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THE
**CLAYTON ♦ DEER PARK
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Mortarboard

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Deer Park High School Graduate Ray Hunt & Spokane's Walkathons of 1931.

by

Wally Lee Parker

(Part Two)

The place was the once magnificent Auditorium Theater in downtown Spokane. The time, late February, 1931. The event, Spokane's first endurance walkathon. The story, two kids — Florence Spinnell of Spokane and Ray Hunt from Deer Park — are paired as contestants in pursuit of a one-thousand-dollar prize. The contest requires all the couples competing to be in motion for 45 minutes out of each hour. Around the clock. Day after day after day. The last couple standing wins. As part two of the story begins, the contest has been underway for just over two hundred and sixty-four hours. Which is to say, just over eleven days.

... and the trek goes on ...

On Wednesday morning, February 25th, 1931, the *Spokesman-Review* reported that the Auditorium Theater “was crowded nearly to capacity last night at the beginning of the 11th day, and all the 15½ couples in the walkathon were still holding up well. ‘Eddie’ Dodd was packing a black eye, sustained

when his wife, Dixie, let him fall against the rail while she was leading him in his sleep.”

Understanding that watching exhausted people circle a stage, hours on end, might be a bit tedious for a paying audience, the event's promoter, William Maylon, arranged for a constant stream of diversions. The *Review* explained that one such ancillary entertainment, an endurance sitting contest, was

scheduled to have begun on the prior evening. Said event caused “a near riot” when “between 300 and 400 applicants ... stormed the doors” for a chance to participate. The Review went on, “Of the 18 selected, four are women ...” All the contestants were described as “sitting in a row in the bleachers on the stage,” — meaning they’d be in full view of the audience.

“The contest started at 8 (p.m.), and they are to sit for 50 hours with only 15 minutes off their seats throughout the period. Each has a humorous line with which he must respond when his number is called. If they fail to respond, they are ruled out.” Sleeping is forbidden and will result in disqualification. “The contest ends at 10 p.m. tomorrow night.” And for suffering all this, the endurance sitters “will be fed with the walkathoners, see the show free, and the winner will get \$25 cash.”

Regarding those walking, that afternoon’s *Spokane Chronicle* reported, “All the contestants were going strong today with little evidence that any are weakening. Bedroom slippers were more in evidence than before, indicating some seek relief for sore feet. Nine of the 40 people who started have dropped out.”

The next morning’s *Review* noted, “The walkathon passed the 272nd hour at midnight with 14½ couples remaining, Mr. and Mrs. (Bill) Zimmerman, No. 14, of Dishman, were forced to drop out after 264 hours due to the illness of Mrs. Zimmerman’s mother.”

And that afternoon’s *Chronicle* added, “Nervousness on the part of contestants in the walkathon is more evident as time goes on. Tilts between partners over minor difficulties are becoming more frequent. Judges on duty find it increasingly difficult to keep the temperaments from running rampant.”

Area residents opening *Deer Park’s* newspaper that Thursday, found this on the *Union’s* front page. “Ray Hunt, known in the *Spokane* walkathon as ‘The Voice of Deer Park,’ sang over the radio yesterday evening, dedicating the song to his classmate, John Gardner, who is ill at his home, here. Ray is

one of the popular contestants in this spectacular attraction which is on its second week, and he is said to be gaining in weight after being on his feet and on the move for nearly 300 hours.

“Deer Park is buying a pair of jersey sweaters to be decorated with a deer’s head for Ray Hunt and his partner in the walkathon ... as recognition of the publicity he is giving Deer Park in the contest.”

... an accumulating attrition ...

February 27th’s *Spokane Chronicle* reported, “At noon today 309 hours were behind the competitors.” By that point two more were out, one with swollen ankles, the other with a ruptured appendix.”

On the morning of March 4th, the *Spokesman-Review* outlined the events of the night before. “With all the privacy of goldfish, the 12 men contestants in the walkathon at the Auditorium Theater last night slept their 11-minute rest period at 9:45 on cots on the stage.”

It’s unclear if this apparent reduction in the rest period from 15 minutes to 11 was actual, or simply an error. That said, later on — primarily after the contest crossed the five-week mark Maylon had stipulated as necessary before any prize money would be awarded — even more draconian rule changes were made in order to force the contestants into exhaustion and the contest to a close.

The *Review’s* March 4th article continued, “The house was packed to capacity, and 1,500 people sat in silence so as not to disturb their (the resting walker’s) dreams.” This was short lived, as the article went on to describe the wakening process. A “screaming siren,” then “blankets jerked,” and finally — as the sleepers were yanked to a standing position — “a gasp of sympathy went up from the audience.”

The *Review’s* reporter concluded his Wednesday morning musings with, “At 9 p.m. tomorrow night ... Gladys Tone, No. 13, will wed Doug Angus, if he can stay awake that

long.”

The following Thursday afternoon, the *Spokane Chronicle* continued that theme when it reported, “The first bridegroom to go to sleep while applying for a marriage license appeared at the courthouse today. He was Edmond Douglass Angus, 28, of Tacoma, who obtained a license to marry a sleepy girl, Gladys Irene Stone, 18, of Spokane. ... They met here when paired in the competition and reached the 452-hour mark (two weeks, four days, and twenty hours) of walking at noon today.”

To assure full compliance with the walkathon’s rules while offstage, the couple were attended on their jaunt to the courthouse to obtain their marriage license.

There was a hitch — so to speak — in the wedding. A near riot occurred outside as an oversized crowd attempted to get in. Both the police and fire department were called. Then the wedding ceremony was performed a second time, this to satisfy those unable to get in the first time. After this, the bride quietly fainted. Her brand-new husband continued on with a previously soloed partner, hoping to secure half the prize money as a nest-egg for his new family.

It was five days after this wedding was vividly described in the local newspapers that the anti-walkathon protests began in earnest.

... damnation strikes back ...

On March 10th, the *Spokesman-Review* reported that a communication had been sent to the Spokane City Council urging that body to ban walkathons within the city. The request came from the County Association of Presbyterian Ministers.

