

THE
CLAYTON/DEER PARK
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mortarboard

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The C/DPHS is an association of individuals dedicated to the preservation of the history of our community. To the preservation of the region's oral history, literary history, social history, graphic and pictorial history, and our history as represented by the region's artifacts and structures. To the preservation of this history for future generations. To the art of making this common heritage accessible to the public. And to the act of collaborating with other individuals and organizations sharing similar goals.

A Time Out To Serve: Across the Pacific and on to Tokyo

by
Wey Simpson

(Part Four)
(conclusion)

The Last Round

The New Year saw front-page stories in the *Stars and Stripes* that read: “*There Aren't Enough Replacements — Army Slows De-Mobilization — Rate of Return Home Cut by More Than Half.*”

You can guess the general reaction. My parents had to wade through a nearly two page letter that I wrote on January 6th sounding off in very strong terms. Many of us also wrote our Congressmen. Didn't do much good, but certainly helped relieve the internal pressure that was building up. We were prisoners of the mind-set that “*The war is over! Send us home!*”

It happened that Secretary of War Patterson visited Japan in the midst of this turmoil. I'm sure that he somehow got the general feel of the emotions that were running strongly just then.

Apparently one can protest too much. It was later reported in *Stars and Stripes* that

two reporters had been transferred for “*disloyalty.*” One of them was Sergeant Ken Pettus, who had earlier been editor of the “*New Dealer,*” a very liberal publication headquartered in Washington State. I wrote home, “*I never liked his politics, but it is still a free country.*”

There were a few positives in the first days of 1946. We enjoyed the first ice cream since we had shipped out, and also got the first bottled Coca-Cola we had seen overseas. It tasted a lot better than the fountain version.

In the new year I found myself spending more and more time in the Supply Room. I thought this might become a permanent assignment. Otherwise one pulled guard duty or KP.

Then, in the middle of the month, our First Sergeant sought me out and told me, “*You will go over to Personnel and learn to clerk. Our present clerk there is becoming our troop clerk. This will be a break for both of you and you will both get better ratings.*” It

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is or soon will be
available in booklet format.*

*Ask about
“Collected Newsletters: Volume Twenty-Four.”*

*Society contact information can be found
on page 1132.*



Photo from the Wey Simpson collection.

“These are the fellows with whom I worked in the Regimental Personnel office. I’m in the back row, second from the right. I had them all identified at some point, but that information seems to have been lost.”

might be a good year after all.

I had already had a taste of it, and I thought it was a “swell job.” The work entailed making up payrolls, keeping records on individual soldiers, and handling bond schedules, among other things. Being able to type was a requirement — so thanks to Deer Park High School for its typing class. Whenever there was a large movement of personnel, or when it was payroll time, we could be very busy. But it challenged the mind a lot more than KP or guard duty. I guess it helped to have friends in the right place.

Moving into Regimental Personnel resulted in some major changes in my life. I worked regular hours, which of course could expand if we had a heavy workload needing

immediate attention. It was more mentally challenging. And with regular work hours I had some free time. Thus I could see some of Japan and more of Tokyo — and have a chance to better know the land of the former enemy.

Once a group of us visited Radio Tokyo (*imagine that*), and I termed it the nicest building I had seen in the city. Another time we attended a performance by the Nippon Philharmonic at Hibiya Public Hall.

In February we were able to take a day trip to Mt. Fujiyama. We rode in the back of an Army truck. Starting out at about 8 a.m., we went up to about four thousand feet above sea level. It was cloudy at the peak so we only got occasional glimpses of the iconic moun-



Photo from the Wey Simpson collection.

“Unfortunately on our trip to Mount Fuji it was so cloudy we never got a good look at the peak. This picture is a shot of one of the mountain villages through which we passed.”

tain top. The trip through the Japanese countryside was instructive. The small towns and villages, and the intensive farming, gave us a better picture of Japan. The road was narrow and some of the drop-offs took one’s breath away. On the return trip we came out at the head of Tokyo Bay, passing through some picturesque villages.

In February the mail issue raised its head again. Delivery of mail slowed to a crawl. The reaction was widespread and loud. Cablegrams were sent to the various congressmen. I even sent some cablegrams home to explain that our mail was not arriving in a timely fashion. The official explanation was the planes were grounded for inspection and would not be allowed to fly until the inspections were done. For a time, only one mail plane a day was arriving in Tokyo. Finally deliveries picked up in late March and we were almost overwhelmed with delayed mail.

