ington. Though no mention was made of the actual Washington source for the clay, since the best pottery clay in the Spokane area is from Clayton, it could well have been us.

“The reason for McIntyre’s interest in Medicine Hat was that the kilns could be fired by an extremely ‘sweet’ and therefore exceptionally clean-burning natural gas — available from wells throughout the area. The original company went out of business within a year (two years) — apparently due to the cost of transporting those pottery grade clays from our state. Transportation cost about 10 to 12 dollars a ton — assuming that to be Can- nadian dollars, circa 1913. We just need to watch the historical records for any mention of Clayton clay going to Alberta in 1912 or ‘13. If we see such, we might be able to docu- ment a connection between Clayton and the Medicine Hat Pottery Works.”

“As soon as I heard of the site’s existence, the thing I wanted to see the most were the terracotta kilns. I wanted to see how they baffled the ware to prevent direct contact with the combustion gasses — I wanted to see a muffle kiln. It appears that one of the ad- vantages of using the locally available sweet, clean-burning natural gas was that the traditional muffle kiln wasn’t needed — assumedly because the gas wouldn’t leave combustion residue on the ware. Surprisingly, there were no facts. Since the people on site weren’t experts in industrial kilns, they couldn’t confirm that for me. So, I still don’t have a good idea of how the baffles were put around the wares in the Clayton kilns. But I did get a lot of photos relevant to Clayton — including details of the iron expansion bands used around the circular kilns, and a good look at the perforated, down-draft floors.

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Recently we did discover several other links between the Medicine Hat Pottery...
Company and the Western Porcelain Manufacturing Company — or at least links regarding John A. McIntyre. Located in a 2013 document described as an “Historic Context Paper” produced for the City of Medicine Hat is a line that reads “John A. McIntyre established the town’s first pottery, Medicine Hat Pottery Company Limited, in 1912.”

A second source states that in 1912 the City of Medicine Hat — obviously to sweeten the deal — offered McIntyre free land, reduced utility rates, and tax exemptions to locate his factory in the city. The exact date of this short-lived factory’s closing is not known, but is generally stated as having been sometime in 1914.

As for the fate of the McIntyre’s Western Porcelain Manufacturing Company, the Fourteenth Biennial Report of Washington’s Secretary of State indicated the company — as was typical for dissolved corporations — was “stricken from the registers since last report, for failure to pay annual license fee.” dated as of September 30, 1914.

As part of his artisanic process, the craftsman, Robin DuPont, uses a homebuilt woodfired kiln that, unlike the miniature kilns used by Clayton’s terracotta factory, allows the combustion gases to come in direct contact with the wares being fired. Robin says this introduces an unpredictability to the appearance of the final work — an unpredictability that would be undesirable in most commercial grade products.

In his emails Robin stated, “My primary concern is finding a sustainable source of material for my ceramic practice.” Robin’s email address is robin@robindupont.com, his phone (+1) (250) 226-6964, and his website can be drawn up at http://robindupont.com.

... where the Big Foot Valley got its name ...

When multiple versions of a story exist, it’s often best to go with the earliest written account. In the case of the naming of Steven County’s Big Foot Valley, the most vintage bit of print so far uncovered comes from the front page of the May 3rd, 1913, Loon Lake Times.

That newspaper claims, “Some fifteen years ago R. E. Jones, his son Urias, and Bob Twees were discus the relative sizes of their shoes, and it was discovered that it took a pretty big piece of leather to cover their feet. ‘That settles it,’ said Urias, ‘we will name this place Big Foot Valley!’ And that has been its name ever since.”

So, did Urias Jones, in meditation of his foot, name the valley? Evidence aside, we’re sure the debate will continue...

... and what, exactly, is being left unsaid ...

Several months ago, the society received an email in which the sender asked to be put in touch with the author of “Standing Watch: The Story of Deer Park’s Atlas Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, 1961 — 1965.”

