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Illustrations from "Collier's Magazine," October 21st, 1905.

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The 1891 Murder Trial of John C. Hoefer — Deer Park Rancher & Store Owner —

by
Wally Lee Parker

... the shooting ...

Other than the newspaper accounts referenced here, I've yet to find any further trace of the shooter, John C. Hoefer, or his family. The files containing 1890's federal census — our best chance of retrieving at least some reliable data — were largely destroyed during a Washington, D. C. fire in January of 1921. A search of Washington State's late

territorial censuses for both Spokane and Stevens Counties (Pend Oreille County still a part of Stevens County at that time) came up blank. It's hoped that someday other records may be uncovered, allowing us to flesh this story out a bit more.

As to what information we do have, our introduction to Mr. Hoefer and his plight begins with the October 2nd, 1890 editions of both the *Spokane Falls Review*, and the *Spo-*

Washington State Digital Archives — Census Records:

Territorial and Other Censuses by County.

<https://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/Collections#RSID:3>

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kane Falls Daily Chronicle.

In heavy block letters, a headline on page three of that day's *Review* declares, "A FATAL SHOOTING," followed by three sub-headlines; "Doc Ellis, a Notorious Confidence Man, Killed by One of His Victims; An Exciting Chase on Howard Street Last Night Ending in a Death; J. C. Hoefer, the Murderer, Surrenders to the Police and is Locked Up."

The writeup began, "Another murder was committed in the city last night, and another man lies dead in the city morgue."

"Henry Ellis, a well-known sure thing gambler, has played his last game, and has victimized his last man."

Curious about the term "sure thing gambler," I found this definition in Joseph M. Sullivan's 1908 edition of "Criminal Slang: A Dictionary of the Vernacular of the Underworld." To quote, "A character who bets with suckers at race-tracks and steals himself when he is broke." As for that dictionary's definition of "sucker," it's simply a "victim of thieves."

That fairly well settled, the story continues, "A few minutes past 7 o'clock last evening the neighborhood in the vicinity of Howard and First Street was startled by three pistol shots fired in rapid succession. Everybody who was in the stores and saloons rushed to the street to find out the cause. They saw a man stagger across Howard Street and fall to the sidewalk on the corner of Railroad Avenue. A moment later Officer Volk arrived, and, pressing through the crowd, arrested the man who had done the fatal shooting, who was still standing near his victim, revolver in hand."

The *Chronicle's* introduction to the story adds that the shooter was "a German rancher from Deer Park" who'd arrived in town with "two carloads of wood and in early evening was looking about for a buyer." I'm assuming we're talking about cordwood — firewood. Regarding the phrase "carloads," the normal assumption would be such was a reference to railroad cars — which a later *Chronicle* article, using the phrase "He had shipped two carloads of wood to Spokane,"

appears to confirm.

The October 2nd *Chronicle* then printed a longish quote attributed to Mr. Hoefer that seems tantamount to a confession. "I came in from Deer Park with my wood, and was looking for a buyer. I stepped into the Echo Saloon, next to the Comique."

The notorious Echo Saloon was located on the northwest corner of Main Avenue and Wall Street — the latter then called Mill Street. Today the address for that space is 702 W. Main Avenue, with the store in place there called Urban Outfitters. One door west of the Echo was the Comique, an equally notorious comedy theater — the word "Comique" being translated in the "Concise French Dictionary" segment of my massive *Random House Dictionary* as meaning "funny, comical." The current structure occupying that space — 706 W. Main — houses the menswear store Jos. A. Bank.

Hoefer's quote continues, "I asked the bartender if he wanted to buy any wood. He said he didn't, but that I could find plenty of buyers. Just then this man came in, and the bartender introduced him to me as Doc Ellis, so I supposed he was a doctor. He said if I would go with him, he could sell the wood for me in a 'jiffy.' We went over south here on First Street and went into a fruit store with a room in the back. Here Doc said, 'Here is a man who beat me at cards last week, stake me with half a dollar and I'll get even with him.' I gave him the money and he kept on borrowing until he got \$170, then he got up and started to run. I put my hand on his arm and said, 'Hold on partner, you're not going to run. I want some black and white for that money.' He kept on running. I ran after him, calling to him to stop. I saw he didn't intend to stop, so I drew my revolver and fired in the air. A policeman (Officer Volk) standing on the corner also called to him to stop and fired in the air. Just then I saw Ellis start around a dark corner and just as he was passing behind the building I drew the pistol down on him and fired. He dropped to the sidewalk and I gave myself up to the officer. I am a good shot and

could have hit him easily the first time, but I didn't want to kill him."

The *Chronicle* adds that "The revolver used was a Smith & Wesson thirty-two caliber. The ball entered Ellis's back just below the left shoulder blade, and, passing through the left lung, came out below the nipple."

A witness to the shooting, Mr. R. H. MacArthur, told the *Spokane Falls Review*, "I was walking up Howard Street and had just arrived at the corner of First when I saw a man run around from First Street into Howard and go in the direction of the railroad track. A second later another man turned the corner and called out, 'Stop thief; stop thief.' As the thief didn't stop, the man pulled a revolver and fired a shot into the air. Officer Volk, who was near, also saw the man running, and he too fired a shot into the air. This shot was followed by another, and I saw the man stagger across Howard Street and fall into the vacant lot on the corner of Railroad Avenue. When I arrived there, he was unconscious and in a dying condition."

The *Review* described the scene immediately after the shooting thusly. "The man lying on the sidewalk was Henry Ellis, familiarly known as 'Little Doc.' He had a bullet hole through his body, and the blood was gushing in a stream from the wound and from his mouth. 'Uncle' Whitney's wagon was summoned, and Ellis was carefully lifted into it, but it had barely started for the police station when he breathed his last. The body was immediately taken to the city morgue, where it remained for some time unidentified."

Regarding the above reference to "Uncle Whitney's wagon," several unrelated newspaper articles indicate that around the time of the shooting there was a business on Howard Street known — either officially or commonly — as Uncle Whitney's.