The 77th Infantry Division was deactivated, and the men not eligible to go home were assigned to other outfits. The 8th Regiment got a number of them, so work picked up in Personnel. We had new records to integrate into our system — we had to bring them up-to-date and file their records with the appropriate unit. An extra work load until it was all

under control.

The Japanese government decided to issue new currency. Strong controls were instituted, aiming at curbing black market activity. Wages were also controlled. After turning in their money, the Japanese were only allowed 400 Yen a month in return. We had to convert our Yen as well.

Another advantage I now had was that I was free from most of the parades and other such activities in which the Division took part. The parade grounds were next to the Imperial Palace. I missed marching for a delegation from the United Nations. Other dignitaries the division put on a show for were former President Herbert Hoover and General Dwight D. Eisenhower. I avoided the parade for ex-president Hoover, but the salute to General Eisenhower was on a Sunday, the 12th of May, so I did take part. “Ike” even visited our billet and spent some time in our Hobby Horse Inn. That act apparently was widely covered by the US press.

I thought this showed what kind of a person the General was. I wrote home, “*He told us he was so deeply appreciative of the review on our free time and that he didn’t want to keep us very long. He said he had three things to tell us. First, we were doing a very important job. Second, from what he had seen we were doing a magnificent job. Third, he visited many troops, but we were the best he had seen.*” That was nice to hear. Of course I’ll bet the buttons on the First Cavalry brass were ready to pop off their jackets.

Later there was a story in the *Stars and Stripes* about Eisenhower dressing down a Colonel because of a complaint he had heard from an ordinary GI.

Because the review for General Eisenhower took up our morning, that Sunday’s religious services were delayed until the afternoon. I had been asked to do a solo — which of course I did — but I was beginning to feel the results were not too good. Still I was asked to sing again. On some occasions I was also asked to perform at the Hobby Horse Inn. But, I had a feeling that I was not performing

at the top of my game. Maybe reality was setting in.

Among our extra duties, one of us from Personnel would occasionally serve as Charge of Quarters (CQ) in the Regimental Headquarters office. Mainly we would be posted in the Colonel's outer office during off duty hours — just in case. Similar duty was required of one of us every Sunday in the Personnel Office.

Armed Forces personnel are allowed to wear ribbons on their dress uniforms designating their honors and places of service. I was entitled to the Good Conduct Medal, Philippines Liberation Ribbon — with one campaign star, Asiatic Pacific Ribbon — with one campaign star, World War II Victory Medal, and the Combat Infantry Badge. Not a lot compared to the "long-timers," but I was still glad to be able to wear them.

I now had a lot more time to get acquainted with Tokyo, and to sample some of the amenities that were available to service personnel. One of the theaters that survived the bombings was re-named the Ernie Pyle Theater to honor the revered war correspondent who had died in the last days of the European conflict. A group of us went there to view the movie "I Ring Doorbells," following which we enjoyed another amenity at the theater, a roof garden. We could just relax and

The Ernie Pyle Theater.



The Dai Ichi building; General Headquarters for the occupation. Dai Ichi means "number one" or "the first" in Japanese. It had been a bank.

view that part of Tokyo.

There was a barbershop where the hair was cut by young Japanese women. I availed myself of this service once, just to say I did.

The downtown PX was also a must-visit site. It was large and offered a lot of things that were not available at the regimental PX. That included ice cream and hamburgers.

The American Red Cross also had a facility downtown which we visited on several occasions, just to escape "the Army life" for a brief time.

Once a friend and I were downtown, shooting photos around the Imperial Palace. Then we stopped at another place for rest and relaxation — The Banker's Club. From there we took a rickshaw to the Ernie Pyle Theater. On the way we passed the massive Dai Ichi

Photos from the Wey Simpson collection.

Building (*Dai Ichi meant Number One*) which was Allied Headquarters in Japan, and where General MacArthur headquartered. Just then the general was leaving the building. He had an imperial bearing, ideal for the job of managing the occupation of Japan. There was always a crowd of ordinary Japanese around the front of the building, and as he walked out they would bow politely.

After reaching the Ernie Pyle Theater we went up to the Roof Garden. It turned out that Paramount was filming some footage for their newsreel — recording some of the off-duty activities available to our service personnel. As luck would have it, we were photographed. However, we never knew whether we made it onto the screen or to the cutting room floor.

Considering we could see movies and live performances, get our haircut, shampoos and shaves, and enjoy 'goodies' from the PX, it's small wonder that the Ernie Pyle became one of our favorite off-duty destinations.