Your editor is the writer responsible for that 24,000-word article, first published by the society back in 2006 in Volume Two of the Reports to the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society. Since the entire text is currently viewable on the society’s website, and the print volume continues to be offered through the society, it’s rare but not unknown for it to still generate a request for comment. And that was my first assumption when the above noted email was forwarded to me — that a fellow writer (likely amateur, possibly professional) was inquiring about his own research into the subject of early ICBMs.

But then, several things in this incoming email seemed odd. One was a ‘boilerplate’ statement of confidentiality attached to the bottom of the page. Such statements are, as intended, at least mildly if not overtly threatening. These boilerplates are most often found on emails sent from corporate or professional organizations. In this case the professional source was clearly a law firm.

The message itself said the sender was interested in the Atlas missile program in general, the activities of Fairchild’s 567 Strategic Missile Squadron in particular, and would like to be placed in contact with “Wally Lee Parker,” author of the “Standing Watch” article, regarding the same. What drew me to a halt was an indication in the note that the sender was most interested in some of my sources — meaning, I believe, the missickers I interviewed.

I suppose speculating on why this law firm wants contact information for my prior sources would be a violation of their email’s boilerplate — though a visit to the firm’s website produces a very strong hint as to their objectives. And that leaves me with the dilemma of what to do about this inquiry and the legal implications surrounding it. So, I wrote the following, addressed directly to the individual sending the email.

“The first question I need to ask is — is your inquiry related to a personal project, or is your interest in my research related to your work for the above noted law firm? I was cautioned by the attachment to your email that the contents were strictly confidential since they might contain ‘information that is privileged, attorney work product, or exempt from disclosure.’ The society and my volunteer work with it is based on the collaborative sharing of information in the pursuit of historical knowledge. Clauses stating things like the above strike me as antithetical to that. Therefore, from this point forward I will not respond to any email containing or implying a caution that would forbid disclosing the nature of the correspondence to the society membership directly or by newsletter. And I will not engage in any communications other than written.”

“I would begin by stating that my research for the Standing Watch article was completed some twelve years ago. As new sources have opened, it’s likely some of that data needs revision. It’s also likely that a fair portion of my personal contacts, considering the current age of the typical Atlas missioneer, are no longer with us. That considered, if you’d care to email any questions you might have, I’ll pursue those that seem appropriate as free time from the normal course of my research and writing permits.”

And in other words, I wanted to know everything about the firm’s inquiry that might be considered “information that is privileged, attorney work product, or exempt from disclosure,” along with permission to fully disclose it to everyone.

At this point it appears the individual penning the original inquiry has lost interest. So, I’ll consider the matter closed.

... Williams Valley Telephone Company ...

Below is the text of the editor’s reply to an email inquiry regarding a 1929 stock certificate issued by the Williams Valley Telephone Company. Though we had little firm information for the questioner, the early telephone companies are a continuing subject of interest, and the society would very much like to hear from anyone having information regarding these early enterprises. We would also like to copy for our archives any documentation that may further enhance our understanding of this complicated subject.

The society’s reply read: “Regarding your July 27th email to Bill Sbrighit on behalf of your grandson, we do have some thoughts on the matter, but none that should be considered authoritative. We’re simply unsure regarding any solved regional companies — such as mining companies and oil and natural gas drilling companies. In most cases our layman’s opinion is that any capital value in these kinds of certificates has likely dissolved with the company. With the Williams Valley Telephone Company, the answer would likely depend upon the circumstance of its dissolution. Was it simply allowed to fold, as most of the companies in the Bell system? And if it was absorbed, was a payout made to the stockholders at that time? These are questions that
Links to Prior Mortarboard Articles about Local Telephone Companies.

In attendance: Bill Sebright, Pat Par- ker, Wally Parker, Mark Wagner, Sue Rehms, Mike Reiter, Pete Coffin, Denny Deahl, John Simmons, Judy Coffin, Roxanne Camp, Mari- lyn Reilly, Betty Burdette, Bill Phipps, Chuck Lyons, and Rick Brodrick.

