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THE
CLAYTON/DEER PARK
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Mortarboard

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With appreciation to proofreaders Jay Hubal, Sue Newell, and Paul J. Erickson.

Part One of
Tuffy's War: The Alvin "Tuffy" Luhr Story

— told by Tuffy Luhr —
— written by Wally Lee Parker —

At ninety years, Tuffy Luhr is small and slender. He uses a cane to steady himself when walking. But his mind is sharp, and he's still active in the business world — acting as a consultant on various projects in the lumber industry. Early in 2008 Tuffy and I began a series of interviews. The following stories are the results.

Tuffy has few personal recollections of the Luhr side of his family. Much of what he does know about them he learned in later years.

... watch out for that little guy ...

“Back in the old country — Sweden — my great-grandfather Luhr was very well to do. The Luhr family was rich enough to have a Finnish girl as a live-in housekeeper. And even though it wasn't proper to get involved with the servants, my grandfather, A. L. Luhr, just a kid then himself, got sweet on the hired help. So great-grandfather bundled the two of them up and shipped them off to America. A. L. went back and forth between here and the old country a number of times, but grandmother never did go back to visit the homeland.

“In 1898 great-grandfather sent his son enough money to buy some land in the Reno, Washington area — that was in Cowlitz County, along the road between Woodland and Mount Saint Helens.

“While I don't know an awful lot about the Luhr family, I do know that on the 20th of May, 1915, my dad, Elmer Luhr, married my mother, Lucille Dutcher. I was born in August of 1918. My

sister Mildred had come along a year or two before that.

“My uncle down in Reno had a nickname for everybody in the family. He called me Tuffy — and everybody else started doing the same. I didn't know I had another name until I got into school and they needed my real name for the records.

“That was a long time ago. About all I have for memories are a few images. My Reno uncle had a toy monkey that would climb up a string — a puppet kind of thing. He'd stretch that string from the bottom of the Christmas tree to the top. Watching that monkey climb up the side of the tree is the first memory I have of Christmas — and maybe my

Marjorie and Tuffy Luhr and their first two children — Richard and Susan. Photo probably taken in the summer of 1944.



Free — Take One

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first memory of anything.

“The Dutcher side of the family came from Holland to New Amsterdam in 1652. The head of the family had contracted with Peter Stuyvesant (Dutch Governor of New Netherlands) to work seven years to pay for the family’s passage — husband, wife, and all ten kids. After fulfilling the contract, the family settled in the Catskill Mountains.

“About 1904 or ’05 our part of the Dutcher

family moved to the Portland, Oregon and Woodland, Washington, area. And ten years later my mom married into the Luhr family.

“Grandma Dutcher moved to Clayton during the First World War. My folks got a divorce when I was about two years old — about 1920 — so mom, Mildred, and me, came up to Clayton to live with grandma Dutcher.

“I’m not sure how long we lived at Clay-

Clayton School — 5th & 6th Grade — 1929-1930

All Listed Left to Right

Front row	2nd	3rd	Back Row
Alvin “Tuffy” Luhr Arnold Frey Stanley Forsberg Jessie Elkins, Charlie Turcon Earl Twidwell, Roy Carr	Fay Carr Dorothy Smith Lydea Lambier Virginia King Alica Swanbeck Betty Demerice Margaret Casburg Unknown Unknown	Dora Porter Unknown Ruth — Unknown Unknown Unknown Unknown Olive Morgan Jeanette Larson	Eddie Olson Sid Loomis Lee Micback Earl Cox Anna Sater — teacher Fred Bardoa Unknown Bill Schoanfelt Ted Steinart Unknown