The dead man was well known in Spokane, and poorly thought of, as suggested by these comments from the *Review*. "He has always borne a hard reputation and although not looked up as a particularly dangerous man, was regarded as a most unscrupulous

gambler and confidence man. He has been rooming at the Atlantic House on Post Street since he last came to this city."

As for Mr. Ellis's wider reputation, several days after the shooting the *Review* printed this, datelined "Port Townsend, Wash., Oct. 3. — Henry or 'Doc' Ellis, the confidence operator shot at Spokane Falls Tuesday, was well known in this city. He was the leader of an organized gang of bunco-steerers, who made the Puget sound passenger packets their base of operations. Ellis ran on the City of Kingston for several weeks, fleecing tourists out of several hundred dollars. About a month ago the matter was reported to Special Officer J. A. Moore. Moore kept a sharp watch for him, but the latter, on hearing that the officers were on the lookout for him, transferred his base of operations to Spokane Falls."

Joseph Sullivan's 1908 dictionary of "Criminal Slang" defines "Bunco" as simply "to rob," and "Steerer" as the "pilot for a band of thieves." That seems to give a fairly good understanding to the above's use of the term "bunco-steerers." As for the term "passenger packets," that usually referred to medium size boats used to carry passengers, mail, and freight on rivers and inland waterways. Another newspaper blip, this found on page six of the *Pullman Herald's* October 11th 1890 edition, reported that "Little Doc Ellis, killed recently at Spokane Falls, was obliged to leave San Francisco not long ago on account of his swindling propensities."

Regarding Doc Ellis's last swindle, I had been puzzled why a rancher from Deer Park coming to Spokane to sell "two carloads of wood" would be carrying what at the time amounted to a very large amount of cash — that before having made any such sale. The *Spokane Falls Review* quoted Mr. Hoefer as saying, "I came up to the city from my home in Deer Park, intending to sell a couple of carloads of wood and make some purchases for my store." Though this seems to explain the amount of cash in hand, it also appears somewhat at odds with the *Chronicle's* identification of Mr. Hoefer as "a German rancher from

Deer Park” — with no mention of him living in the town itself or owning a store there.

That aside, the *Review* did note that after the shooting, “*Hoefer immediately gave himself up to Officer Volk, who turned him over to Officer Wilson. He was conducted to the city jail and locked up.*”

... *obtaining bail* ...

The day after the above “*conducted to the city jail*” comment was printed, the *Review* corrected itself when it noted that the defendant had “*passed his time since the shooting*” under the watch of “*Officer Manley.*” And that “*He is not locked up in the jail but is kept in one of the rooms in the city hall.*”

That didn’t seem to last long. The October 4th edition of the *Review* stated that “*Hoefer was committed to jail to await the (preliminary) hearing.*”

That same day the *Chronicle* reported that, “*Doc Ellis, who was shot Wednesday night, was buried at Fairmount Cemetery this afternoon.*” There is a Henry Ellis interred at Fairmount Memorial Park. No dates are recorded, other than that he was 28 years old at the time of his passing.

The October 7th edition of the *Spokane Falls Review* stated that “*J. J. Lynch, for whom Ellis formerly worked, paid all expenses of the funeral,*” — an interesting comment considering that at the time Mr. Lynch appears to have been one of the co-owners of the Echo Saloon in which Mr. Hoefer and Mr. Ellis were introduced. The person doing the introduction was later identified as the Echo’s bartender, John Hennessey. Opinions obtained from several police officers during Mr. Hoefer’s subsequent trial indicated that Mr. Hennessey was something of a shady character himself. The testimony infers that Doc Ellis may also have worked as a barkeep, though any suggestion that doing such at the Echo Saloon was the substance of Ellis’s employment by J. J. Lynch doesn’t appear to have been pursued at trail.

On October 15th, the *Chronicle* noted

that “*Joseph Hoefer, who killed Doc Ellis, the tinhorn gambler and robber, was released on \$1,000 bond by Judge Dunning yesterday. Hoefer was almost insane from brooding over his trouble and was the happiest man in the city when he obtained his release.*”

That same day’s report from the *Review* indicated that the bond was “*\$500 cash and \$500 written ...*” And that “*Two well-known citizens of Spokane Falls, Lewis Budde and Ferdinand Hass, stepped forward and furnished the necessary amount of the bond and Hoefer left the courtroom in their company. He returned yesterday afternoon to the home in Deer Park on the Spokane Falls & Northern Railroad.*”

Regarding the above Lewis Budde, there was a prominent businessman in Spokane at that time by that name, though his first name was spelled Louis. Mr. Louis Budde’s obituary, this from the May 19th, 1926 issue of the *Spokesman-Review*, noted that he had arrived in Spokane in 1887. “*He built a large store on Riverside, which was burned in the fire of 1889.*” Regarding such, the September 11th, 1889 edition of the *Spokane Falls Review* — published just 38 days after the fire — reported that “*Louis Budde has opened, corner Monroe Street and Riverside Avenue, with a complete stock of dry goods. Prices lower than before the fire.*” Before he left Washington State in 1902, Mr. Budde had also opened stores in Cheney, Sprague, Harrington, Spangle, Dayton, and Prescott. Whether spelled Lewis or Louis, as a prominent businessman he doubtless would have had the means to post bail for Mr. Hoefer.

The name Ferdinand Hass was proving a bit of a problem until I found this in the August 9th, 1887 *Spokane Falls Review*. To quote, “*One part of the new building on Sprague Street, belonging to F. Hass, has been fitted up for a lunchroom, and will open under the name of the ‘Arion.’*” The word “*Arion*” seemed to be a possible backdoor to more information. Searching such led to an advertisement in the *Review*’s November 24th, 1887 issue. It turns out the Arion’s “*lunchroom*”

was something more. According to the ad, its official name was the “*Arion Beer Hall.*” The ad also noted that “*Hasse and Hahen,*” where the “*proprietors.*” Besides the wrong spelling for Mr. Budde’s first name in its October 15th 1890 edition of the *Spokane Falls Review*, it appears the paper also left the ‘e’ off Mr. Hasse’s name. For English speakers, that would have been an easy phonetic error.