The objective of said missive was to “earnestly and insistently protest against the so-called walkathon now in progress in our city.” The reason being ... “We believe it to be morally debasing to the participants, injurious to their bodily health and deteriorating to their minds ... and that the only reason for its

WILL MAYLON’S WALKATHON

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Over 440 Hours

Friday Night—Masquerade Contest for Audience—Prize

Saturday Night—Carnival Night

Monday Night—Musicians’ Night

THE WALKATHON IS A 24 HOUR A DAY STYLE SHOW

5 A.M. to 5 P.M.

25c

5 P.M. to 5 A.M.

50c

Walkathon Ad.

Clipped from the March 6, 1931
edition of “The Spokane Woman.”

A weekly newspaper published by
Pauline Suing Bloom
from 1921 through 1935.

existence is the financial profit of the promoters.” The missive concludes, “We earnestly request that you ... bring this project to a speedy conclusion.”

In the ensuing rumpus, the existence of the much smaller walkathon at Washington Hall, having received relatively little coverage in the press since the larger walkathon had gotten underway, continued to be ignored.

Beginning on page one and spilling onto page two of the Thursday, March 12th, edition of the *Spokane Chronicle*, the clash at that morning’s session of the Spokane City Council was detailed. As the *Chronicle* explained it, “The future of the walkathon rests with Commissioner Leroy Lambert, head of the public safety department, and Dr. Ralph Hendricks, commissioner of health.” The newspaper observed that “The walkathon hearing was punctuated with applause, hoots, sermons, speeches, challenges and protests.” The newspaper noted, “Seven hundred spectators crowded every seat and every foot of standing room in the council chamber.” While outside, “Many were turned away.”

Besides being of interest to the community at large, that morning’s meeting would, to those few still unaware, demonstrate the full extent of William Maylon’s talent as a

showman and manipulator of public opinion.

Thursday's front page also carried an obvious staged photo — whether staged by Maylon or the photographer, unknown. The image was captioned, “*Don't you dare stop our walkathon, ' said this quartet of Auditorium walkathoners as they cornered Police Commissioner Leroy Lambert just outside the city hall this morning when on their way to the public hearing.*” In the photo all four of the cute young ladies were grinning as they drew a bead on Mister Lambert with their fingers. And the commissioner, who had been sympathetic to the walkathons all along, seemed to be enjoying himself.

The paper named the young women confronting the commissioner. The shortest of the group, by at least a head, was Florence Spinnell — Raymond Hunt's walkathon partner.

Florence was just three months shy of 20 when the Walkathon began. We don't know what brought her and Ray together — whether they knew each other before or just paired up during the walkathon's auditioning process. We hope to have an answer to that someday, though we expect it was the latter.

Regarding the council meeting, and Maylon's showmanship, the *Chronicle* reported, “*The 22 (remaining participants) from Will Maylon's walkathon ... dolled up in their Sunday best, marched in together, with their trainers, judges, master of ceremony. Mr. Maylon headed the parade.*”

“*Mrs. Gladys Stone Angus, walkathon bride who dropped out when she fainted after the ceremony, got a big hand when she walked into the council chamber.*” She and her husband “*assured the crowd they were happily married, and both were applauded when they made their little appearance.*”

The walkathoners stayed in motion during the meeting — in compliance with the contest rules.

As the debate got underway, the Reverend Charles Koehler argued, “*It is the effect on youth. They feel if this walkathon is authorized by law and sanctioned by the commis-*

sioners it is all right.

“*It is immoral. ... It is the relation of the sexes to which we object principally.*” Assumedly referring to the bodily contact between couples, the Reverend elaborates, “*They go along promiscuously.*”

“*This is only the beginning. ... People are going to get tired of seeing just walking. Now they are going to have bathing beauties and what next. God only knows.*”

When Maylon took the floor, the *Chronicle* quoted him as saying, “*Here are the walkathoners .. You can see how they look after 619 hours (three weeks, four days, and nineteen hours) of walking 45 minutes and resting 15. They have two physical examinations daily. Seventy percent have gained weight.*”

Regarding the event's economic impact, Maylon said, “*We are employing about 58 people, 40 of whom would not be working if it were not for the walkathon. People come from Montana and Idaho to see it. And it gives Spokane something to do after 9 o'clock in the evening.*”

Noting that the chamber's crowd was overwhelmingly on the side of Maylon's walkathoners, the March 12th article concluded, “*There seemed little possibility that the city council will see fit to stop the performances.*”

Wedge within all the back-and-forth arguments was the newsworthy observation that only 22 walkathoners attended the meeting because two more had “*... dropped out Wednesday night under doctors' orders.*”

The council's final decision on all this was posted in the *Chronicle* the following Monday. “*After three-quarters of an hour of desultory discussion about the Auditorium Theater walkathon*” — the term “*desultory discussion*” being suggestive of unfocused chattering, without plan or enthusiasm — “*city commissioners this afternoon left the question 'as was.'*”

While no action for or against was taken, “*it was decided that commissioner of Public Safety Lambert should ask Will May-*

lon, the walkathon's 'head man,' to post the \$1,000 prize money for the winner in a local bank.”

... thinning the herd ...

On Saturday the 14th, ten couples and one solo walker were left in Maylon's walkathon, the latest to leave being a victim of tonsillitis — something quite a bit more serious in those pre-antibiotic days.

The following Sunday, this appeared in the *Spokesman-Review*. “*Dixie Dodd, 95-pound walkathoner at the Auditorium, and Eddie, her husband, objected to a rule inaugurated yesterday by Manager Will Maylon. It was that any contestant falling to the floor twice in 45 minutes was ruled out. Although it was the 675th hour (four weeks and three hours) of the long walk — or at least, moving the feet — Dixie and Eddy quit cold.*”

Something else occurred that Sunday, as reported in Monday Morning's *Review*. One of the contestants, Al Lyman, made the mistake of accepting “*an innocent looking 'pop' bottle from a woman in the audience.*” It was assumed the drink was “*doped or poisoned.*” Though Lyman managed to stay in the contest, “*it was not known if he could continue much longer.*”

On Wednesday morning, March 17th, the *Review* reported that the Washington Hall walkathon had “*ended at 4:50 Tuesday morning when Carl and Bridget Hatcher, the last couple, dropped out.*” Like Maylon's walkathon, the promoters had stipulated that the prize money was dependent on the walkathon lasting at least five weeks. The article said, “*The contest would have reached five weeks Thursday night. The management reported the couple was getting a prize. Asked what it was, the reply was given, 'That's our business.'*”

Regarding the Auditorium's walkathon, the article said, “*The nine and a half couples still in the race, had been walking 750 hours (four weeks, three days, and six hours) at midnight.*”

It also noted, “*A certified check for \$1,000 was given to Leroy Lambert, police commissioner, Tuesday night by Will Maylon to assure the city council that the \$1,000 prize money*” would be awarded.