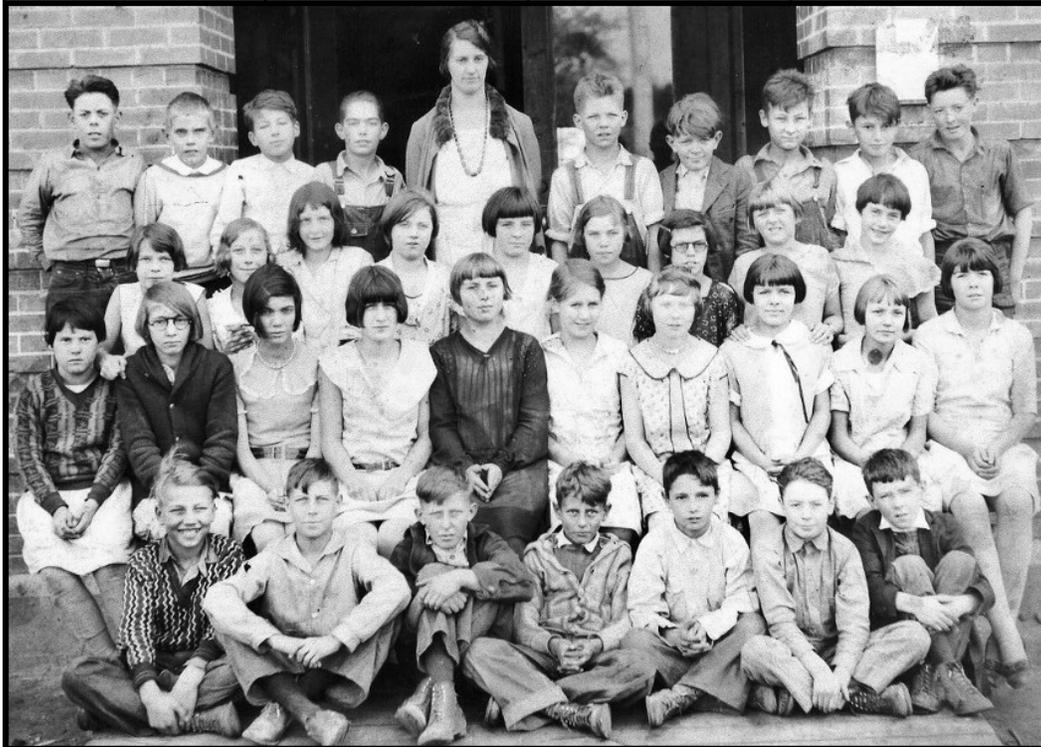


Photo from the Eddie Olson Collection

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ton that first time, though it was just a matter of months till Mom married Clayton's Pete Berg. He worked at the terra cotta plant as a model maker — making forms. Just after they were married he decided he wanted to be a wheat farmer, so they bought a ranch in Asotin County. My brother, Orland, was born while we were down there — and then another sister.

“Mom was pregnant with Orland when she married Pete Berg. For years I thought he was my half-brother. And even though the last name on Orland's birth certificate was Luhr, the folks decided to always use the last name Berg — just because of the way people would talk. That changed when Orland went in the army, and everything official after that was done using the name on his birth certificate.

“I started school in the country outside of Asotin. When the wheat went to pot around 1924 or '25, my stepfather got a job in Seattle, and we lived there until I was in the 6th grade. Then we moved back to the Clayton area, to a farm in Williams Valley.

“From there we moved to a place just south of Clayton — down on Beaver Creek, close to where the fairgrounds are now. Eventually dad — my stepdad — had about 60 to 70 milk cows. It was the top producer in Stevens County for awhile.

“When they came over from Norway, there were ten kids in the Berg family. They originally bought 160 acres about two miles from Clayton. So we were quite a clan, all told.

“When I started school at Clayton, my 6th grade teacher was named Anna Sater. In 7th and 8th I had Mister Cuttybank. Alice Singer was Principal.

“I weighed 110 pounds as a freshman — so naturally they put me on the football team as a tackle. I remember being hunched down on the line, with the other team in its huddle, and hearing one of those guys say, “Watch out for that little guy. He crawls underneath and fouls up the play!”

“I got a letter for my sweater. It was a ‘C’ maybe twelve inches tall. It just about rested on my belt, and then caught me under the chin. I guess it was made for the big boys.

“Allicena was our football coach. I guess you could tell by the name that he was Italian. Before becoming a teacher, he'd played for the University of Washington and the Washington Redskins.”

Tuffy has a few recollections of the relics

left by the Arcadia Orchards Company. In 1930 the company's foreign backers finally threw in the towel, and the company went bankrupt.

“The old Arcadia flume ran eastward right behind the old terra cotta building. It was elevated there, so we had to crawl up to get in it. The water was running from Loon Lake to Deer Park. It was a nice place to cool off in the summertime.

“The flume was something like three foot wide. It had sloping sides. The water was about a foot deep in it. The trouble was that they weren't too fussy about keeping the nails tapped down, so you had to be careful. My mom and all the kids would go up there to ‘swim’.

“Tile, metal or wood pipes ran along the fields out east of Clayton. When they came to a road they went under it and back up the other side. They did that with solid concrete structures you can still find passing under the roads in places. But they also used different pipes to go down and under the creeks, and, in some places, over the tops.