As to why these two gentlemen would put up bail for Mr. Hoefer, there may be a clue in the names. Budde, Hasse, and Hoefer are all strongly Germanic surnames. It’s pure speculation, but it seems possible these two gentlemen stepped forward to help a fellow German — though we’ll probably never know for certain.

It appears Mr. Hoefer remained out on bail for the next 26 days — during which his story was absent from the newspapers. Then, the November 10th issue of the *Spokane Falls Daily Chronicle* reported, “*J. C. Hoefer, the man who shot Doc Ellis some time ago, was brought into court this morning. He did not deny having done the shooting. ... His sunken eyes and pale features were noticed by everyone in the room. His anxious wife sat by his side and long and earnest conversation passed between them. His bail bond of \$1,000 was increased to \$5,000. It is thought that he will be able to secure bail. His trial is set for some time next month.*”

The newspaper’s opinion aside, the defendant wasn’t able to raise the increased bail and was therefore detained behind bars until the trial.

... *John Hoefer on trial* ...

Having first been reported as being slated for December of 1890, the trial was delayed until mid-January of the next year.

The “*News of the Courts*” segment of the *Spokane Falls Review*’s January 6th edition reported “*Prosecuting Attorney Ridpath hustled about in Judge Blake’s court and was busy arranging matters for his successor, who takes the office nest Monday. S. G. Allen,*

Colonel Ridpath’s successor, was also present, but he appeared on behalf of J. C. Hoefer, the slayer of Doc Ellis, who was brought before the court to enter his plea. Hoefer looks thin and haggard from his long confinement in the county jail, but his voice was firm and clear as he replied ‘not guilty’ to the court’s question. ... The case was set for January 13 and Colonel Ridpath was appointed by the court to conduct the prosecution for the state.”

The above attorney was indeed Colonel William Ridpath, who just the year before had opened the first iteration of what would become Spokane’s historic Ridpath Hotel.

The trial took place on the 15th and 16th of January, 1891, with the *Chronicle* recreating the more dramatic bits of testimony for its readers.

The *Chronicle* noted that the first witness called on the morning of the 15th was “*J. P. Webster, manager of the Spokane Undertaking Company, who interred the body of the dead gambler. He testified to the appearance of the corpse and the exact location of the wound ...*” It seemed odd that an undertaker would be called to testify in this manner. That said, a search of the several years of newspapers before the shooting suggest that Mr. Webster had a history of working very closely with the actual coroner and had the year before been an unsuccessful applicant for the coroner’s job — though not a medical doctor himself.

When questioned by Spokane attorney Thomas C. Griffiths — part of the defense team — the *Chronicle* reported that police officer Wilson stated, “*On the way to police headquarters Hoefer talked with a newspaper reporter, and I told him to keep still and if he had anything to say to tell it to his attorney.*”

Police officer Morley was asked if he’d told Mr. Hoefer “*that the man he shot was a notorious confidence man.*” The officer replied, “*I did not. And furthermore, I did not give him any advice. I told him that he must not talk too much, as it would hurt his case, and he promised not to do so.*”

The witness went on to say, “*He said that he shot (Ellis) on account of losing his money. He met Ellis in the Echo Saloon, the bartender introducing him to Ellis. They then went to Front Street and played cards for money. They played cards and he accused Ellis of cheating. When Ellis ran out of the store, he followed and after crying to him to stop, he pulled his gun and shot him.*”

So, it would seem Hoefer may not have loaned the money to Ellis. Rather he’d lost it while gambling in a likely rigged game.

Police officer Volk, who was “*coming up Howard Street*” when the shooting occurred, was called to the stand.

“*I saw a man come running around the corner of First Street and cross over. He was followed soon after by a second man. The first man was Ellis, and I asked what was the matter when somebody yelled out to stop the thief. I Then attempted to stop Ellis, when the second man came along, who proved to be Hoefer. He then told me that Ellis had robbed him. Ellis, who was quite near, heard the remarks and started to run away. I pulled my gun and fired a shot in the air. I told Hoefer not to let him get away at any cost, and he too, pulled out a gun and fired two shots. We then ran up to the spot where the body lay and soon after Officer Wilson came along and arrested Hoefer and took him to police headquarters, and I followed soon after in a team with the body.*”

During the afternoon session it was established that it was dark and rainy when the shooting occurred, that as the defense attempted to instill some doubt in the jury whether it was Hoffer or Officer Volk who’d shot Ellis.

Perhaps the most interesting witness called by the defense the next morning was police officer Coyle.

Attorney Griffiths asked, “*Mr. Coyle, did you know Doc Ellis?*”

“*I did.*”

“*Was he a doctor?*”

“*He was not.*”

“*What was his business?*”

“*He was a barkeep, a tinhorn gam-*

bler, and a bunco-steerer.”

“*Did you know this man Hennessey?*”

“*I did.*”

“*What was his business?*”

“*He was the same as Ellis; that is a tinhorn gambler and a confidence man.*”

A few more witnesses followed, then closing arguments and the judge’s final instruction, after which the jury was sent to deliberate.

The Review’s Sunday edition — that dated January 18th — described what came next.