In June, G Troop was transferred from the 8th Cavalry's headquarters to a remote location for at least a couple of months. Since I had to remain at the headquarters to do my job, we were given special detail designation so we could remain behind. This allowed a move into a small two-man room which I shared with Verne Thom. Verne hailed from Minnesota, and helped run the Regimental Laundry. We had some trouble locating a room. The first one we picked out was claimed by F Troop and they didn't want us there. We finally located one, far enough from the Orderly Room, but close enough to our jobs. Some friends in the Provost Marshall's Guard said they could get some Japanese workers to fix up our room. They put up shelves and added other amenities that made our room more functional. After group living for all these months, the privacy seemed really strange. We could now have our own radio, and could listen to the Armed Forces Radio Service.

One thing about the military, you get used to standing in line for everything — to

eat, to get shots, to get mail, to get paid, to get supplies. You name it. I once wrote home: "I imagine if I ever see a line when I get home, I'll just fall in at the end."

Just a Little More Time

In early April my friend, our Troop cook, "Swede" Olson from Aberdeen, and I decided to take the train to Kamakura to see the famous Buddha there. The train took us through Yokohama on an hour long trip. Kamakura was the first capital of Japan under the current dynasty. We visited a Shinto Shrine (*Shintoism was the official religion of Japan*). There was a museum with antiquities dating back as far as 700 years. The Buddha

Ralph "Swede" Olson, one of our mess crew, and myself standing in front of the huge Buddha at Kamakura.



Photo from the Wey Simpson collection.



Photo from the Wey Simpson collection.

***The Shinto Shrine at Kamakura — Shinto being the official religion of Japan.
Those who worshipped at the shrine would wash their hands and mouth before entering.***

was a 700-year-old statue that was cast in bronze and had withstood a tidal wave and several earthquakes. It was also the largest Buddha in Japan. We also viewed the “Goddess of Mercy,” a gold-plated figure that stood 300 feet tall.

There was a Japanese tearoom where a boxed lunch was provided by the Red Cross. The trip consumed a full day. It was enjoyable and grounded us better in the culture of Japan.

One of the givens in overseas service

was that we got a free carton of cigarettes on a routine basis. Since I didn’t smoke, my smoking friends were willing to buy them from me. That provided most of my spending money. I sent most of my pay home.

At the end of April I finally got my Corporal stripes. I had been due the stripes for a while, but ratings were limited, especially since we had accumulated a number of ratings when we got the men from the 77th Division.

About the same time our work schedule changed. Our day now started at 7:30 a.m., we worked until 11, a two hour break followed and then we finished the day with a 1 p.m. to 3:30 stint. This was an hour and a half less than previously. There would still be days when the work load demanded we work well beyond that time frame.

Late in May we housed a group of Scots known as “*The Queen’s Own Cameron Highlanders*.” Dressed in their kilt uniforms and playing bagpipes and drums, they were performing at the Ernie Pyle Theater. They also performed on our regimental parade grounds and ate in our mess hall. I got to know several and became quite close to one of the fellows. They spent about ten days with us. Later they would be back for another ten.

A July announcement from the War Department said that all men with 24 months service at the end of September were to be shipped home by that date. That would of course include me. I expressed doubts. In early July we had to process out 98 men, and that was one of the smaller groups. We were sending home a lot of men.

Near the end of July we had a group of 24-month vets who were eligible to go home. They were supposed to ship out from the regiment on Wednesday. That was also the day that a General was supposed to inspect the regiment. A Lieutenant Colonel, our Regimental Executive Officer, said the orders should be delayed until Friday so that they would be available for the inspection. This meant that they might miss their troop transport. The Regimental Commander, Colonel Roberts, learned of the order and got in

touch with the 8th Army and reserved space for the men on the ship they were supposed to take. They wouldn’t be delayed.

The sending of men home continued. At the same time there was a growing shortage of personnel to meet the Army’s operational needs. Many ‘*special duty*’ men were pulling guard duty. We were not getting replacements for the men going home. We feared a general freeze in our theater of operations until more replacements arrived.

Life moved on while we waited. Verne and I, on a couple of occasions, used a couple of bicycles the Red Cross had acquired. Thus we were able to see parts of Tokyo that were off the beaten path. It was, however, rather punishing to our muscles. In late July we got beds with springs and mattresses to replace our folding cots and air mattresses. I wrote: “*I’ll never get out of bed, now.*”

In July the military also issued its own currency that could be used only at military facilities. We still had to have Japanese currency to buy anything from a Japanese business. Another interesting twist.