“They had barrel-stave pipes, bound by wire. Wood from those, and the flumes, ended up in a lot of the barns and buildings around here. I think the barn on the Milner's place out in Williams Valley has a lot of flume wood in it.

“After the Arcadia shut down, we'd go dig up these four foot tile — red terra cotta tile — and use them for lining wells and such. Washington Brick & Lime made them down at the Mica plant just south of Spokane.

“When a couple of my aunts were teenagers, they worked packing Arcadia apples down at Dennison. They worked night shift, which tells you something about how many apples they were shipping out. I remember early morning car rides down to pick the aunts up and bring them home — before school car rides. But that's about all I can remember.

“I helped at the Clayton Moose Hall when they were having dances. Eddie Hampton and I would run the ‘check room’ for people coming in who wanted to hang up their coats and so forth. The charge for taking care of a coat, hat, purse, or whatever was a dime. That was before 1936 — before I got out of high school.

“The Moose Hall was a pretty active deal before 1936, but I think they were having money troubles. They had Moose Bay on Loon Lake. Members could buy lots — those high up on the hog

Photo from Peter Coffin collection.



Peter Michie on the Big Foot Valley Farm in the mid 1930s. The horses are Queen and Dolly, and the device they're pulling is a dump rake — for raking hay into windrows.

could. When the depression came, all that started downhill.

“When I was in high school, Stewart was one of the head guys with the Moose. His son was in my class. Stewart was pretty well educated — boss at the terra cotta, on the school board, things like that.

“We were using horses to work the farm at Clayton up until dad got a tractor. Dad bought the horses and their harnesses for \$125 from a guy who lived about five or six miles west of Deer Park. I think it was \$100 for the two horses, and \$25 for the tack. We used them for everything from plowing to hauling the cord-wood wagon.

“The farm depended on the horses, so Dad was fussy about how they were cared for. We'd keep them in the barn at night. In the morning, we had to feed them at least an hour before starting work — to make sure they had time to eat everything. It took around half an hour to get them harnessed up for work. At night we made sure the horses were clean and that their bedding was down, and then at 8 or 9 we had to go out to the barn and make sure they had something to munch on at night and so forth.

“We also had to keep watch on the tack — patching whenever necessary. To keep the harnesses pliable and moisture resistant, Dad would treat the leather with a mineral oil concoction every once in awhile.

“They were a good team — Dolly and Queen. When they got too old for the amount of work Dad had to do, he sold them to Pete Michie out in Big Foot Valley.

“Michie was known for caring for his animals. When he worked them he'd cut a switch from an aspen tree, but he'd leave the twigs and leaves on the switch so it wouldn't hurt the horses. I think the swishing sound was enough.

“For years, whenever we were out that way, I'd see those horses. They were out roaming around the pasture most of the time.

“It seems we worked with horses until I was out of high school. Then Dad bought a little Farmall 'A' tractor. It was just big enough to do the work of one team. And it was running day and night.

“It was so handy. Start it up and you were ready to go to work right then. I think Dad paid somewhere around \$800 for it new. There were

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bigger tractors. And a lot of guys needed bigger tractors. But dad got what he figured he could afford.

“Compared to horses, that was a fantastic machine.”

The Farmall ‘A’ was introduced in 1939. It was produced by International Harvester with a 113 cubic inch displacement 4 cylinder engine rated at 16 horsepower at the power take-off, and 13 horsepower at the drawbar. The engines could be had in either gasoline or kerosene/distillate versions. It appears that the primary difference between the engines was in the system used to preheat the fuel, since distillate requires sufficient fuel preheating to allow vaporization inside the carburetor. Because of this, the tractor would not start when cold on the heavier fuels. The kerosene/distillate version required a small, auxiliary gasoline tank. The engine was started on gasoline drawn from this tank, and then, when the engine had reached operating temperature, it would be switched over to the heavier fuel from the main tank.

The lower compression ratio common among tractors of the period made it possible to burn different fuels with the proper manifold and carburetion adaptations. The side benefit of lower compression engines was that they were much easier to hand crank-start than similar sized but higher compression automobile engines.

“I left home when I was in the 11th grade. I went to work for the gentleman who had been our next door neighbor when we lived in Williams Valley, Dale Milner. Dale worked for the Deer Park Lumber Company at the time. He was trying to get a herd of milk cows started, so he had to hire someone else to milk the cows while he went to work. He hired me for 10 dollars a month and room and board.