“*The jury in the Hoefer case, who retired at 5 o’clock Friday night, came to an agreement shortly before 8 the same evening. According to the instructions of the court the verdict was signed and sealed up and handed to Foreman Charles W. Anderson to deliver to the court in the morning. The jury then separated for the night.*”

“*Promptly at 10 o’clock yesterday morning every juryman was in his seat. Hoefer was brought in from the jail and took his accustomed seat directly to the rear of his attorney. He tried hard to look easy and composed, but his face was a trifle paler than usual and his hands worked nervously and restlessly together.*”

“*Judge Blake mounted to the bench, and the announcement that court was in session was made by Bailiff Sanders. A few spectators and attorneys were in the courtroom, and they immediately took seats and the hum of conversation ceased. Clerk Johnston read the minutes of the previous day, and they were handed up to Judge Blake to sign.*”

“*Turning to the jury, Judge Blake said, ‘Gentlemen, have you arrived at a verdict?’ ‘We have,’ was the answer made by Foreman Anderson, who at the same time drew forth a sealed envelope from his pocket and handed it to the clerk.*”

“*Mr. Johnston broke the seal, and, standing up, read aloud, ‘We, the jury in the case of the State of Washington, plaintiff, vs John C. Hoefer, defendant, find the prisoner not guilty.’*”

“*For a moment there was an oppressive stillness. The defendant’s face was seen to work, and he looked as if he would break down, but by an effort he controlled his emotions and grasped the hand of Attorney Griffiths, whose face was transfigured with one of his peculiar smiles. Hoefer started with outstretched hand toward the jury with the evident intention of shaking hands with them, but Judge Blake ordered him to go back to his seat and not make any demonstration in the courtroom. Hoefer turned and left the courtroom at once, and a minute later Judge Blake dismissed the jury ...*”

As the former defendant was leaving,

a reporter from the *Chronicle* apparently asked if he intended to return to his former life. “*No,*” Mr. Hoefer is reported as replying. “*I shall not go back to ranching. I have no ranch, no stock, no home. I have sold everything to clear myself of the charge of murder. I do not know now what to do, but I shall leave Spokane at once.*”

As far as currently known, the history of John C. Hoefer’s family at Deer Park ended with that statement. Anyone with direct knowledge to the contrary is asked to contact the society.

———— end ————

Letters, Email, Bouquets & Brickbats

— or —

Bits of Chatter, Trivia, & Notices All Strung Together.

... flying disk crashes in Long Lake ...

One Christmas present from my daughter this last year was a tee-shirt printed with a picture of a flying saucer and the notation, “*The Truth is Out There*” — that being a catchphrase from the classic ‘90s television show, the X-Files. Over the years I’ve snuck a couple of pieces about flying saucers into the pages of the *Mortarboard*. If you go back and look at those — links provided below — you might understand why I was tickled pink to

get that shirt. By way of further explanation, I proffer another catchphrase from the X-Files, that being “*I Want to Believe.*” In my case the problem with belief is that just like the show’s fictional distaff FBI agent, Dana Scully, I have to have scientifically verifiable proof before I’ll accept that UFOs are alien spacecraft. And the sad truth is, I’ve yet to see such.

One of the above “*snuck*” stories appeared in the *Mortarboard’s* Letters/Brickbats column for April, 2016 — that under the lead “*a round loaf of flying fire.*” In said article, I

Further Reading: Flying Saucers

“**Letters, Email, Bouquets & Brickbats,**” by Wally Lee Parker.

—— see “... a round loaf of flying fire ...” ——

Mortarboard #96, April, 2016 — page 1258 — Collected Newsletters, Volume 26.

http://cdphs.org/uploads/3/4/2/0/34204235/mortarboard_issue_96_doublepage_web.pdf

“**Letters, Email, Bouquets & Brickbats,**” by Wally Lee Parker.

—— see “... a burning sky ...” ——

Mortarboard #88, August, 2015 — page 1126 — Collected Newsletters, Volume 24.

http://cdphs.org/uploads/3/4/2/0/34204235/mortarboard_issue_88_doublepage_web.pdf

mentioned that my research had drawn up a piece from the August 23rd, 1965 edition of the *Spokesman-Review* headlined “*Flying Saucers, Fiery Balls Claimed Seen by UFO Buffs.*” The author of that article, staff writer Jerry Wigen, stated that the crash of one such aerial phenomenon into a stretch of Spokane’s Long Lake near Tum Tum had been outlined in an eyewitness account — said account printed in one of the *Review*’s July, 1948 issues. Mr. Wigen hadn’t mentioned on which day it had appeared in the paper, and I hadn’t been able to find it prior to that specific *Mortarboard*’s deadline.

Knowing it was a story worth pursuing, I added this plea to my 2016 article. “*If anyone can recall the name of the above noted (witness), or any other information regarding this specific tale, such might prove useful in locating the original account.*”

There was always something else in need of research, so the Long Lake story has lain dormant for the last five years. But then very recently, while tracking through the *Review*’s archives in pursuit of a different story, there it was. Tum Tum’s own X-File.

In form, it’s a letter to the editor tucked into page six of the newspaper’s July 30th edition. The missive’s author, Mrs. Harold Higgins, stated she had “*lived in Tum Tum for the last 17 years.*” She reported the incident had occurred on the Sunday prior — that being July 25th, 1948— at approximately 4:30 in the afternoon. To quote, “*It was round and flat, shiny like a mirror, belching puffs of black smoke, hissing like a pressure cooker; it veered to the left and disappeared into the water.*” Rowing out to the site where the disk had sunk, she reported nothing could be seen below the surface, however “*bubbles were coming up all around and rainbow-colored oil spots were everywhere.*”

In totality, it was certainly a well-written, well-thought-out letter. And if there’s any truth to it, it leaves open the possibility that there’s a flying saucer somewhere beneath the waters impounded behind Long Lake’s dam. I don’t know how deep the lake is in the

Tum Tum area. Reportedly its maximum depth is about 180 feet, that probably within spitting distance of the dam. Of course, the maximum anywhere along the lake should be the Spokane River’s original bed, though one wonders about the reality of that after just over a century’s worth of silt has settled in the now stilled waters. As for how far down the saucer might be, Tum Tum is just over ten miles upstream from the dam, meaning the maximum depth there is doubtless quite a bit less than the above noted 180 feet. But from the description of the crash, the best we can say is that the saucer’s resting somewhere below the point at which a mirror-like object would still be visible from the surface. From what I can recall of trolling with spinners on Long Lake, that point isn’t that far down — leaving a lot of obscure territory to search.