Early in August I became Chief of the Service Records Section, and also a general troubleshooter. Lieutenant White, who headed the Personnel Office, gave me a lot more responsibility; which meant more work, but was a lot more interesting. I was now doing a Staff Sergeant’s work, but still a two-striper. Personnel tried hard to get me my Sergeant’s stripes, but most troops didn’t want to give up a rating to someone that was not in their organization. This brief period was the most satisfying of my entire service experience. Too bad the opportunity came so late. Being busy and challenged made a real difference to me.

The top people in Personnel urged me to re-enlist for 18 months. This would probably have gotten me a Tech Sergeant’s rating, which meant decent pay and I could have saved a wad of money. I suspect you know my answer. The call of home was too strong, I said, “*Thanks, but no thanks.*”

It was nice to know I was valued, and

I've sometimes wondered how my life might have changed if I'd jumped at the opportunity.

A few days later I finally got my Sergeant's stripes. This required that I transfer to "A" Troop, which was not stationed at headquarters, so I was then attached to my old "G" Troop for rations — i.e. where I ate.

Fairly late in my stay in Japan I had two opportunities to visit homes in Tokyo. A friend from the Chaplain's office had access to a Jeep, one day he drove me to a missionary's home. The lady who ran the home was an American who had been in Japan for 25 years. They also operated an orphanage and were grateful for the help offered by many GI's.

We also visited a home of a Christian Japanese family. They had traveled much of the world, even having lived in Los Angeles. The father was a doctor, they had two boys and three girls. The oldest I described as the loveliest Japanese girl I had seen. She was 24 and married to a doctor. The oldest son was serving in the US Army and planned to study medicine when he was discharged. We had a standing offer to return to visit again, which sadly never happened.

In those final days we were extremely busy in the office. We worked up rosters for Division payroll which were due by the 15th of August. The 14th was the first anniversary of the Japanese surrender and was supposed to be a day off. I figured we'd get the holiday when we could.

I had expected to be relieved of duty near the end of September. On the 28th of August we were advised that on September 1st or 2nd I would qualify to leave Division and begin the process of going home. On the 31st I cabled home to announce the news. But, with 150 men leaving, I would have to work until the last minute. Another friend from Personnel, Walter Coil of California, was to leave at the same time.

We actually left for the Replacement Depot on the 3rd of September. We were there only briefly. Then it was another troop ship experience.

I'll only note that on our crossing of

the Pacific we hit a very violent storm and for several days we were required to stay below deck. It was a pretty rough ride.

On September 20th we docked in Seattle. What a joy to see our homeland again. Our first stop was Fort Lawton, then to Fort Lewis to muster out. Getting out of the Army was almost as complicated as getting in. However, this time there didn't seem to be much of a hurry. We had a lot of time to kill, so on several occasions a group of us took the bus into Tacoma.

I finally got to Spokane on the morning of October 1st. My parents met me at the train, and for the first time in over a year and a half we were able to talk to each other face to face.

I would still technically be in the Army until I had used up all of my accrued leave time, which meant a few more weeks. But, it was goodbye uniform and welcome civilian clothes.

It was over, so who was I now? I was two years older, a decade wiser, and I hope I was more caring and compassionate. I learned to appreciate doing a job well. I experienced for the first time in my life other cultures, and I think I came home more sensitive to the differences that exist around the world. While I didn't really want to go into the military, I have always valued the experience and how it helped shape my life. I met a lot of wonderful fellows, a few not so, but then that's life. I learned how to take what comes and deal with it in the best way I could. I learned to treasure our freedoms very deeply. And I came to recognize that when people work together, great things can be accomplished.

One of the things I took away from this experience was a better understanding of the diversity and general beliefs of other parts of our country. Thinking back to my good friends, they came from such diverse states as Iowa, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, South Dakota and New York. These were in addition to the fellows I've mentioned in this story. We all represented different

Photo from the Wey Simpson collection.



Wey Simpson
1946

backgrounds, but we were serving for the same reason.

I've tried to carry these lessons into the years that followed. I certainly did not singlehanded or otherwise save the world. My contribution to the actual war effort was extremely modest. I still harbor some concerns

about the interest this story will hold for you, dear reader. Perhaps, it will provide a little window of insight into how we moved from war to peace. And what it was like to do so in the capital city of a former enemy.

— end —

Letters, Email, Bouquets & Brickbats

— or —

Bits of Chatter, Trivia & Notices All Strung Together

... Spokane Tribe archeologist writes ...