“That was the same year I switched from Clayton to Deer Park. Clayton’s high school wasn’t accredited – I don’t think they ever were when I was going there. I wanted to go on to college, and you had to graduate from an accredited school for any of your high school grades to count.

“When I left there to go off to college, Mike Burdette took over my job.

“Fred Reynolds’ farm was on the next section south of Milner’s. At that time I was going with his daughter, Loraine. Fred’s first wife, Daisy, was Loraine’s mother.

“Anyway, one morning it was maybe 35

degrees below zero when Fred called. He asked me to take my car and pick up the Kline girl. ‘She’s walking a mile down to the corner,’ he said. ‘You’ve got to pick her up before she freezes.’ So I got my car started and took care of that.

“Not long after, Fred called me up and asked if I’d like to come to work for him. I could milk cows, drive his school bus, and the rest of the time go to school myself. He said I could start the next week. I figured that would be pretty great.

“That night I took his daughter out, with the usual understanding that I’d have her back by ten o’clock or so. I had one of my friends with us on the way home.

“The car slid off the road. One front wheel wedged into the snow bank so hard I couldn’t back out. Ed Falk lived maybe a half mile north of Fred’s, so I borrowed Ed’s horses to pull the car loose. And it was getting later and later.

“I was working with the team, and my friend was holding the lantern so I could see what I was doing. The harnesses began to freeze up — getting hard to work with. And I was getting a bit mad. I said a few things, and my friend was standing right in front of me, for some reason waving the lantern side to side.

“I said something like — ‘Damn these people, putting restriction on when to get their daughters home when the weather’s like this!’ And I said it loud.

“It was past 10. Fred had been watching down the road, saw the lantern and all, and had come down to investigate. He was standing right behind me, listening to everything. My friend was doing his best to warn me without saying anything.

“I didn’t show up for work the next week. I should of, but I thought he would not have had the notion to hire me after hearing all that.

“I attended Pullman from 1936 till ’38. I think Loraine went to work as a secretary for a heavy machinery dealer out east of Spokane – and ended up marrying one of the salesmen.

“People all around had a good opinion of Fred Reynolds. And those who knew Daisy thought she was great too.

“When Fred brought his milk truck by, if one of your milk cans wasn’t clear full, he’d not charge you for hauling the part full can – especially if the weather was hot. If you tried to keep the can over till you could fill it all the way up, the milk in it

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would likely spoil. If you sent it in anyway, you were supposed to be paying full freight on the part-empty cans. Fred shipped his own milk from his own farm too, so he knew. And back then, every penny counted.

“Everybody would ride to town on Fred’s milk truck. If they had to go to Deer Park for anything, they’d call Fred to make sure there weren’t too many people riding that day. That’s just the way Fred did things.

“Fred did a pretty good job farming. I don’t know how he did it with all the other things he had going on. But he seemed to like working that way.

“But as I said, I switched to Deer Park High because it made it a lot simpler getting into college. If you graduated from an accredited high school, they’d accept your high school grades, and then you wouldn’t have to take the entrance exams.

“For some reason, after looking at my high school grades, they decided I needed to be in bone-head English. I hadn’t thought I’d done that bad, but I went to class and took the first exam. A couple of days later the teacher asked me why I hadn’t finished the exam – I thought I had. It looked like a couple of pages had stuck together or something, because I hadn’t even touched them. I filled out those pages, and the teacher told me I didn’t need to be there. She had me go register in regular English before I got too far behind.

“I started majoring in Forestry. But then I got the foolish idea that I’d go to work in a drug store, and maybe go on to medical college. So I changed to pharmacy and pre-med. I did that, the two different courses, for about three years. Then, toward the end of the first semester of my last year I got sick, and spent two weeks in the hospital. I dropped out for the rest of the semester, and then I didn’t go back.

“From 1936 until 1938 I worked at Clayton’s terra cotta factory during my summer breaks to help pay for college. Eddie Olson was firing kilns at both the terra cotta and the brickyard back then. At about four or five in the morning, and again at eight or nine o’clock at night, I’d have to haul wood for the kilns. Between, I’d put in a regular shift at either the brick plant or terra cotta – wherever they wanted me. At the terra cotta I worked as a kiln setter — stacking the ware into the kiln for firing.

“Due to the economy, the terra cotta was

up and down quite a bit. The brick plant seemed to run along pretty good, though there were times when it was beat down. There was a year or so when the guys could only draw about five dollars a month on what was owed them. They’d go to old man Fosseen, and he’d give them 5 dollars.