Now I don’t know how quickly flying saucers are likely to rust — assuming they rust at all. To find out we’d need to consult the nonexistent experts in the equally nonexistent Area 51. But considering said nonexistent experts haven’t said anything of substance since Roswell, it’s doubtful they’ll start now.

Forced by governmental recalcitrance to invent an answer, I would guestimate that any saucer that belches black smoke and leaves an oily ring after sinking probably not only rusts, but likely does so very quickly. As of this writing, that alien vehicle has been down there for just shy of 73 years. If it’s ever located, it might be hard to tell the difference between it and anything else of metallic composition and noteworthy size submerged in Long Lake by happenstance or design that long ago — for example, something like a Model T touring car, of which the lake doubtless contains at least several. If the in-line four-cylinder engine isn’t a dead giveaway, telling the difference between two rusting hulks — one from Gliese 581c, the other from Highland Park, Michigan — still shouldn’t be that big a problem. After a few tests, any competent metallurgist should be able to distinguish between the vanadium alloy used in a Model T’s body and an even more exotic alloy

clearly not manufactured on planet Earth.

As noted, I want to believe. In that vein, there is a potential solution. Currently there are any number of more or less reality-based television shows that specialize in things like searching for evidence that most ancient megalithic structures such as the pyramids, Stonehenge, etc., were actually built by extraterrestrials, or that are attempting to prove ghosts exist by employing a new generation of electronic gizmos of questionable efficiency, or that specialize in tracking mythical creatures universally dismissed by science — bigfoot being a fan favorite. The utterly amazing thing is that these shows go season after season without actually finding anything, but still get renewed. Could any of them be convinced to come search for Long Lake’s lost saucer? Chronically coming away empty handed doesn’t seem a ratings problem — meaning they quite literally have nothing to lose. Or prove, for that matter.

All that said, it was good to find that pesky letter. It’s been vexing me for a long time. And now it can be added to the society’s collection of odd historic footnotes. You know, the ones we also file under “X.”

... regarding Nellie Gardner ...

One April 3rd, Joe Barreca, president of The Heritage Network, forwarded a nicely done trivia sheet produced by the Pend Oreille Historical Society discussing the history of one-room schools in that county. Our society’s president, Bill Sebright, forwarded that sheet to everyone on his extensive mailing list. Several days later, Bill received the following email from Tom Gardner.

“*My mother, Nellie F. McLean Gardner, boarded with my grandparents, Tom E. and Murmer Gardner, at the upper end of Deer Lake when there was a community of loggers in need of a school. There she met and married my father, Roy W. Gardner. Mom taught at the Deer Lake one room school in 1923-24, and again in 1926-27 — for \$810 the first year and \$900 the second. This*

school was vacated and the last time I saw the location trees were taking over and only the old iron stove was left. During the 1929-31 sessions, Mom taught at Greenwood School for \$1,035. She also taught down the road at the Garden Spot School for \$900. I believe both of these schools were one room. In 1943 Mom taught at Loon Lake for \$1,400 per year. She moved to Clayton in 1946. These last two schools were multiple rooms.

“*Today Mom’s granddaughter — our daughter, Natalie McKenna — instructs in the Mead School District with a much different pay schedule.*”

Bill replied, “*I’m not sure that you remember, but your mom taught both of my brothers — Chet and John — and me in both first and second grade. My oldest brother, Chet, was in the first grade for her last year in Loon Lake and in the second grade for her first year at Clayton. We moved from Loon Lake to Clayton that summer. The C/DPHS Publications editor, Wally Parker, was also in your mom’s first and second grade class at Clayton. Wally and I started school together in the fall of 1951.*

“*My son, Nathan, also teaches in the Mead School District. He teaches Spanish at Mt. Spokane High School.*

“*Thank you for writing up your mom’s teaching history. I didn’t realize she taught at so many schools.*”

Bill asked if I had any recollections about Nellie I could share. Looking back through my files, I found one that had been published in the society’s first booklet — volume one of the *Reports to the Clayton Historical Society* — that back in 2005.

“*It was in Nellie Gardner’s 1st grade class that I saw my first science experiment. Nellie stood in front of the class holding two one-pint Mason jars. She said, ‘I’m going to pour air from one of these jars into the other. And I’m going to pour it up, instead of down. Tell me if you can see me do it.’*

“*She held up the jars, mouths down, and tipped the lip of one up under the mouth of the other. ‘Do you see the air pouring?’*

“No,’ the class said.
“Why not?”
“Because you can’t see air,’ one said.
“Because you can’t pour things up,’ said another.
“Nellie left the room and came back pushing a cart. On top of the cart was a small aquarium filled with water. Positioned behind the tank so the class could see, she pushed one Mason jar, mouth up, into the water. With a couple of quick glugs, the jar filled. The second jar she pushed under water with the mouth down, trapping air inside. Then she turned the water filled jar rim-side down, brought the second jar beside it, and proceeded to pour the air trapped in the second Mason jar upward into the first.
“Did you see me pour the air that time?”

“It was as simple as that. I was hooked on science.”

It’s amazing the influence some teachers can have — influences that can easily last seventy or more years. Regarding such, we expect there are many other stories of enduring impressions made by many other teachers and would appreciate receiving recollections of them for publication.

... images from the Owen Museum ...

A short time ago the society received two photographs from Sue Mauro. She’s part of the family that created the historic Owen Museum near Chattaroy. The images were from the now shuttered museum’s collection. Of them, the first shown here was labeled as the Williams Valley School, circa 1900. Included was a list of twelve names. A separate source suggested a thirteenth name — which made the list compatible with the image.

Assuming the names are compatible with the individuals seen when viewed from left to right, this is my current best-guess as to those being pictured.

