Just Think!
The farms and fields you see all around were taken one square foot at a time from the post-glacial forest that once covered this valley.

Join the Clayton / Deer Park Historical Society, and help preserve this region’s natural and social history.
Blacksmith Shop that at that time stood on the corner of Main and Crawford where the Coast Inn Service Station is now located, and which served as the general store with living rooms upstairs. A lumber mill was operating here, which soon developed into a larger plant and offered market for forest products, and a number of small mills were located in the country adjacent, on Wild Rose Prairie, the Meadowbrook district, and other nearby places.

With these small opportunities, the pioneers began making their homes on the homesteads they had taken. Stumps were pulled by men and horses, no stump pullers until E. C. Casberg brought in one later that proved a boon to the whole district. So heavy was the forest growth and so isolated the pioneers that it is told that the Walbridge family moved to Williams Valley from the Naches Valley in 1886 after that family had been living on their newly acquired homestead eight months. A part of their time the men worked out and obtained enough for clothing. Tom Irish was a carpenter and gave much valuable aid to the settlers in building their farm houses. A little later Ed Krick, the Edwards family, M. E. Kratzer and others came in, and the community grew in numbers and farms that were in the making.

By the slow process of handwork and their horses a few acres were cleared and planted, and farms began to assume shape. But the struggle was long and hard, such as need not be faced now with modern methods of land clearing with explosives and machines. It was heroic work that these pioneer men and women undertook, hewing out their homes along with the daily living, raising their families and providing them with proper training, and what they have today is a monument to their intrepid spirit.

Williams Valley today is one of the productive, desirable farm districts in their fortunes. Good homes, good soil is fertile, and the well tilled lands and dairy herds of the settlers speak well for the future. There are very few of those who came in the early days and won their way who would let go of what they have, even though the price paid in labor and privation was so great. While the district is well settled, there are still a good many sections unused, and these can be made into farms much more cheaply and with less labor than these men were forced to give for their homes.

Today the valley is largely a district of dairy farms, with sufficient acreage for the farmers to raise the products necessary for feed for stock, and a residue for selling on the market, and those who have the qualities in them are steadily going ahead in their fortunes. Good homes, good schools and church privileges make it one of the choice home districts adjacent to Deer Park.

——— end ———


Very Early Settlement of the North Spokane Area

by

Peter Coffin

It has been commented that the Historical Society does not pay sufficient attention to the history of our area prior to 1880. The presenters at the 2018 meeting identified that there was a lack of population data in eastern Washington prior to 1880. They emphasized the need for additional research to fill this gap and provide a more complete understanding of the early settlement of the Spokane area.

In 1805-1806, explorers traveled through the very southern portion of present-day Washington on their return journey from the Kettle Falls and at Spokane House. In 1825 Fort Colville was established near the confluence of the Spokane and Little Spokane Rivers. During the period from 1811 to 1830 a few Europeans may have trapped fur for sale to the Hudson’s Bay trading posts at Kettle Falls and at Spokane House. In 1825 Fort Colville was established near the confluence of the Spokane and Little Spokane Rivers. During the period from 1811 to 1830 a few Europeans may have trapped fur for sale to the Hudson’s Bay trading posts at Kettle Falls and at Spokane House. In 1825 Fort Colville was established near the confluence of the Spokane and Little Spokane Rivers. During the period from 1811 to 1830 a few Europeans may have trapped fur for sale to the Hudson’s Bay trading posts at Kettle Falls and at Spokane House.

In 1852 Fort Colville was established near the confluence of the Spokane and Little Spokane Rivers. During the period from 1811 to 1830 a few Europeans may have trapped fur for sale to the Hudson’s Bay trading posts at Kettle Falls and at Spokane House.
population of Indians in the area was estimated to be 4500 in all of the original Stevens County, Washington. The tribes of Indians listed as composing this number were: ‘...Spokane, Coeur d’Alene, Isle de Pierre, Sig- Poel, Okanogan, Lake, Colville and Calispe1’ (Durham, p. 165). The Isle de Pierre tribe was a Salish speaking band living on both sides of the Columbia River south from the present Grand Coulee Dam.