“Eric Johnson came in as manager of Washington Brick and Lime about 1933. Somehow he got fifty thousand dollars worth of financing for the company. Nobody could imagine fifty thousand dollars in those days.

“Part of the problem was that the old man, A. B. Fosseen, was pretty used to leading a good life, regardless of the times. Eric Johnson and Neal Fosseen — A. B. Fosseen’s son — essentially forced A. B. out.

“The terra cotta plant’s round muffle kilns had a solid layer of brick to prevent flames, sparks, or anything from touching the surfaces of the terra cotta. If anything like that touched the glaze, it would mar the finish. It was a big deal to properly direct the fire through the space between the outside and inside walls – to smooth the fire out so it would be equal all the way around. Jim Stelting, Doc Harrison, and a few others, by the seat-of-their-pants, knew just when everything was set up right.

“The kilns were downdraft — meaning the heat and flame from the fireboxes went to the top of the kiln and then down through the floor and underground to the smokestacks. It was one smokestack between two kilns. You’d be firing one kiln while unloading then loading the other kiln. You’d go back and forth that way so that only one kiln at a time was using the stack.

“Tony and Hilo Marconi and me filled up and emptied the kilns. Certain shapes of terra cotta had to be fitted after firing — so we’d move them to the fitting floor. Things were dry-fitted, and any excess chiseled off.

“After that we’d load the stuff into boxcars or onto trucks.

“While I was working at the factory, there were lots of buildings — dormitories, the chemistry building, the vet building — being constructed on the Pullman campus. They all had to have terra cotta trim around the windows and doorways, as well as other things. And lots of that was being made at Clayton. If I was home during the school year and a truckload of brick or whatever was leaving Clayton on Sunday so it’d be available to the workers at Pull-

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man on Monday, I'd sometimes hitch a ride. Then I'd help the truck driver unload at Pullman — to pay for my trip.

"The terra cotta wasn't the only place I worked. You had to save everything you could — every dime. So I worked at August and Otto Westby's gas station on Saturday and Sundays — when the factory was closed. The Westbys had a Dodge and Plymouth dealership there, too. Their garage was located just to the west, just across the street from where, in the late 1940s, the first Don and Carl's Phillips 66 would be built.

"The station sold Shell Oil products mostly. The Shell salesman came in one time with a 1934 Ford that everyone thought had a blown engine. It was a company car, so rather than messing with it, the company bought a new car from the dealership.

"The rest of the car was in perfect condition, so I bought it, and was tearing it down in my free time. Turned out, all that was wrong was that the camshaft had broken. I slipped in a new camshaft, and away I went.

"I think it was in the middle of 1939 when I went in with Ben Renner and bought the lease on a service station on north Main Street in Deer Park. It

was called the Public Station. George Warner had owned it since somewhere around 1922.

"The guy who delivered Shell gasoline knew George wanted to sell. He asked us if we'd be interested. Ben and I talked it over. The idea of wearing that white service station uniform was for some reason enticing to me.

"I don't know what it cost us to buy the station. I know all I had was the 500 dollars I'd saved for college. Ben didn't put in any more than I did. And I don't recall adding any more to the original sum over the years.

"The oil company must have covered quite a bit of the cost — leaving us to mostly cover stocking our original inventory.

"Originally the service station had those old fashion gravity flow pumps. We'd hand pump the gas up into the glass upper part of the pump. It ran out of that glass container into the cars. The glass had lines — a gradient — that'd tell you how much gasoline had flowed down into the customer's tank. Later on we put in modern electric pumps.

"About two years after we bought the station, Bill Shaw, the manager of the brickyard at Clayton, asked Ben whether he would consider going back to the plant if he could be boss? Ben al-

Tuffy Luhr and Ben Renner at the Public Service Station in Deer Park.
1939



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ways wanted to be boss, so he went back.

“I kept the service station until the war started. The War Department came into the service station and took most of our inventory — tires and whatever — for the war effort. After that, there wasn’t much left to do business with.

“We handled local freight at the service station for Inland Motor Freight. When Inland offered me a job working at its Spokane freight depot, I decided to sell the station and take Inland’s offer.

“Forrest Baker bought the station. He

hired some kids to pump gas and take people’s ration coupons — you got four gallons a week or some such.

“I worked for Inland Freight for the next couple of years, and did a lot of flying for the Civil Air Patrol at the same time.”