The first named, Marion (Kratzer) Trowbridge, was born on January 16th, 1889,

to Annie M. (Crawford) and Edward M. Kratzer. Her younger half-sister was Williams Valley’s Grace Milner. Marion passed away on September 11th, 1983.

The second named, Alice (Casberg) Hutchins, it appears she was married to Albert Hutchins at the Williams Valley schoolhouse on June 22nd, 1904. She was 19 years old at the time. As of the 1940 census her and her husband were listed as residing on the Farm to Market Road in Williams Valley. She’s interred beside her husband at the Williams Valley Cemetery, her date of death, November 18, 1968.

There is an Irvin Johnson interred in the Williams Valley Cemetery, as are his parents, Martin and Mattie. He was born on October 14th, 1889 and passed away on June 12th, 1947. It does appear he was married, but little other information has been found yet. My assumption is his is the third figure from the left.

Regarding Alva Edwards, I believe her parents were Thomas and Louisa Irish of Williams Valley. She married Royal Edwards of Deer Park on the 7th of November, 1913. Her age as listed in their marriage record, 24.

As for the school’s teacher, Jennie E. Boorman, her date of birth appears to be December 7th, 1863, with her death occurring on March 20th, 1916. Records indicate she married Barhan Boorman on the 20th of May, 1891 — that possibly in Wisconsin. Mr. Boorman was born on March 4th, 1860. As reported in the March 31st, 1916 edition of the *Deer Park Union*, shortly after their 1891 marriage they relocated to Wild Rose Prairie. The couple left that area for the community of Greenacres in 1902, with Jennie passing away fourteen years later. Barhan lived on for quite some time, his death recorded as May 18th, 1947. Several things of particular interest on Mr. Boorman’s death certificate. His marital status is “Widowed,” wife being “Jennie E.” And the certificate lists his former occupation as, “School Teacher.” Both Jennie and Barhan are interred at Spokane County’s Pines Cemetery.



Identified in the Owen Museum Collection as the Williams Valley School, 1900.

This image was provided by Sue Owen Mauro. Inside the framed photo was a typewritten list of names. No indication of how the names relate to the individuals seen was given — my assumption being from left to right. Also, while twelve names were given on the list, the photo contains thirteen souls. The missing name, Willy Boorman, was obtained from a different source and added after the fact.

The names are, Marion (Kratzer) Trowbridge, Alice (Casberg) Hutchins, Irvin Johnson, Elva (Irish) Edwards, Mrs. Jennie Boorman (teacher), Earnest Casberg, Bennie Irish, Luther Irish, Ella (Johnson) Reuthinger, Jennie (Ross) Lawson, Esther (Irish) Anderson, Willy Boorman, and Newt Grove.

The three figures to the immediate right of Mrs. Boorman seem problematic. In a strictly lineal progression from left to right, my vision falls on the first of the younger boys to the front.

The name for that figure given in the list is Earnest Casberg. I found Earnest in the 1910 census — his parents recorded as Edward and Carrie. At the time of the census, Earnest was listed as 27 years old, which would have made him around 17 when the school photo was reportedly taken. Records indicate a few years later — on May 27th, 1904 — Earnest married Etta May Doyer, who

appears to have arrived in the area just the year before. Earnest passed away in 1962, and Etta in 1967. Their address at the time of passing, Route 1, Clayton.

If the tallest person seen in the photo is Earnest, we need to break the order presented in the list with a best-guess that the first of the younger boys in front — the taller of those two — is Bennie Irish. I have yet to find anything on Bennie — unless that was a nickname for Benjamin Irish, him being the second born of Thomas and Louisa’s clan. If it is Benjamin, he would have been about 8 years old when the photo was taken.

To Bennie's left is Luther Irish. More than likely this is Martin Luther Irish, the third born of the above noted clan. According to the 1910 census, Luther was a year younger than Benjamin.

Back in order, we come to the particularly sad image of a near adult Ella Reuthinger. Born Ella Johnson on the 22nd of March, 1883, she wed German immigrant Joseph A. Reuthinger on the 26th of December, 1900 — apparently sometime after the image was taken. That ceremony was performed by the Reverend Frank McConaughy of Deer Park's Open Door Congregational Church.

Looking for further traces, I found a listing for Saint Mary's Cemetery in Deer Park that stated Ella Reuthinger, wife of Joseph A. Reuthinger, had died on the 30th of July, 1902. Also interred there was a Joseph Reuthinger, born July 29th, 1902, and passed away on the same day. The parents of the dead child, Joseph and Ella Reuthinger.

On September 25th, 1905, Joseph Reuthinger married Jennie Elizabeth Irish, older sister of the pictured Elva (Irish) Edwards.

Joseph passed away on November 23rd, 1948. Jennie lived on until April 4th of 1968 — her April 11th obituary in the *Tri-County Tribune* reporting, "*She came to the Deer Park Area with her parents in 1888 and lived here most of her life.*" The newspaper also noted that her husband had partnered with R. A. Miller in a store at Main and Crawford in downtown Deer Park called the People's Supply. Joseph and Jennie had two sons, one dying "*in his early youth.*" Both Joseph and Jennie are interred at Spokane's Holy Cross Cemetery.

Regarding the next person on the list, Jennie (Ross) Lawson, I'm not finding anything, so would appreciate hearing from anyone who can tell us about this person.

As far as finding information is concerned, Esther (Irish) Anderson is a different matter. Esther — middle name Albertina — was born into the Thomas and Louisa Irish family on the 10th of February, 1895. She

passed away in Deer Park on September 11th, 1994. Her husband, Henry Oliver Raymond Anderson, was born August 19th, 1895, and passed away on October 8, 1978. They were married on the 4th of September, 1918. Both are interred at the Williams Valley Cemetery. Their son, Henry R. Anderson, and his wife, Lucy, are also buried there.

Then we have Willy Boorman — William E. Boorman, the son of Barhan and Jennie Boorman. The first connection was the census of 1910 for the Greenacres Township. In such, William was listed as being 18 years old. The next trace is a certificate of marriage that states W. E. Boorman of Greenacres, age 21, was married to Mabel Hanson, also of Greenacres, on the 4th day of November, 1913.