The *Review's* report for Monday morning, March 23rd, foretold things to come when it announced, “*New and stiffer rules will be put into effect Monday for walkathon contestants now in their fifth week. ... It is expected that some of the entrants, who have completed nearly 900 hours, will fall by the wayside this week.*”

The changes announced, instead of 45 minutes between fifteen-minute breaks, it would now be a full hour. Also, trainers and judges would no longer be allowed to offer any physical support to walkers attempting to sleep while on the move.

Wednesday morning's *Review* suggested the changes were having the desired effect. “*The end of the trail came for two in Maylon's walkathon ... yesterday. Wayne Pitts, partner of big Amelia Galka, No. 23, fell down twice shortly before 7 a.m. and was disqualified. At 5 p.m. Miss Maxine Hostetter, partner of Al Lyman, left the contest at the end of 912 hours (five weeks and three days) on account of nervousness.*”

On Friday afternoon, March 27th, the *Chronicle* outlined what seemed a puzzle. “*As the eight couples remaining in the long-distance hike ... approached the 1,000th hour on the floor, an examination shows that the men have gained 17 pounds each. That's 248 pounds among them since the stand-up-or-get-out contest started nearly six weeks ago. Figure it out.*”

The article added, “*Tonight the girls will do their sleeping periods on cots on the stage. The awakening process always proves amusing to the crowd.*”

Something on most observers' minds was answered in the *Review's* last Sunday edition for March. “*The contest reached 1,000 hours (five weeks, six days, and sixteen hours) at 8 a.m. yesterday, and a few hours later each contestant was asked what he would do with*

the money if he won it.”

Get married, go to school, pay debts, take a vacation, buy a house, pay off the farm. Among those replying, this. “*Florence Spinnell and Ray Hunt, No. 8 — Florence: ‘I’m going to take a trip to New York to visit my folks.’ Ray: ‘If I can get enough cash with the merchandise prizes, I will enter W. S. C. (Washington State College). Otherwise, I’ll go to Cheney (Normal School) two years, then teach awhile and finish at W. S. C.’*”

For all their effort, by the end of the month four more walkers were out. As the *Review*’s Tuesday, March 31st issue summarized, “*The casualties over the weekend were Sammy Wise, who succumbed after his birthday party celebration, and Dan Stiefel, who fell twice within one hour, which means ‘out.’ Miss Jerry Mills fell twice yesterday and was ‘counted out.’ Gladys McCoy who had been paired with Gordon Bezley, also went out Sunday.*”

The count was now down to six couples.

... “*that which does not kill us*” ...

On the 1st day of April, the *Spokesman-Review* described in detail walkathoner Al Lyman’s on-stage marriage. The article concluded, “*Bride and bridegroom received presents of flowers and a huge cake. The walkathon management presented them with \$100. A photograph was taken, then ‘time’ was called and the bridegroom resumed the long grind of walking about, determined, he declared, to win the \$1,000 prize.*”

A few days later, the Saturday, April

4th *Review* announced that Will Maylon had another rules change in mind. Specifically, “*Walkathon contestants ... will find the rest periods fewer and further between starting next Monday. ... They will have to walk 75 minutes before they get their 15-minute rest period. At present they are walking an hour and resting 15 minutes.*”

It also noted that another contestant had been injured in a fall but was continuing on with one eye blackened and her head bandaged.

The harsher rules would go into effect at 8 p.m. Monday, April 6th, according to that afternoon’s edition of the *Chronicle*. The newspaper made it clear such was of little concern to the recently married Al Lyman, since he was ordered out of the completion just before midnight Sunday evening. The newspaper noted, “*He had lasted 1204 hours.*”

If anyone had any doubt as to the results expected from the walkathon’s rule changes, the *Chronicle* had this quote from William Maylon. “*Some contestants are in such shape they may drop out any moment. ... The strain ... is taking its toll fast, and with harder rules going into effect, it should end soon.*”

Tuesday morning’s report in the *Review* began, “*The five and one-half couples still left in the walkathon ... are reaching the end of the trail, and from their weariness the contest which reached 1231 hours (seven weeks, two days, and seven hours) last midnight, cannot continue much longer ...*”

It was clarified that the new rules stipulated that any contestant walking without a partner would be disqualified after just 24

hours, which led the newspaper to speculate that solo walker Amelia Galke would “*fall by the wayside at 8 o’clock tonight.*” As the *Review* explained, “*Amelia lost her partner, Al Lyman, singing bridegroom, late Sunday night when the doctors ordered him to quit because of an infected foot.*”

Maylon addressed that issue in the evening’s *Chronicle*. “*Amelia began soloing at 11:40 Sunday night, before the new rules went into effect, and has one week from Sunday night to continue soloing before being disqualified.*”

The same article also reported, “*Amelia Golka was an easy winner among the girls and Ray Hunt among the boys in a popularity contest last evening ... Amelia received a hat and Ray Hunt was given an order for a shirt.*”

For the next five days, the newspapers’ primary focus were the walkathon’s various side entertainments. A women’s nail driving contest — \$3 prize, a spelling bee — \$20 prize, another 50-hour sitting contest — \$25 prize, amateur night with 20 acts — \$25 dollars for the winner,

And then, on Monday morning, April 13th, the *Review* summed up the situation for the walkathoners.