On June 17th, society vice-president Peter Coffin received the following email from Jackie (Jacqueline) Corley, Tribal Archeologist at the Spokane Tribe's Archaeology & Historic Preservation Office, located in Wellpinit, Washington.

Ms. Corley wrote, "I recently came across the article by Michael Denuty titled 'The Springdale and Long Lake Railroad and the Deer Park Railway Company.'" (See *Mortarboard* #33, January, 2011, pages 409 through 415 — also *Collected Newsletters*, Volume Nine.) I was wondering who I should get in touch with about this article. I would like to use the map on page 409 that is the Springdale and Long Lake Railroad. I am currently working on a report and have not been able to find any other maps that incorporate the Deer Park Lumber Spur. I would like this map for my report with the proper citation, and was wondering if there was any other information on this spur. If you could point me in the right direction, it would be greatly appreciated.

"Thank you for your time."

Pete replied, "Mike Denuty passed away a couple of years ago. However, I wrote most of the article under his direction and I drafted the map you refer to and have the original paper map and the original digitized

drawing of it. Mike and I took a field trip from Ford to Wellpinit on April 30, 2012 to review the lumber spur. The map you refer to has the approximate location of the spur as neither one of us had seen a map of the route but we did view the remains of the road bed during our field trip. The Deer Park Lumber spur portion of that map was drafted (copied) from USGS-Coast and Geodetic survey contour maps (Ford Quadrangle), estimating where the rail-bed had to have been. The Springdale and Long Lake portion of the railroad is reproduced from Washington Water Power original survey prints which I obtained from them and should be as accurate as a pencil width.

"There is information in the Deer Park Union newspaper as to when the spur was used for logging. I have a digital copy of that newspaper from 1911 to 1980.

"How may I help you."

The final disposition of Jackie Corley's request is outlined in the vice-president Pete Coffin's additions to the society's July minutes — as posted on page 1130 of this issue.

... local history and the Spokane Tribe ...

An illustration found on the Spokane Tribe's website outlines the three million acres of eastern Washington and western Idaho

claimed as traditional tribal lands. It would seem reasonable to assume that the suggested borders were ambiguous in the sense of being in continual flux due to ongoing agreements and disagreements with neighboring tribes. That said, what is clear is that the entirety of the Little Spokane River drainage basin is included in the Spokane Tribe's lands (*at least in oral tradition*) — plus some lands to the west and east, and an extensive expanse to the south.

Even though the historical society's area of interest lies primarily within the north-west quadrant of the Little Spokane River's drainage basin, we do claim some of the Colville River's drainage basin as well. That claim is based on the fact that during the Arcadia Orchards era, waters from Loon and Deer Lakes were diverted into the Dragoon Creek segment of the Little Spokane River's drainage basin to feed the irrigation company's orchards. According to the Spokane Tribe's map, that area of southern Stevens County was also, at least marginally, their ancestral lands as well.

So, even though the three interrelated tribes that compose the Spokane Tribe claim ancestral rights to all of the Little Spokane River's geographic drainage basin, the lack of a written tradition makes researching and reporting on this history difficult. Most of what little we know of recent aboriginal history is drawn from a period of time in which the deliberate fragmentation of the First Nations with the intent of eliminating any cohesive opposition to the Federal Government's appropriation of native lands was ongoing. This creates a situation in which reconstructing the reality of traditional native life must largely be left to archeologists, rather than non-native historians contemporary to the era — whose scant writings were likely to contain political colorations that often make them suspect.

Jackie Corley's email can also be considered a much needed reminder that to fully understand local history, we need to search much further back than the relatively recent arrival of the Europeans. In truth, the

majority of the history we report is only scratching the surface. We need to take every opportunity to look beyond that. In other words, we need to actively seek out those areas of interest seldom touched upon since they require specialized knowledge and/or research. Hopefully we'll be able to explore some of this deeper history going forward. And if so, it's likely to be enlightening. It's also likely to be supportive of a First Nations cultural tradition that assumes the inhabitants of any given region belong to the land, rather than the land belonging to its inhabitants.

... Mary DePaola and the local Indians ...

In the winter of 2004 your editor did an abbreviated interview with Mary (DePaola) Hopkins (October 20, 1914 — June 5, 2005). In that interview Mary outlined what little she knew of her family's history, including how her father ended up owning one of Deer Park's legendary stores, DePaola's. As Mary explained it, "Dad tried to tell me about all that kind of stuff — about what part of Italy he came from and such — but I was just a kid then and couldn't have cared less."