Society President Bill Sebright called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. He reported that: 1) We received two thank you cards from people winning trophies sponsored by Pete and Judy Coffin in the name of the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society from a Camaro Club Car Show. 2) Dianne Allert ... to the group. 4) At the Brickyard Day (BYD) display Howard Justice said he had a complete collection of BYD buttons, hats, and shirts. He gave them to Mark who brought them to the meeting. It’s quite a col-
lection. A picture of the first and last button is attached (page 1546).

Society Treasurer Mark Wagner re-ported the main checking account ended the month at $6,352.50. There were deposits of $338.86. One check was written to Sue Kelsch for $50.00 for ads, one for $236.38 to Discount Sign Warehouse for shirts, one for $76.60 to Wally Parker for a Prestini Plate, one to Discount Sign Warehouse for $273.77 for shirts, one for $300.00 to Standen Insur-
ance for Brickyard Day Insurance, and one to Big D Septic for $20.00 for Brickyard Day. The web hosting account ended the month at $694.91, with a withdrawal of $10.95 for web hosting.

Society Vice President Pete Coffin reported that: 1) In response to a request from
Antique Boat Propeller Recovered from Loon Lake in Early 1970s. 
Speculation as to original owner.

Area resident Rick Brodrick — pictured above — brought an approximately 15 inch wide brass boat propeller he and a friend found while diving in Loon Lake in the early 1970s to the August meeting. The dive site was several hundred feet from the sunken hull of what is locally assumed to be one of Evan Morgan’s large motor launches from the early decades of the 20th century. While the manufacturer of the prop, the Bryant & Berry Company of Detroit, Michigan, appears to have been in business when Evan Morgan was operating power launches on the lake, we’ve found no evidence connecting the prop to any of his water craft. We know excursion size propeller driven boats have been operating on Loon Lake since the early 1890s. That said, this does appear to be a vintage propeller, and any further information regarding propellers of this type, or of the company that produced this specific one, would be appreciated.
community wide involvement. Without such involvement, this historical society will simply disappear — as so many of the community’s wealth of personal recollections already have.

Webmaster Marie Morrill reported by email that, “I have uploaded both July and August Mortarboards. I was truly in a no-internet area last month. I will not be at the meeting again this Saturday, having another commitment for the whole day out in Otis Orchards. See you in September, I’m pretty sure!”

Mike Reiter, Rick Brodrick, Bill Phipps and Wally Parker all discussed the possible wreck of the Gwen (mentioned in Wally’s report). Rick brought a brass propeller found near the west side of Loon Lake. See attached pictures (page 1549).

The Settlers Day display went well. Thanks to Mark Wagner and Mike Reiter for setting up and taking down the display. Thanks to Lorraine for helping “man” the booth.

Brickyard Day went well. One concern is that the parade didn’t have many entries. We are looking for ideas to increase the number of entries. Thanks to Lorraine Nord and Sue Rehms for helping “man” the display. Thanks to Pete and Judy Coffin for helping to set up the display, and to Pete and Buck Armstrong for taking down the displays.

It was stated at the meeting that the Williams Valley Grange closed several months ago and is for sale. Bill checked with Lynn Wells (from the State Grange), who said, “The Williams Valley Grange is NOT closed and is NOT for sale.” Lynn also added: Per the State Convention report in the Grange News August/September issue this week, Clayton won 3rd place for Community Service, Class 1 for size 30 members, Williams Valley 2nd place in Class 3 for 45-65 members, and Excelcior Pomona (South Stevens Co. 7 granges) Class 5 for size, won 2nd place. Not all the community involvement takes place at the halls.

Next meeting: Saturday, September 9, 2017, at 9 AM at the Clayton Drive-In. Meeting adjourned at 9:57 AM.

The Society meeting minutes submitted by Mark Wagner, acting Secretary.

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. Copyright considerations for any materials submitted are stated in the “Editorial and Copyright Policy” dialog box found on page 1,548 of this issue. For any clarifications regarding said policy, or any discussions of possible story ideas or the appropriateness of certain types of material and so on, please contact the editor via the email address supplied on the same page.

— the editor ——

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.

C/DPHS, Box 293, Clayton, WA 99110
Bill Sebright, President — sebrightba@gmail.com — (509) 276-2693
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— C/DPHS ——

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