Newt Grove, the last name on the list, more than likely refers to Royal Newton Grove, the son of Glenn G. Grove, himself the brother of Deer Park's R. R. Grove. Newt was born on the 24th of January, 1892 and passed away on February 26th, 1953 — having spent the majority of his life in Deer Park, or, as his *Spokesman-Review's* obituary noted, "*Mr. Grove was born in Pennsylvania and came to Deer Park when he was one year old.*" The 1910 census for the City of Deer Park lists Newton as 18 years old, suggesting he would have been about 10 when this image was taken.

The society has another image of the Williams Valley schoolhouse dated eight years later. That image appears to be of a clearly different building. The consensus within the society is that replacing the old structure in the years between 1900 and 1908 with something more up to date is a reasonable likelihood.

So ... this is as close as I can come to identifying the people in a one hundred and twenty some year-old photograph. Corrections or arguments welcomed.

The other image Sue Mauro provided was of a locomotive standing at Deer Park's Great Northern station. Though not dated, we can at least estimate the era in which this depot served the town. Though taken from a printed source, and therefore not particularly



***Great Northern Engine at Deer Park's Depot.
Circa 1910.***

Provided by Sue Owen Mauro, this image, from a vintage postcard, was once part of the Owen Pioneer Museum's collection. An inscription in white lettering at the bottom of the image (not shown here) reads, "No. 13, G. N. Depot, Deer Park, Wash." Since the initials G. N. — standing for Great Northern — are used, the photo is assumed to have been taken sometime after the Great Northern's takeover of the Spokane Falls & Northern Railway in the summer of 1898, but before a new depot had been built several blocks to the southeast, that likely during the winter of 1919.

clear, it does seem — especially from the perspective of general composition — to quite possibly be the best photo we have of the station.

As for the act of fortune by which these images have been preserved for all these years, that begins with the Owen family of Chattaroy — a family that's had a rather large impact on both northern Spokane County and well into Pend Oreille County.

Regarding the family's arrival in the area, in an article appearing in the November 28th, 1963 edition of the *Spokane Chronicle*,

family member Bertha (Owen) Beyersdorf, the fourth of Alexander and Alice (Popp) Owen's eight surviving children, and the first born in the Territory of Washington, told the *Chronicle's* feature writer, Rowland Bond, that the family had arrived "*here*" on the 1st of July, 1886. And that in August they moved to "*a 160-acred tract*" close to Chattaroy.

The couple's first three children, Lawrence Chester, George Homer, and John Walter had been born outside the future State of Washington — the first in Kansas, the next two in New Mexico. In both those places it

appears their father was employed as a school-teacher.

These two paragraphs from Alexander B. Owen's obituary, as found in the February 14th, 1935 edition of the *Spokesman-Review*, note that "He was the last survivor of the small band of pioneers who opened the first wagon road in the Calispel Valley in 1887, sections of which are now part of the modern highway along the Pend Oreille River.

"A native of Ohio, he came to the Chattaroy country after having spent some time in New Mexico. He was a justice of the peace of the region north of Spokane during Washington's territorial days, and organized school district No. 83 at Bear Creek."

The last four children, Forest Lester, Charles Winfield, Robert Thomas, and Alice Estelle were all likely born on the Chattaroy farm. And, as were several of the boys, Alice, the youngest of the bunch, was known primarily by her middle name. In Estelle's case this was further confused by her preferred name occasional being spelled Estella, and sometimes shortened to Stella.

This was the family that created the Owen Pioneer Museum, located several miles northwest of Chattaroy. It was opened to the public in June of 1949, and remained such for more than four decades. Its history is a story worth telling, though that would take a lot more space than remains in this issue, as well as a significant amount of research.

... when spelling is everything ...

In last month's *Mortarboard* (#157) we printed a 1938 photo showing Clayton's first, second, and third grade classes arranged in front of the school's main entrance, along with the names of those seen. Unsure of the spelling of some of the names, we added "a general appeal for anyone seeing errors to drop us a line — email or snail-mail — and set the record straight."

We did receive several replies. Due to them, the Bettefriend family name was revised to Bettfreund, Carlene Jarett became

Carlyne Jarrett, and Katherine Baker was corrected to Catherine Baker. Once these accurate spellings were known, printed examples confirming such were found through newspaper searches.

Three of the 32 kids pictured shared the surname Lamberson. To confirm that spelling, the following thread was developed.

From the *Spokesman-Review*, February 2nd, 1919: Datelined Whitefish, Montana — February 8th. "Charles Lamberson, son of Night Officer C. M. Lamberson, has arrived from France. He is the first local man to reach home from the battlefield. He was 20 days in action in the Argonne Forest, and for four days was without anything to eat."

Though admittedly a tenuous connection with the above, there's this from the *Spokane Chronicle*, January 16th, 1925: "Charles A. Lamberson of Montana has purchased 80 acres of land three-quarters of a mile north of Clayton. Mr. Lamberson formerly rented a farm near Deer Park."

And then this from the *Deer Park Union*, September 28th, 1933: "Mrs. Jenna Estella Lamberson, 57 years of age and a well-known resident of Clayton, died at her home on Thursday from paralysis induced by cerebral hemorrhage. The body was given into charge of the Lambert (Funeral Home) and funeral services were held from the chapel at 1 p.m. with interment at Woodland Cemetery. G. H. Rice, pastor of the Open Door Church, officiated at the service and music was furnished by a group of friends from Clayton. ... She is survived by three sons, Charles, Hubert, and Roy, all living in the Clayton community."

Spokesman-Review, October 22nd, 1948: Datelined Chewelah, Washington — October 21st. "(Fannie Garr) had been a resident of this community the last eight years. Surviving are four daughters, Mrs. Hubert Lamberson, Chewelah, Mrs. Arlie Stephens, Eureka, Montana, Mrs. Roy Lamberson and Mrs. John Voerman, both of Whitefish ..."