Mary did say that her family name has always been spelled wrong. It was originally Di Paola. Her mother's obituary, as it appears in the September 22nd, 1916, issue of the *Deer Park Union*, confirms that spelling. But said confirmation has so far proven a singular event, confined to that one article.

Regarding her mother — Josephine — Mary stated "My mother was just 19 when she died, so I don't recall her — or even ever seeing a picture of her. My dad would never talk about it, so I don't know much about her."

Josephine was interred in what is now referred to as the Holy Redeemer section of Deer Park's Saint Mary Cemetery.

Mike DePaola, as a single father, never remarried. He passed away on July 5th, 1957. And, after 40 years of separation — under cloudy circumstances — he shares a headstone with Josephine in the above noted cemetery.

Regarding the store, Mary said, “*At first it was just a little shoe repair shop. Dad worked at the shop and at Deer Park’s sawmill too. The shop’s owner — I think his name was Sisno, or something close — wasn’t too honest. He ran up a bunch of debts and had to leave town. Dad decided to just take over full time. I must have been about three or four years old when that happened. From the little shoe repair shop Dad expanded until his establishment was the biggest dry goods store in Deer Park.*”

“*We lived in an apartment over the store. I recall that on occasion one of the town drunks, after losing all his money, would stand in the street and throw rocks up at our window until dad would get up. Then the drunk would say something like, ‘Mike, I’m broke. Can I borrow enough money to get home?’ Afterwards Dad would say, ‘Someday that guy will just drop dead. Then I won’t get my money back.’*”

“*I remember when the Indians would come to town. In back of our store was a big open area. So when the Indians drove down from up north — maybe they were from Colville, I just don’t know — they would camp in that space behind dad’s store. They’d stay for maybe a week. I use to have a bunch of baskets, hand made baskets, all stained with the huckleberries that they brought in to pay for the shoes and stuff that they wanted from Dad.*”

“*The town people were distrustful of them, but they were always honest so far as I could see when it came to dealing with Dad.*”

During our interview Mary apologized several times for the fact that she didn’t have any photos or other memorabilia to share with the society. Prior to our talk someone had broken in to her assisted living apartment and taken, among other things, the boxes containing her life’s remembrances. As far as currently known, none were ever recovered.

... a burning sky ...

First of all, let me disclose that when it comes to flying saucers, your editor has al-

ways wanted to believe. Unfortunately, having spent the majority of my working life dealing with people, I’ve learned that humans often embellish things just a little bit beyond the merely factual. So even though I do want to believe that unidentified flying objects are extraterrestrial craft, I’ll need to see some credible scientific evidence first — meaning eyewitness accounts alone are never enough.

That said, most anyone with any number of years behind them has seen at least a few unusual things in the sky. For example, late one afternoon in the mid-1950s, we were out in the west field of the family’s Williams Valley farm turning hay bales to speed their drying (*they were baled just a little too green*) when we noticed an intense pinpoint of green light falling out of the northeastern sky. The light fell for what seemed five or six seconds, then disappeared behind the timberline — that being perhaps a half mile away. As for what it looked like, imagine a green aerial flare being dropped from an aircraft — though what kind of muddled aviator might drop something like that into a tinder dry woods is beyond me.

It’s interesting to note that objects dubbed “*green fireballs*” were very popular among UFO devotees in the early 1950s. And to also note — when reading about the fantastic maneuvers these objects engaged in — that estimating the distance, size, and speed of airborne UFOs without fixed references is notoriously difficult if not impossible even for trained observers. As for my sighting, all I can honestly report was a descending point of intense green light. If what I saw was one of those notorious “*green fireballs*,” I wasn’t particularly impressed by it. But if it were a tailless meteor falling several dozen or more miles away, that would have been impressive.

The above is preamble to the fact that about ten years later I saw something incredibly impressive — and initially unidentified.

The event occurred on the evening of March 31st, 1965, at exactly 47 minutes after 9 — Pacific Standard Time. That, at least, is the time published in the November, 1965, bulletin of “*The Permanent Commission on Mete-*

orites of the International Union of Geological Science.” And with a name like that, I’m going to assume their data is accurate.

A lady friend and I were parked and “*talking*” in a sparsely wooded rural area not far from Spokane when the entire landscape — both inside and outside the vehicle — turned a vivid orange. And I do mean the entire landscape, including the mountains in the distance. Looking around, the obvious source of the light was what appeared to be a single boiling orange fireball just a short distance above the horizon to the north. If I had to hazard a guess as to size, I’d say at least as big as a clenched fist at arm’s length. Within a few seconds — perhaps five — it had faded away.