David Douglas visited eastern Washington and Spokane House in 1826 during his botanizing trip. On the trip he took souvenirs from the Spokane Valley across the mountains to somewhere near the original Garden Spot area and then on south to near the Colville River (Nisbet, p. 82-83). He did not mention seeing Loon Lake but does describe the Europeans at Spokane House and the Indian encampment near it. He described the area as an open forest and easy to travel through because the Indians had repeatedly burned the undergrowth. He did not mention any European inhabitants except to describe Spokane House as a gathering place for the Indians and trappers.

In the period from 1830 to 1848 there were several Protestant missionary outposts established in eastern Washington. In the late summer of 1835, David Douglas Spalding opened a mission to the Indians at Fort Walla Walla and in 1838 Elkanah Walker and Cushing Eells founded a Spokane Mission at Tschimakain (‘Place of Springs’) (Dryden p. 96). These missions continued operating until Indian unrest and the November 1847 Whitman Massacre made migration into the area undesirable. The Oregon country was officially organized after the boundary between England Canada and the United States had been formalized by treaty (Dryden, p. 109). By 1855 the territory population was counted at 13,284 with 1049 listed as living north of the Columbia River, mostly in the Vancouver and Puget Sound areas.

With the discovery of gold in the early 1850s in the mountains of eastern Washington and Idaho, miners and prospectors began to enter the area and threaten the Indians’ way of life. Territorial Governor Stevens began a series of trips into eastern Washington to sign treaties with the Indians and establish reserves. In 1855 he began the process of diversion to the Colville mining areas were killed by hostile Indians and resulted in the need for military protection. The military commander of the area, General Wool, thought that the miners and prospectors had brought the troubles on themselves, established military law, and forbade white men from entering the claims (Dryden, p. 129). This did not solve the Indian unrest as more government officials were killed and the Indian unrest continued to fester. Wool was replaced by Colonel Wright whose program was one of military pacification of the problem. This resulted in the May 1858 Colonel Steptoe military expedition to pacify the Spokane Indians and his subsequent defeat (Dryden, p. 132-136). Colonel Wright then took a large military operation into the field to defeat the Indians and quell the uprising finally killing about 800 of the horses that the Indians relied upon for war operations and hang some of their leaders.

During this time, from 1830 to 1860, land in eastern Washington area was not particularly attractive for settlement with the war in the north tending to discourage the immigration of white settlers. Access into the area was limited to routes such as the military road between Fort Walla Walla and Fort Colville which followed an old Indian trail. Other roads from Walla Walla to crossings of the Spokane River including the Kentuck Trail, Texas Road, the Old Northern Road, and the Mullen Road (1859-1862). The Cottonwood Road was cut south from Colville in 1867, and on through north Spokane County to connect with the Mullan Road and allow Colville Valley farmers to sell their products to prospectors going into Idaho (Coffin, 2010, p. 310).

After 1859 more treaties were signed with the Indians and increased migration into eastern Washington began. The Willamette Meridian was established by the Federal Government in 1851 so that formal land claims could be filed. The grasslands of southeast Washington were more attractive than the area of north Spokane with its stands of timber that would have to be cleared so farming could begin. By 1873 there were only 350 white people living in present Spokane, Douglas and Lincoln Counties.

There were several ways land could be acquired by a settler. Homesteading was one of the most popular means of acquiring land from the government. The Homestead Act of 1864 encouraged migration into the western United States. It required an interested person to pay an $18 fee to claim as much as 160 acres. The act required the claimant to establish a residence on the land near Tschimakain (Dryden, p. 129). The act required the claimant to improve the land for five years before a certificate of title could be issued. It is valid to assume that a homesteader would want to earn title to the land as soon as he could. In making this assumption in the Deer Park area one can review the dates area homestead land certificates were awarded and then subtract five years to estimate a date when a claim was filed and thus determine an approximate date that settlers began to populate the area.

The earliest estimated dates in the immediate Deer Park townsite are in 1886 when August Sigmund filed to homestead the W2/2 W/2 (west ½ of the west ½) Section 2-Township 28 North-Range 42 East WM (East Willamette Meridian). This tract of land includes most of downtown Deer Park north from H Street to 6th Street and north from Margaret Avenue to approximately Margaret Avenue.

Another possible 1886 homesteader was Peter Meyers who claimed a homestead of 160 acres in the summer 1886. Peter Meyers lived in present Spokane, Douglas and Lincoln Counties.