“*Four couples and one weary solo walker were all that remained of the Will Maylon Inland Empire Walkathon at the Auditorium last midnight. The end seemed near with 1380 hours (eight weeks, one day, and twelve hours) on the floor.*”

“*Joe Fairchild ... fell to the floor yesterday and was disqualified after 1360 hours ... Fairchild’s partner, Dorothy Johnson, will be eliminated today unless she finds a partner. Amelia Golka, who failed to obtain a partner was ruled out of the competition last night ...*”

“*Florence Spinnell, partner of Ray Hunt of Deer Park, slept on the man’s shoulder, her hands tied together behind his neck last night. New rules of 90 minutes walking and 10 minutes rest probably will finish off the walkathon this week.*”

Tuesday evening’s *Chronicle* drew it even sharper.

“*Competition in Will Maylon’s walkathon has now narrowed down to two and a half couples, with prospects that the number will be an even two tomorrow morning. Doug Angus was disqualified this morning when he fell after a collision with Ray Hunt. Doug’s partner, Margaret Westerman, will be disqualified tomorrow morning unless she secures a partner. Gordon Bezley and Mickey McKinney make up one of the remaining couples, and Ray Hunt and Florence Spinnell the other.*”

... *within reach* ...

Thursday morning, April 16th, 1931 — this from the *Spokesman-Review*. “*With \$1,000 in cash and \$2,000 in prizes for the winning couple, and with the merchandise growing daily, the two couples left in the walkathon at the Auditorium are grimly carrying on, each determined the other shall be the first to fall. The two pair left are Gordon Bezley and Mickey McKinney of Spokane and Ray Hunt of Deer Park and Florence Spinnell of Spokane. They are now past the 1450-hour mark. Margaret Westerman was disqualified at 7:30 o’clock yesterday morning ...*”

The article contained these observations from Will Maylon. “*Interest is becoming intense in the contest and the phone rings continually. ... Several thousand dollars have been bet on the outcome. ... the winners will be from the Inland Empire and amateurs, as none of the four ever took part in a walkathon before. ... Naturally they all want to win after walking around in circles 60 days with little sleep and with so much money and merchandise offered.*”

Friday morning the *Review* reported, “*Florence Spinnell, a chic little girl completely surrounded by tremendous pajamas, has corns. And how they hurt! Ask her.*”

“*Ray Hunt, her walking mate, can’t keep awake. Ray is a good-sized young man, but his lively little partner manages to keep*

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From the *Spokesman-Review*, April 17, 1931.
Clipping — photo and caption — used by permission of the *Spokesman-Review*.
With special thanks to the *Review*'s newsroom archivist, Jessica Bell.

Walkathoners Past Masters in Somnambulism



Where do we go from here isn't the problem of the quartet shown in the photograph, the last remnants of the plodders in the Will Maylon walkathon at the Auditorium. What they're worrying about is how long they are going to be able to stay there, as there's 1000 bucks awaiting the couple that avoids collapse the longest. The photographer dropped in casually, recently and snapped them in a characteristic pose. They're only getting

10 minutes out of every 1 hour 40 minutes in the feathers, and any one who ever stayed up all night will realize that they're just as tired as they look.

On the left, Florence Spinnell is sleeping peacefully in Ray Hunt's arms, while on the right, Mickey McKinney has rocked Gordon Bezley to sleep in her arms and maneuvered him around so that the camera will show how pretty he is in his sleep. Since the picture was taken, 30

hours more have been chalked up on the board, but it is doubtful if the contest can run many hours longer. For this reason, sleeping quarters have been fitted up in the dressing rooms for Mrs. R. A. Hunt of Deer Park and Mrs. Henry Bezley of Orchard Avenue, mothers of the two men.

Tonight the rules tighten. At 10 p. m. the walking period will be lengthened to two hours before a 10-minute rest is allowed, and each couple is to be chained together.

him from doing a nose dive."

The newspaper also noted, "Mothers of the two boys were on hand Thursday. ... Mrs. R. A. Hunt, Deer Park, where Ray was born 22 years ago, has been somewhat in the same boat as her son for the last week, she hasn't been able to sleep, she said." Regarding Gordon Bezley's mother, "As a walkathon fan, Mrs. Bezley has got just about as much endurance as her son. She's on hand every day, remaining from 12 to 24 hours."

Elsewhere in the paper it was noted, "Sleeping quarters have been fitted up in the dressing rooms for Mrs. R. A. Hunt of Deer Park and Mrs. Henry Bezley of Orchard Avenue, mothers of the two men."

That evening the *Chronicle* noted, "At noon today the walkathoners had been going 1484 hours" — that being eight weeks, five days, and twenty hours. The article also noted, "Contestants ... are getting a little squirrely ... Perhaps that's the reason Bill (Maylon's often seen nickname of Will occasionally being replaced with Bill) is going to have them put in handcuffs at 10 o'clock tonight." By "squirrely," the article explained, "Last night Maylon had just finished arbitrating a fight between Ray Hunt and his chic little partner, Florence Spinnell, when Gordon Bezley and his plump walking mate, Mickey McKinney, had a falling out and Bill had to arrange another armistice."

The next morning's *Spokesman-Review* elaborated on this theme. "Chained together, and with their walking periods lengthened to two hours and their sleeping periods reduced to eight minutes, the two remaining couples in the walkathon at the Auditorium are about all in. Last night Ray Hunt was irrational, and Gordon Bezley was more or less 'punch drunk.' Hunt nearly fell several times and would have had it not been for the watchfulness of his frail but spunky partner, Florence Spinnell. Mickey McKinney also aided Bezley considerably as he ambled aimlessly around, sound asleep on her shoulder. The two girls seem to be holding up better than the men. The contest has now passed the 1500-hour mark and today is its 63rd day."

... Ray Hunt falls to floor ...

On Saturday afternoon, the 18th of April, the *Spokane Chronicle* reported, "This morning at 4:45, Ray Hunt, partner of Florence Spinnell, did a nosedive with dramatic suddenness to disqualify himself. Hunt had been having a bad day, but appeared to be growing stronger when, without warning, he pitched forward before his diminutive partner could catch him."

With Ray out, the rules allowed Florence to continue walking by herself for another 24 hours, at which point she would be disqualified, and the remaining couple would split the prize money.