My only hint as to distance was that I heard absolutely nothing I could associate with the explosion — then, or in the following minutes. What I didn’t realize at the time was that our area was only seeing the final dazzling flashes of what would prove to be one of the 20th century’s legendary meteor falls.

As for other local reports, the April 1st, 1965, edition of the Ellensburg, Washington, *Daily Record* quoted the pilot of a DC-3 flying in the Ephrata area as saying the event lit the cockpit of his aircraft “*as bright as day.*” So at least I wasn’t having a singular hallucination — even though my date only recalled seeing a “*confusing*” flash of light.

Eyewitness reports of this event were received from as far north as Peace River, Alberta, and Dawson Creek, British Columbia. As far east as Edmonton, Alberta. And as far south as Lewiston, Idaho. The final official report stated the explosion, or explosions, I saw occurred at an altitude of approximately 18 miles, some 38 miles northwest of Revelstoke, British Columbia — which is to say, about 270 miles north of Spokane.

Over the next several years a fairly good understanding of what actually happened that evening was pieced together. The evidence suggested that the source of the explosions was a roughly 10,000 pound chondrite meteor. (*Chondrites being rocky meteors composed of smaller, non-metallic pebbles,*

the bulk of which usually “burn up” before impact.) Subsequent analysis indicates that the meteor, leaving a glowing 60 plus mile long trail, detonated in a blue-white fireball that then broke into at least two smaller chunks which subsequently exploded as red fireballs — one or both of those smaller explosions likely what witnesses in our area saw.

Data extracted from instruments measuring atmospheric pressure changes were used to estimate the force released by the entire series of explosions. Said calculations suggested that an amount of energy equivalent to at least 20,000 tons of TNT — or a small nuclear device — had been liberated in just a few seconds. And when something that large detonates over Canadian airspace, agencies from both sides of the border, both civilian and military, are interested in sifting through the details just to make sure there isn’t anything — shall we say — unnatural going on.

Most of those directly under the series of blasts described the event as very bright and very loud. In fact, the April Fool’s Day issue of the *Revelstoke Times Review* wrote, “*windows rattled and doors shook*” with “*thunder-like bangs*” that “*lasted fully 10 minutes,*” the above sounds preceded by “*brilliant flashes of light all over the sky.*”

Only two small fragments of the object were recovered from the ground. The rest of the physical evidence was collected directly from the air shortly after the event by United States Air Force jets fitted with special dust collecting filters — which, as chance would have it, were also very good at gathering radioactive airborne residuals from Russia’s ongoing series of aboveground nuclear tests.

So — setting aside the conspiracy theories suggesting that the “*Revelstoke Fireball*” was actually a flying saucer’s anti-matter drive malfunctioning and then exploding — I’m pretty happy with having seen the last glow of this perfectly spectacular meteor. Of course, if it had been an exploding flying saucer, that would have been pretty cool too.

———— Wally Lee Parker ————

Minutes of the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society — July 11, 2015 —

In attendance: Pete Coffin, Judy Coffin, Don Reiter, Mary Jo Reiter, Betty Burdette, Bill Sebright, Mark Wagner, Marilyn Reilly, Kay Parkin, Bob Gibson, Sue Rehms, Sharon Clark, Ella Jenkins, Lonnie Jenkins, Lorraine Nord, and Bill Phipps

Society President Bill Sebright called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM. He reported: 1) The Eagle repair will begin the first week in August. The finished color of the Eagle will be determined after the present paint has been removed. At the last meeting \$650 was donated to the Eagle Repair Fund. Since then \$400 more has come in. 2) Bill filled out an application for The Heritage Network Grant. We will find out the amount at the THN meeting which is July 20. 3) Mark filled out the application for us to be an official 501-C-3 tax exempt organization. We were able to fill out the EZ version. It will cost us \$400 that Mark will donate. We will get a \$200 grant from Avista when we have our letter of determination. 4) Bill filled out the paper work for our Settlers booth. We should be in the same place as last year.

Society Treasurer Mark Wagner reported: The main checking account ended the month at \$7,424.50 with deposits totaling \$868.00 and a check written for \$389.84 to Discount Sign Warehouse for Brickyard Day shirts. The web hosting account ended the month at \$928.88 with the usual monthly withdrawal of \$10.95 for web hosting services. A \$16.99 yearly charge was also included for enhancement features.