REFERENCES:
Clayton’s 35th Brickyard Day
—— August 4th, 2018 ——

photo essay by
the editorial group
photos by
J. L. Brian
Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society Newsletter
Issue #126 — October — 2018

Image #4:
The year’s Honored Citizens, Nina and Jim Palmer. They’re being chauffeured in Pete and Judy Coffin’s 1967 Camaro.

Image #5:
The Clayton Community Fair float, with Queen Kari (right) and Princess Hannah.

Image #6:
The parade reviewing stand. Elizabeth Gillam and Andy Carson, announcers.

Image #7:
Mike and Teri Sardinia’s Clydesdales.

Image #8:
Stevens County Fire District #1. The engine is from the Loon Lake station.
Image #9: Fred and Kathy Brown’s 1926 Willis Knight --- the restoration finished just a day or two before this summer’s Settler’s Day parade.


Image #11: Margie Malek’s 1941 Ford pickup being chauffeured by a friend. Note the enlarged detail from the photo.
... in search of Leno’s fame ...

Over the last several decades our understanding of the life and works of Clayton’s favorite artist, Leno Prestini, has greatly increased. Quite a few of the apocryphal stories about him have been put to rest. And as our focus has sharpened, a number of the remaining stories have been whittled to a finer point. That doesn’t mean we know anywhere near what we should of this gentleman. It just means we know more than we previously did. Like many artists, Leno led a messy life. And I suspect it’s accurate to say that much of his art was inspired by the wreckage left after his most painful days. Anyone who views his artwork with a sensitive eye should come to that same conclusion. Much of the mess is there; the doubts; the self-criticism; the romantic and social passions. And much of that resides in a jumble of colorful ciphers, begging to be untangled. Also, right there — at the point of impact between the lines and shapes and hues on canvas, and the artistic impulses that laid those things down — is the elemental schism separating art from reality. The fact is there is no reliable dictionary of artistic symbolism that will allow us to explain Leno’s artwork without immersing ourselves in a vaporous stream of psychobabble.

It’s probable each of us, if so motivated, will have to find our own means of understanding Leno’s works. As a suggestion, the first skill to brush up on is how to look with an appraising eye. And the first step down that path is to remind ourselves that well engineered art reflects back at the viewer more than it reveals of the artist. The simple truth being, well-engineered art is theater. It’s applied dramatics. It’s a piece of stage dressing on which our own imaginations are set loose to play. And if we want to look deeper, if we want to speculate on what pieces of the artist’s own heart or history he or she is putting into the canvas — rather than the pieces of ourselves the artwork is reflecting back — we’ll need to understand something of the artist and something of his techniques.

We could bundle it all up in a tidy package by turning to an art expert; a lady or gentleman with a litany of letters after his or her name, whom, for a small stipend — likely in the order of four digits — will read a few pieces of the available literature and spend a day or two observing Leno’s artwork and taking notes. Then he or she will write a few thousand critical words possibly saying something worth hearing, or, more than likely, a few thousand words suggestive of his or her well educated ability to occupy literary space without an excessive outlay of effort. That’s one way to search for Leno — though it appears Leno’s prior experiences with learned criticism did not go all that well.

Comments Policy

We encourage anyone with observations, concerns, corrections, divergent opinions or additional materials relating to the contents of these newsletters to write the society or contact one or more of the individuals listed in the “Society Contacts” box found in each issue. Resultant conversations can remain off-the-record if so desired.
Another way is to do as much as possible to remove the theatrical overlay — this in an attempt to see what’s beneath the surface of the art. Dissolving such will require a basic understanding of what lies to lay down the images. One source for that kind of knowledge would be working artists — an approach that was tried once before.

In the spring of 2008 the Stevens County, Loom Lake, and Clayton/Deer Park Historical Societies formed a working committee referred to as the Prestini Project. One of the objectives of that group was to create a book containing everything then known of Leno Prestini’s history — a book illustrated by his artwork rendered in full color. One of the methods proposed to gather interpretive insights for this book was a showing of Leno’s art designed specifically for regional artists. Referred to as the “Attic Showing,” I recorded the nature of this event in the following posting to my website, the Bogwe Report Online.

“The October 25, 2008, the Stevens County Historical Society held a private showing of its entire Leno Prestini collection for a small group of local artists. Arranged in the attic of the society’s Colville museum this presentation was in large part the doing of Glendine Leonard, the museum’s librarian and archivist. Glendine was chairperson of a now discontinued committee tasked with refreshing the public’s interest in Leno’s art. This showing was an attempt to solicit interpretations of Leno’s style, techniques and the like from the region’s art community.”