Of course, there were other possibilities. Either Gordon or Mickey could fall before Florence's 24 hours were up. If one of them did drop before then — effectively ending the contest — and if that person was Gordon, the rules indicated that Gordon, as part of the winning couple, would get one-third of the prize money, while Mickey and Florence, also as finishers, would split the remaining two-thirds. In other words, as soon as Ray fell, the clock to a defined finish was ticking.

On Monday morning the *Spokesman-Review's* April 20th edition summarized the walkathon's conclusion. "*Before a packed house at 4:45 a.m. yesterday at the Auditorium Theater, Will Maylon's Inland Empire Walkathon ended after two months or 1524 hours (nine weeks and twelve hours) of continuous (except for brief rest periods) walking.*"

"*Gordan Bezley ... and Miss Mickey McKinney were declared the winners, but Florence Spinnell, who had soloed since ... Saturday morning, was on her feet at the last and virtually tied with the winning pair.*"

It was noted that Ray, along with Florence, was present on stage when William Maylon awarded the \$1,000 check to the winning couple. And that would have been it — except, as the *Spokesman-Review* explained, "*A surprise attended the finale of the competition when Bezley and his popular partner declared they would split their winnings with Hunt and Miss Spinnell.*"

On the following Thursday — April 23rd — the *Deer Park Union* concluded its report on Ray's participation in the event by noting, "*The \$1,000 cash prize and an equal amount of mining stock was divided among the last four contestants, which means that Ray is several hundred dollars to the good as the result of his experience.*"

Since Ray's portion of the prize mon-

ey was \$250, that would suggest his earnings during the around the clock event amounted to sixteen and six-tenths of a cent every hour.

That said, considering the manner in which the audience rewarded their favorites with gifts and coins tossed onstage, this event may have been far more lucrative than the prize money, mining stocks, and other official rewards alone would suggest.

... *one can only wonder ...*

Regarding the aforementioned column from the April 20th edition of the *Spokesman-Review*, after explaining the surprise decision by the winners to share their prize, the article offered a second surprise when walkathon promoter William Maylon announced "*he would promote another walkathon, this time without rest periods ...*"

As explained in the *Review's* April 24th edition, this new contest wasn't designed to be a long, drawn-out affair. The contestants were "*expected to fall rapidly*" since they would "*never go to bed while the contest is on and must do all their sleeping on their feet.*"

The article went on to report, "*Ray Hunt and Florence Spinnell ... announced their entry yesterday.*"

At 9:00 p.m., Saturday, April 25th, 1931, this second walkathon got underway with 28 couples.

As for Mr. Maylon's prediction regarding a rapid rate of attrition, that proved true, as this update from the *Chronicle's* Saturday, May 2nd edition suggests. "*At noon today the walkathoners had been on the floor 159 hours (six days and fifteen hours). Ten couples remained in the contest.*"

The newspaper also noted, "*Florence Spinnell was found spinning a yo-yo today in an endeavor to keep awake.*"

Summarizing the weekend, Monday morning's *Review* stated, "*Ray Hunt, runner-up of the last contest and known as the 'whistling mayor of Deer Park,' was forced to withdraw from the grind after an infected foot put him on crutches. His partner, Florence*

Spinnell, was teamed with Ray Bush."

Monday afternoon's *Chronicle* explained that the order was issued Saturday evening, and that Ray "*left the floor at 9:25 p.m., during the 168th hour,*" exactly one full week plus twenty-five minutes after the march began.

The May 11th *Chronicle* reported, "*Florence Spinnell, winner of the first walkathon contest, left the bunion marathon at 1:14 o'clock this afternoon after 376 hours (two weeks, one day, and sixteen hours) on the floor.*" Fourteen hours later the two remaining couples agreed to split the \$1,000 prize and William Maylon's second walkathon was declared at an end.

... *Florence in the years after ...*

On October 13th, 1931, the *Spokesman-Review* announced that Will Maylon was planning a third walkathon. After all the preparations, beginning with rules similar to those used during the first walkathon, and a \$1,000 prize to the winning couple, on Saturday, November 28th, 1931, it began. Among the contestants, Florence Spinnell — this time partnered with a gentleman by the name of Bob Scott.

A marriage license dated February 19th, 1932, certifies that Florence Spinnell and Alfred George Raschka were married — that assumedly occurring on stage at the walkathon. We know Mr. Raschka, who doesn't appear to have been one of the walkathon contestants himself, was employed at the time by Spokane's Diamond Cab Company.

On February 29th, 1932, the *Spokane Chronicle* announced that Florence Spinnell, along with replacement partner Jack Hayes, "*... were judged the winners in Will Maylon's walkathon at the Auditorium Theater at 12:15 o'clock this morning.*" That after a soul-numbing 2212 hours, which is to say, thirteen weeks, one day, and four hours.

In January of 1950, Florence's husband was struck down at the couple's home by a heart attack. His age, 43. At the time of his

death he was employed as the general manager of a Spokane paint company. Surviving him, Florence, a daughter, Patricia, and a son, Al — all at the home. As far as currently known, Florence never remarried.

In April, 1973, an article recalling Florence's walkathon adventures appeared in the *Spokane Chronicle*. That article stated that in 1950, the year of her husband's death, Florence went to work for the telephone company, retiring, the paper said, 22 years later. It was noted that her attendance record with the phone company was perfect, "*being neither tardy nor absent for a single working day.*"

Born in Spokane on May 6th, 1911, Florence passed December 10th, 1997. Her son, Al, had died in 1985. But her daughter Patricia, seven grandchildren, and twelve great-grandchildren lived on.

... *Ray in the years after ...*

At this point we just have a sketch of Ray's post walkathon history. Although, as far as we know, he never participated in another walkathon, he didn't give up the stage entirely. In late November of 1933, Deer Park's Ladies Auxiliary to the American Legion put on the play titled "*Road to Glory*" as a fundraiser. Raymond Hunt is listed as one of the ten players with speaking parts.

In July of 1934 the *Spokane Chronicle* reported on the formation of a labor union — the A. F. of L. — at the Deer Park Lumber Company, with Ray Hunt listed as recording secretary.