Secretary Grace Hubal reported by email: 1) She sent out eight thank you notes

for Eagle donations. 2) She delivered the Clayton School 100th Anniversary postcards and signs to Odyanski's Accounting and the Gardenspot Market. The postcards will be sold for \$.50 each.

Society Vice President Pete Coffin reported: 1) Gave Richard Hastings of Spokane's Liberty Ciderworks a field trip to locate Arcadia Orchard apple trees that could supply enough apples to make an historical apple cider. 2) Provided David Benscoter (the apple historian) the 1917 *Deer Park Union* article documenting the types of apples and the number of boxes shipped out. 3) Researched the Garver property at the SE corner of Burroughs and Monroe Roads to document the sequence of ownership from the Northern Pacific Railroad through the middle 1950s as recorded on the Metsker ownership maps. Supplemental biographic material was also extracted from Ancestry.com files. 4) Provided an historic photograph of Deer Park's Main Avenue with the Yoke store sign to Yoke's Graphics Department. Took pictures of the 2004 *Nostalgia Magazine* article on the Yoke's business and found a 1946 *Deer Park Union* newspaper article describing the sale of Young's grocery to Marshall Yoke. 5) Sent the Spokane Indian Archaeologist maps of the Springdale and Long Lake Railroad right of way that include the Deer Park Lumber Wellpinit logging branch from Mike Denuty's *Mortarboard* paper. In addition, I provided *Deer Park Union* newspaper articles on the 1920's Reservation timber sale and Libby pictures of the logging operation from the MAC. Pete will be going to the MAC for more early telephone research.



Photo by Bill Sebright.

Eagle Restoration Begins:
On Monday, July 13th, society president Bill Sebright reported, "Pioneer Waterproofing got a break in their schedule and started stripping paint on the eagle this morning. (The photo above) was taken about 2 PM." A photo journal of the restoration is being kept for inclusion in a future Mortarboard.

He is mainly interested in when the first telephone came to the Clayton/Deer Park area. Pete also showed pictures of late 1800s logging operation in the area.

Print editor Wally Parker reported by email: 1) 125 copies of July's *Mortarboard* (#87) have been printed for distribution. The online version is pending. 2) The July issue is a Special Edition retrospective on the old Clayton School. It draws heavily on materials previously published by the Society. 3) It should be possible to print extra copies of the

July *Mortarboard* for distribution at this summer's events should such prove necessary. 4) The next edition of the *Collected Newsletters* is still under construction. More than likely it will be August or September before it's ready to go into print. 5) The August edition of the *Mortarboard* will conclude Wey Simpson's "A Time Out to Serve." That issue is currently about 50% complete, and I hope it will be ready in time. 6) Events of the last several weeks has bolstered concerns regarding the susceptibility of a system in which only one

person understands the complexity of setting up and publishing the newsletters. Just be advised that there are likely to be times when the newsletters will not be forthcoming in a timely manner. I've no suggestions to make in this regard. I'm only alerting everyone to the possibility.

Webmaster Marie Morrill reported:
1) No report.

Penny Hutten reported by email that the Westerners don't have meetings in July and August, but you can open the link pasted in the box below to access a list of the Westerners summer activities, including two tours of the "forgotten" Lewis and Clark Trail, and a tour of part of the "Old Colville Military Road, Indian Agency Home, and the Kalispel People."

There was some discussion about helping Wally out with publications. Jeff Lilly's name was mentioned as someone who has publishing experience.

Betty Burdette inquired about pic-

tures of the Happy Home Church. She talked about the many new improvements that have been made to the church in recent years. Betty has fond memories of the church. Pastor Dennis Christianson gave the Society a 3-ring binder of the Church's history a few years ago.

Wednesday, July 8, was the 6th and last Planning Committee meeting for this year's Brickyard Day. We think we are as ready as we will be for the 100th anniversary celebration of the opening of Clayton School. We have one more meeting to go over the good and bad points of the Day, August 5. So if you have any constructive criticism, come to the meeting or talk to a committee member.

Next meeting: Saturday, August 8, 2015, at 9 AM at the Clayton Drive-In.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 AM.

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

———— end ————

Westerners summer activities link — <http://www.westernersspokane.org>

Society Contacts

We encourage anyone with observations, concerns, corrections, or divergent opinions regarding the contents of these newsletters to write the society or contact one or more of the individuals listed below. Resultant conversations can remain confidential if so desired.

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———— C/DPHS ————

Volunteer proofreaders for this issue: Paul J. Erickson, Peter Coffin, Bill Sebright, Charles Stewart, and Lina Swain.