From the *Spokesman-Review*, December 3rd, 1949: Datelined Kalispell, Mon-

tana — December 2nd. (Under "Get Licenses") "Charles G. Funey, 26 and Arlene M. Lamberson, 20, Whitefish, Montana."

Is the above Arlene Lamberson the same girl seen in front of Clayton's school in 1938? The age is about right, but we can't be sure without a firm string of connections.

What all this suggests is that whenever

er computers are involved, the correct spelling of a name is essential for drawing direct lines between people, places, and events. This holds true even with some of the simpler searches we find ourselves in when sifting for loose threads possibly floating in the internet.

———— Wally Lee Parker ———

Minutes of the Clayton ♦ Deer Park Historical Society ———— May 8, 2021 ———

In attendance at the society's meeting hall, 300 Block 'A' Street, Deer Park: Marilyn Reilly, Bill Sebright, Mike Reiter, Rick Brodrick, Winnie Moore, Scott Moore, Damon Smathers, Jessie Tennant, Pete Coffin, Judy Coffin, Bill Phipps, Wally Parker, Tracy Strong, Tom Costigan and Marie Morrill.

Society President Bill Sebright called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. He reported that: 1) Mike Reiter, Rick Brodrick and Bill met with Mike and Steve from Pioneer Waterproofing to look at the Eagle. More on the Eagle below.

Society Treasurer Mark Wagner reported by phone: 1) The main checking account ended the month at \$9,659.27. There were deposits of \$30. The web hosting account ended the month at \$779.92 with a withdrawal of \$11.84 for web hosting. The Brickyard Day account is at \$1,945.33. 2) Mark took *Mortarboards* to The Hotspot, Garden-spot Health Foods, and Odynski's Accounting.

Society Vice President: No one has stepped forward to become Vice President.

Print editor Wally Parker reported: 1) One hundred and twenty copies of the May *Mortarboard* (#157) have been printed for free distribution. The online version has been submitted for uploading to the website. Loon Lake's library and The Heritage Network have received printable PDFs. 2) The May issue

leads with a piece by the editor titled "In Search of Denison's Beginning." This is followed by an expanded Letters/Brickbats column that includes a letter of interest from the directors of the Loon Lake Historical Society, some further analyses of the article in last March's issue titled "In Search of Summit," a bit of research regarding the surname Beyersdorf, the presentation of several vintage school photos, and some more data regarding the naming of Loon Lake. 3) Ten copies of the "Collected Newsletters, Volume 46," binding *Mortarboards* #155, #156, and #157, have been printed. 4) Anyone wishing to have influence on the future course of the Society's newsletter is encouraged to join the *Mortarboard's* editorial group. If interested, contact the editor.

Webmaster Damon Smathers reported: The May issue of the *Mortarboard* has been uploaded to the website.

Pete Coffin reported that he worked up family tree summaries for Oscar Lindh (Conrad Lindh's brother), Carl Herman Lindh (Conrad and Oscar's father) and Conrad Lindh (Carl, Don, and Norma's father). Bill had asked Pete to do this after Lorraine Nord gave many Lindh family pictures — those provided by Shirley Dudney (Norma's daughter) — to the Society. Pete also did family trees for George Heard and his wife Bertha. Tom

Schreiner had called and requested them. Shirley, Lorraine and Tom were happy with the results.

We have pretty much decided that we will have an open cover where the Eagle can be seen year-round. Rick and Mike showed examples of open covers. Mike, Rick, and Bill measured the Eagle. It's almost 8 feet tall. Mike will talk to Doug Knight and go to the next Fair board meeting. We discussed different ways of moving the Eagle.

Brickyard Day has been postponed for another year. The main uncertainty is that the Deer Park School District is still not renting out schools. So, we don't know if the Clayton School would be available.

Mike Reiter asked if we want to do something special for Settlers this year? Could

we do a special display? Could Rachelle make large prints of the 2 early gatherings pictures we have?

Bill filled out the forms for us to have a display at the Clayton Community Fair in August.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, June 12, 2021, at 10:00 AM at our building.

Meeting adjourned at 11:05.

Minutes submitted by Bill Sebright acting as secretary.

Editor's Note — We'd be very appreciative of someone stepping forward to fill the very necessary position of secretary. The society's president should be concentrating on other things.

———— end ————

Society Contacts

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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 confidential if so desired.

Editorial, Copyright, and Reprint Concerns

Those contributing "original" materials to the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society normally retain copyright to said materials while granting the Mortarboard and the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society durable permission to use said materials in our electronic and print media — including permission to reprint said materials in future Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society publications. Under certain conditions proof of ownership of submitted materials and/or a signed release may be requested. No compensation for materials submitted is offered or implied. All materials submitted are subject to editorial revision. Any material published as an exception to these general understandings will be clearly marked. When requests to reprint materials are received, such will be granted in almost all instances in which the society has the right to extend such permission. In instances where we don't have that right, we will attempt to place the requester in contact with the owner of the work in question. But in all instances where a request to reprint is made, it should be made to both the society and the author of the piece, and it should be made in writing (letter or email). The society considers the application of common business conventions when dealing with intellectual properties a simple means of avoiding misunderstandings.

Volunteer proofreaders for this issue: Rick Hodges, Bill Sebright, Lina Swain, & Ken Westly.

From "The Coast" magazine,
April, 1907



See Yourself in Print.

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

Copyright considerations for any materials submitted are stated in the "Editorial, Copyright, and Reprint Concerns" dialog box found in 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 ————

About our Group:

The Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society was incorporated as a nonprofit association in the winter of 2002 under the title Clayton Historical Society. Our mission statement is found on the first page (upper left corner) of each issue of our newsletter, the Mortarboard.

Our yearly dues are \$20 dollars per family/household.

We are open to any and all that share an interest in the history of our region — said region, in both a geographic and historic sense, not limited to the communities in our group's name.