On August 10th, 1934, Ray married Hazelle Charbonneau, age 20, of Springdale. The August 16th, 1934 *Deer Park Union* said they became acquainted when Hazelle was attending Deer Park's high school. Ray appears to have been several years late in graduating from high school, and it's tempting to wonder if the Pandemic of 1918 may have had something to do with that. But who knows?

At some point in 1935 Ray purchased a service station at Loon Lake, at least that's the inference drawn from this notice found in

the Wednesday, August 5th 1936 issue of the *Spokesman-Review*. “Ray Hunt sold his service station at Loon Lake Saturday to George Rozelle of Spokane. Hunt has entered the employ of the Hillyard Bakery.” The next day’s issue of the *Deer Park Union* added that Ray would be relocating to Hillyard, and that “his work will be on the road as a traveling salesman.”

In May of 1938 Raymond and Hazelle were divorced. It doesn’t appear any children were involved.

The August 26th, 1943 edition of the *Deer Park Union* reported, “Pvt. Ray Hunt, son of R. A. Hunt, has returned to his station in California after spending a short furlough with his family and friends. Ray has been in the army 14 months and likes it fine.” On the 29th of November, 1945, the newspaper announced that, “Pfc. Raymond R. Hunt, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Hunt of Deer Park, has received his honorable discharge from the army and has returned to the home of his parents. Ray, a graduate of Deer Park High School, served 41 months in military police and medical corps units.” A few months later, the February 27th, 1946 edition of the *Spokane Chronicle*, recorded that a marriage license had been issued for “Raymond Hunt, 37, and Laura Wilson, 42, both Oakland, California.”

This appeared in Deer Park’s newspaper in late April, 1955. “Mrs. Mattie Hunt, who has been living in Spokane for some time, has returned here to live in her old home in

the north end of town with her son, Ray Hunt.”

On Thursday, May 7th, 1959, Raymond Hunt, age 49, passed away at the Veterans Administration Hospital, Vancouver, Washington, after a stay of “some months” — the last according to his obituary in the *Spokane Chronicle*.

His obituary in the *Deer Park Union*’s May 14th issue included the following. “Survivors include his wife, Laura; a step-daughter, Billie Siewert and three grandchildren, (all living at) Winlock; his mother, Matie A. Hunt of Spokane, and sister, Mabel M. Olson, Spokane.”

But the best remembrance of Ray in that issue of the *Union* was the one William C. Roll posted in his ‘Shavings from the Mill’ column. “Friends and former high school chums of Ray Hunt were shocked last Friday to learn of his sudden passing in Vancouver’s hospital. Ray, who lived here practically all his life until two years ago when he moved to Winlock, was a food salesman. He had been ill with a stomach ailment. His funeral services were held this Wednesday in the Veterans Hospital in Vancouver. Burial was there in the Veterans Cemetery. Ray, it is remembered, was the hometown favorite in the big walkathon which was held in the old Auditorium Theater in Spokane a good many years ago. We’d like to extend to his mother, wife, and other relatives our sincere sympathy.”

— end —

Mortarboard Volunteers Needed!

**We’re Looking for Two Writers,
each Willing to Write and Otherwise Administer a Recurring Column.
One column will answer questions of an historical nature submitted by our readers.
The other column will be a series of biographic sketches,
each featuring a current member of the society.**

**Both these projects will require intensive research, and may necessitate in-person interviews,
telephone discussions, as well as email and/or letter communications.
Creative writing skills and a willingness to engage collaboratively would be helpful.
If interested, contact the Mortarboard’s editor at bogwen100@msn.com for particulars.**

A photo-essay of The Clayton ♦ Deer Park Historical Society at Clayton’s Community Fair! August 27th to August 29th, 2021

article composed by the

Editorial Group

— with —

*Photos by Peter Coffin
(Unless otherwise noted.)*

The weather in late August was nearly perfect for this year’s Clayton Community Fair. The one jarring thing, something that likely kept attendance down, was the wildfire. That, tagged the Ford-Corkscrew Fire, reportedly popped into existence around midday, August 15th, near the community of Ford in southeastern Stevens County — that being some 13 miles west by southwest of Clayton. In the photo below, taken from Clayton’s fairgrounds on August 28th, the fire’s eastern most limb can be seen creeping down the east side

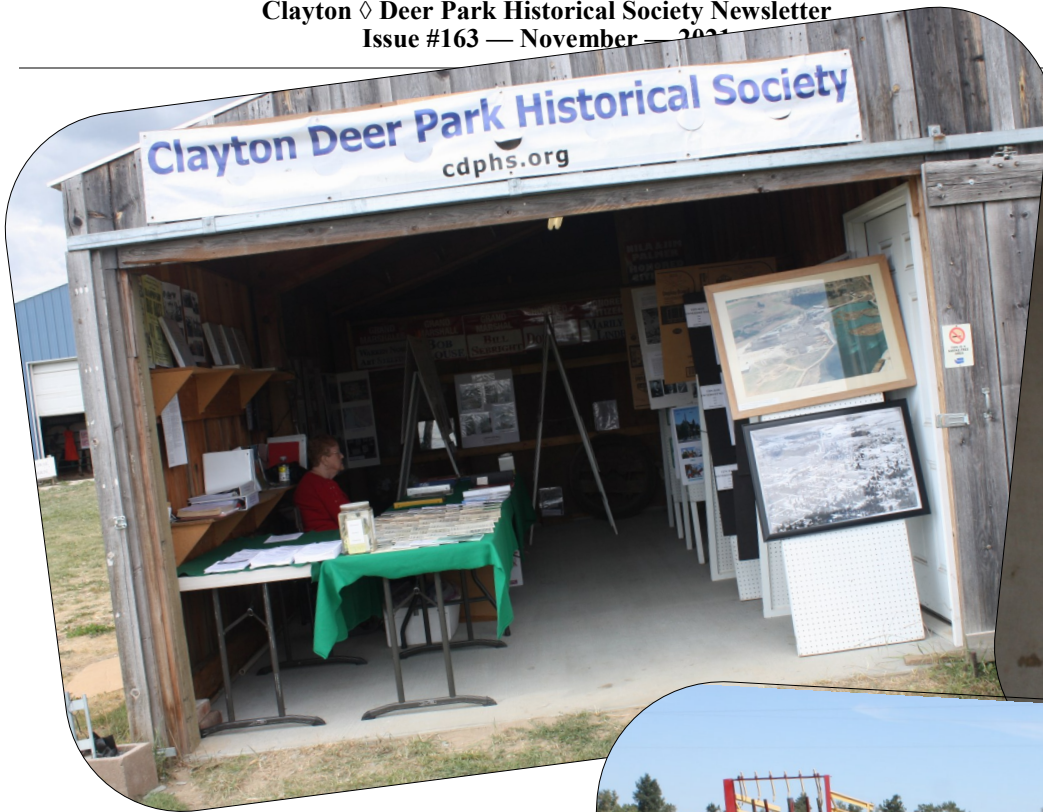
of the Five Sisters Mountains, toward Williams Valley. As August ended, what remained of this wildfire was considered contained, and soon after, just another historical footnote.