Despite outreach to the arts community mailing invitations to a number of the area’s artists and art instructors, plus posting notices on art-related websites and such, the event was sparsely attended and most of those that did show up were working artists. That said, enough interesting insights were gained from the working artists that did show up to justify the concept, if not the execution.

Suffice to say, before dissolution the Prestini Project achieved close to zero of its long-term goals. It did however provide those willing to learn from their mistakes with an education on how to do things better should the opportunity ever again arise.

The first thing would be a clear statement of intentions, for example, to assemble Leno Prestini an enduring and significant position in the art history of the Inland Pacific Northwest. As far as statements go, it could be as simple as that.

Secondly would be to specify a singular means for achieving that goal — singular at least as far as this particular iteration of a working group is concerned.

The original Prestini Project touched on the idea of creating a coffee-table book of Leno’s art — meaning a selection of Leno’s paintings presented in a format intended for both the casual collector and mildly curious. Part of the problem with such was that this idea was bundled with at least a half dozen other Prestini related projects — a video presentation, a virtual database, and several more. Each of these ideas drained both energy and funds away until all was gone.

What if we were to alter the coffee-table book idea? What if the single goal was to create a nicely packaged photobook presentation containing as many images of Leno’s artwork as could be gathered? What if this photobook were done with the idea of being suitable for inclusion in visual and fine arts libraries throughout the world, as well as being available to anyone else interested in Leno’s work? What if the images were laid out in chronological order? What if the book was also published in a lower cost virtual edition?

The idea here is drawn from something artist David Govedare said after 2008’s “Attic Showing.” Viewing the entirety of the Stevens County Historical Society’s Prestini collection, all arranged by date of completion (from the early 1930s to the late 1950s), David noted how unusual it was to see such a large part of a painter’s entire working life — close to 70 pieces — in one room. To David’s trained eye the impact was both startling and insightful. Would the effect be just as impressive and instructive if the artwork was dancing through the pages of a well-crafted book?

For this to work, we’d need people with skills, both amateur and professional, willing to donate such without quid pro quo. Conflicts of interest arising from an expectation of personal or corporate profit is a sure way to doom a project of this nature.

The problem is, creating such a publication would be a massive undertaking. And there just isn’t sufficient interest in the community. We know this because — when it comes to matters of an historic nature — groups such as ours deal with a significant degree of recognition within the arts community — something he appears to have never enjoyed when still with us.

——— Wally Lee Parker ———

DPHS annual from Chuck Stewart to digitize for our collection.

6) Bill brought a Clayton Boy Scout Troop 108 folder. We...
Deer Park Automobile Exhibited at Dearborn, Michigan’s Henry Ford Museum,” this by your editor. The Letters/Brickbats column carries a list of all the local high school annus- als currently in the society’s collection. 2) Tentative plans for the October Mortarboard include a reprint of a 1927 Deer Park Union article by then editor G. H. Rice titled “Pioneer Residents of Williams Valley,” a piece by Pete Coffin titled “Very Early Settle- ment of the North Spokane Area,” and a photo essay of Clayton’s 35th annual Brickyard Day. Webmaster Marie Morrill reported by email, “I am out of town again... celebrating our anniversary. Haven’t seen the Mortar- board. I will check when I get home.” Pete Coffin reported: 1) I have digit- ized the Deer Park High School Antler Annu- als for 1961, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973 and 1974. All have been sent to Darren Keitel who manages the DPHS Classmates Facebook site. 2) Tried to help Gary Hordeman with information about the Deer Park Airport. He has written a book about drag racing at the airport and he is add- ing to it. Leno Prestini is the theme for next year’s Brickyard Day. Ideas were floated about putting together a bigger display of Leno’s work. Interpreting the meaning behind some of the specific Prestini paintings by an art professional was discussed. Pete is willing to take images of some of Leno’s work for display. Mike Reiter reported by email, “We’re cooling our heels on the Clark Fork north of St. Regis, so we won’t make the meeting.” Next meeting: Saturday, October 13, 2018, at 9:00 AM at the Clayton Grange Hall. Meeting adjourned at 10:02 AM. The Society meeting minutes submit- ted by Mark Wagner, acting Secretary.

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