The worrisome smoke aside, the following Society members helped set up and show this year’s fair display; president Bill Sebright, Society historian Pete Coffin and his wife Judy, Mike Reiter, Mike Wolfe, and Mar-

— text continued on page 2421 —

Photo by Bill Sebright.





Top Row: Left to Right.
The Society's display with Judy Coffin overseeing.
Next, a display of creatures Made of farm produce.
And last, a quilt display.

Bottom Row: From the left.
Chuck Lyons demonstrating a vintage rope-making setup of his own construction that utilizes the mechanism seen on the far right — that from the North Spokane Farm Museum's collection.
Regarding said artifact uncovered while rummaging through the museum's collection of bits and pieces, Chuck said, "I knew immediately what it was."



Photo by Chuck Lyons.



Above:
*A segment of Chuck's newly made rope
on display at the Historical Society's enclave.*

Right:
Chuck Lyons at work making rope.

Below:
A kerosene farm engine on display.

— text continued from page 2417 —

ilyn Reilly.

Regarding our display of artifacts and printed materials, that located in one of the fairground's buildings, Bill said, "We had the large color photo of the old Deer Park sawmill as well as our enlarged aerial photo of Deer Park mounted at the entrance to our presentation. Those items seemed to attract people, a number asking about or commenting on them."

"The other big area of interest were the ownership maps that Pete Coffin created. Locals really enjoyed finding their property on the maps and seeing who owned it before them."

"While it seemed attendance and exhibits were down compared to other years, as always the young people's animal exhibits and sales were a big draw."

"We received a very nice card from the Clayton Fair Board, thanking us for participating and making Clayton's fair a success."

Among the pieces of vintage machinery being demonstrated at the fair, Bill took special notice of a rope-making device from the North Spokane Farm Museum. Illustrating the workings of the mechanism was Chuck Lyons, member of the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society, and our go to source for explanations regarding mechanical devices — especially vintage tractors and farm machinery. In the following note to the *Mortarboard's* editor, Chuck explained his fascination with rope-making.

"When I was just a lad, raising, showing, and selling fat 4-H steers at the Grandview, Washington, Junior Livestock Show in the mid-1950s, there was this fellow who came several years and made a few bucks making and selling custom lariat ropes. Being

much more interested in mechanical gadgets than cattle, I spent many hours during the show watching him make his ropes, and eventually reached the point I was certain I could make a machine to accomplish the same result. I went home after the show ended and made my own version, which worked just fine. I think the longest rope I made on it was 75 feet, plenty long for use as a lariat.

"As a result of my becoming a Board of Directors member at the North Spokane Farm Museum, I often had occasion to peruse the many gadgets donated into the museum's collection. One day, lo and behold, there lay a winding mechanism (US Patent 1901) for making rope (see image page 2419). It was only the winder, not the whole setup, but I knew immediately what it was and took it upon myself to build it into a configuration easily hauled and set up for demonstrations at fairs, historical gatherings, and the Museum's yearly anniversary celebration. With it now so configured, single-handedly I can make a four-foot hunk of rope, which I then give away to my young spectators. The required materials are cheap: Plain old baler or binder twine, which comes in a range of colors (Blue, orange, and green — usually). These colors add patterns to the finished result. Rope size can be varied by the twine size used and the number of strands used in each."

Reading Chuck's detailed instructions on operating the machine, it's clear that not a small amount of knowledge tempered by experience is involved in successfully turning out usable rope. As noted in those instructions, "The artistry comes in knowing when you reach 'full twist.' Too little, you get loose rope. Too much and the strands will knot up and make a mess."

And next year is coming up fast.

— end —

**Numerous events are presented throughout the year at Clayton's Fairgrounds.
For more information, check their website — link below.**

<https://www.facebook.com/ClaytonCommunityFairgrounds/>

Letters, Email, Bouquets & Brickbats

— or —

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

... “to keep the girls from falling out” ...

The following was clipped from the Thursday, October 18th, 1923 issue of the *Deer Park Union*. I believe the “Ford bug” mentioned below was a stripped-down Model T roadster — or possibly some other body style of Model T flivver chopped down into a two-seater. I also believe that the Wesley Holcomb mentioned below was a brother to our region’s better-known Elmer and Homer Holcomb. Add to these another three brothers, Orville, Donald, and Albert — and one lone sister, Ruth — and you have a family our society needs to know more about.

“A hug in a bug cost Wesley Holcomb ten dollars and the expense of a hearing before Judge Wood on Monday when Marshal Woods arrested him as driver of a Ford bug in

which he, with three companions, were piled in two deep. It may be that the boys were doing it to keep the girls from falling out, but they couldn’t make the officer see it that way and he gathered them in. Holcomb was arrested on the now common charge of reckless driving, as he only had one hand busy with the car at the time the official eye caught him at it. He pleaded guilty to the charge and paid the fine, but as far as could be judged, he made mental reservations to the effect that he wouldn’t promise not to do it again.

“The other man and the girls were not arrested as they were not driving, and evidently the case was not one where contributing to the offense could be charged against them.”

———— Wally Lee Parker ————

Minutes of the Clayton ♦ Deer Park Historical Society ———— October 9, 2021 ————

In attendance at the society’s meeting hall, 300 Block ‘A’ Street: Marilyn Reilly, Bill Sebright, Mike Reiter, Bill Phipps, Tom Costigan, Wally Parker, Dick Purdy, Amy Lindh, Damon Smathers, Jessie Tennant, Larry Bowen, Judy Gross, Tracy Strong, Tim Verzal, Judy Coffin, Pete Coffin, Chuck Lyons, Steve Moore, Christina Burris, Mary Jo Reiter, Rachelle Fletcher, and Winnie Moore.

Society President Bill Sebright called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. He reported that: 1) He received a call from Mary Fritz

Byrd in Dayton, WA. She is the daughter of Alice (Donovan) and Don Fritz. Donovans once lived near Spotted and Enoch Roads where Mont Lam is now. The Fritzes owned Fritz’s Beer and Lunch in the 1930s across Main Street from where NAPA is now. Pete could find nothing about Fritz’s Beer and Lunch. Pete found that the J and J Tavern was opened in 1946 by Jimmy Sicilia and Joe Cerenzia. Mary sent a booklet, Your Household Guide, that belonged to her grandmother Inez Fritz. Willard and Inez Fritz owned a

dairy on Enoch Road where Urbats live now.

Society Treasurer Mark Wagner reported by text: 1) The main checking account ended the month at \$15,917. There was a deposit of \$20. No checks were written. There was the usual withdrawal of \$12.92 for web hosting. The Brickyard Day account is at \$1,103.75. The Eagle fund account, \$7,450. 2) Mark took *Mortarboards* to Gardenspot Health Foods and Odynski’s Accounting.

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

Print editor Wally Parker reported: 1) October’s *Mortarboard* (#162) has been printed for distribution, the total run being 120 copies. A printable PDF version has been sent to the Loon Lake Library and The Heritage Network. And the society’s webmaster has received the web version for uploading. 2) This issue of the *Mortarboard* features the first half of an article outlining Spokane’s Walkathon of 1931 and a Deer Park resident’s participation in such. The second half is expected next month. The Letters/Brickbats column includes an update on research into the town of Deer Park’s earliest history, some details regarding the connection between a vintage truck in the North Spokane Farm Museum’s collection and Wild Rose Prairie’s legendary R. R. Hazard, and we’re also archiving a small addition to the history of Clayton’s Ramble Inn Tavern. 3) If you’ve ever wondered, the physical location of the occasionally referred to Print Publications is your editor’s home library. It’s here, surrounded by a clutter of books, by stacks of paper materials arranged in geological order (meaning the further down the stack you go, the older things get), and with the original crew of the starship Enterprise gazing down from a row of collector plates, that my online research is done, my articles created, correspondence received and sent, and all the various other operations necessary to paste together a desktop publication carried out. Most of this work is done between four and nine in the morning. A small cluster of sci-fi figurines serve as my office personnel, and my editorial staff (critical to

whatever professional polish these newsletters might display) are scattered somewhere on the other end of my internet link. If you feel there’s something I should know — be it suggestions, criticisms, scripts, images for publication, etc. — I’m here most mornings, easily reachable by either email or snail-mail. Telephones are not optimal since I’m a terrible notetaker with bad hearing who finds it difficult to read my own writing, especially when that writing is dashed at a furious pace. Furthermore, considering my age and sputtering memory, submitting things in writing is an absolute necessity if accuracy is the desired outcome. Regarding such, legibility is helpful since the eyesight, though ahead of the hearing, isn’t far behind the memory. Just saying.

Webmaster Damon Smathers reported: 1) October’s issue of the *Mortarboard* has been uploaded to the website. 2) The new “Contact Form” is finished. Visitors can now request photos/information under the “Contact Us” tab on the website, as long as a valid email address is submitted.

Pete Coffin reported: 1) President Sebright asked for copies of 14 short stories about my childhood adventures in Deer Park. He forwarded them to Editor Parker for possible publication. 2) Sent President Sebright and Editor Parker several possible *Mortarboard* manuscripts. Titles include: The Deer Park Concrete Construction Company, Newton Grove and the Grove Motor and Implement Company, Bulk Hydrocarbon Warehouses in Deer Park, and the Fish Chevrolet Garage. 3) Digitized the 2001 and 2006 Deer Park High School annuals. 4) I am researching the Inland Power Company and its origins in the depression era Rural Electrical Administration. 5) Have sent Melissa Silvio of the Valley Historical Society some pages with pictures of the Valley railroad depot from the book “*Great Northern Railway Kettle Falls Branch*.”

Amy Lindh took the Camp Fire Girl’s dress to loan for a Camp Fire Girl display.

Mike Reiter reported that: 1) I’m working on a story about the Clayton Drive-In. I want to set up an interview with Don Ball

and Taffy Long. 2) We need to get a work crew to get a slab poured. If we just poured a ten-by-ten slab and got the Eagle set on it, we could throw a tarp over it for the winter. Mike will call a concrete guy Tim Verzal suggested.

Rick Brodrick texted: "At this moment I'm a bit loopy. While in Richland for a stock car race I had a syncopal episode due to blood clots in both lungs that resulted in an unexpected hospital stay. Currently I'm continuing to recover at home." We certainly wish Rick a quick recovery.

Mary Jo Reiter brought a circa 1930 picture of her Uncle Oscar Roberts in a Meadowbrook baseball team uniform, and a 1995 Tribune article about the 60th class reunion for the DPHS class of 1935. Warren Brodrick, Helen Yingst Strong, Elma Ziehnert Roberts,

Norton Weldert, Estelle Gjervik Coe, and teacher Ward Crowley were in the article's picture.

Tracy Strong brought the abstract title to the Hopkins Addition and the ledger for the O. A. Peters Ford Auto Agency.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, November 13, 2021, at 10:00 AM at our building.

Meeting adjourned at 10:59.

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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Wally Lee Parker, Editor of Print Publications — bogwen100@msn.com

Damon Smathers, Webmaster — damonsmathers@gmail.com

Website — <http://www.cdphs.org>

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, Chuck Stewart, Lina Swain, and Ken Westby.

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.