... to be continued in the next issue of the Mortarboard.

The Ed Kelso Family of Big Foot Valley

— by —

— **Charles W. Stewart** —

(All photos from the Charles W. Stewart collection.)

My grandfather Ed Kelso and his family lived in Big Foot Valley from 1912 to 1942. This is the story of their migration here, what their life was like, and how they wove their contribution into Clayton-Deer Park area history during this 30-year period. This is not a genealogy, but much of the story comes from two extensive self-published genealogical works; Earliest Settlers Western Frederick — Eastern Hampshire Counties in Virginia Their Descendants by Grace Kelso Garner (daughter of Ed Kelso), copyright 1978, and Harloe-Kelso Genealogy by Dr. Charles Bruce Harloe (nephew of Ed Kelso), printed December 1943. Besides my own memories of the old folks’ stories, I also used articles from early issues of the Deer Park Union and Deer Park Tribune newspapers in the *World Vital Records databases. My sister, Susan Rumble of Monitor, WA, and my cousins, Virginia Crim of Lancaster, PA, and Dorothy Lyle of Kennewick, WA, also provided information and encouragement.

*(<http://www.worldvitalrecords.com>).

Isaac Edgar Glaize Kelso was born June 17, 1869, the youngest son of Joseph and Elizabeth Millslagle Kelso of Concord, West Virginia. His names honor his uncle Isaac Newton Millslagle and his grandmother, Joanna Glaize Millslagle, but he was “Ned” to his family and “Ed” to his friends. Nevertheless, he always wrote “I.E.G. Kelso” for his official signature. Ed’s great-grandfather, Joseph, came to America from Ireland in the late 1700s with his wife and young son James, Ed’s grandfather. After short stays in Pennsylvania and Maryland, they settled in what is now the northeastern part of West

Virginia. Ed’s father, Joseph Alexander Kelso was named for the immigrant Joseph.

Joseph Kelso had 10 brothers and sisters and fathered nine children of his own, so his son, Ed, grew up in a large family surrounded by many close relatives. As the youngest son, Ed saw his older siblings leave home one-by-one for college, marriage and careers. Many migrated to the Midwest and far Northwest, eventually drawing him along. In the meantime he took up the responsibility of running the family farm and caring for his aging parents after completing the equivalent of high school in 1887-88 at about age 18.

Though his school teacher remembered Ed as one of her best students, family responsibility kept him from going to college as his brothers and sisters had. Instead he found a calling in music. From his early teens, every hour that he could spare from farming was in training with an exceptional local musician. By his mid-20s, he was proficient on the organ, piano, cornet, and the violin. With a fine voice, he led the choirs of two local churches and conducted singing schools where entire families came to the Kelso home for an evening of singing. He could play classical works on his violin or ‘fiddle’ jigs and reels for weekend dances on Timber Ridge in West Virginia. I am now learning to play Grandpa Kelso’s 120-year-old violin. It has a resonant, lively sound “played in” by thousands of hours of Timber Ridge dance music. Some day I hope to make it sound that way consistently.

Ed had less time for music after 1894 when Joseph Kelso died suddenly, leaving him and

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sister Olive with the full responsibility for the farm and supporting their mother. They also ran the Concord, WV, Post Office. A great many people were still moving west in the 1890s, including many from their own family, and these youngsters must have felt left out. Joseph Kelso had himself moved the family to a farm in the vicinity of Springfield, Illinois, for three years in the 1850s before returning to WV. Ed's brother, Newton ("Newt") Kelso, had settled on a wheat farm near Reardon, WA, in 1893. Two of Ed's older sisters, Laura and "Bertie", were living with their own families in northeast Illinois near Thawville in the mid-1890s. They probably wrote many letters home to West Virginia, suggesting the rest of the family join them. In 1902 they did. Ed, at age 33, rented out the family farm and, with Olive and their mother, Elizabeth, took the train west to Thawville where they continued farming. Ed also took time to play cornet in the 40-piece town band.

But neither Ed nor Olive could abide the humid climate of the Illinois plains, so two years later they decided to move further west to Newton

Kelso family portrait taken at the Joseph Kelso home in Concord, WV, about 1890. Front row: "Veet", Elizabeth Millslagle Kelso (Ed's mother, age ~60), Joseph Kelso (Ed's father, age 62); Back row: Olive Kelso (Ed's sister, age 18), I.E.G. Kelso (age 21), Laura Kelso (Ed's sister, age 30).



Kelso's wheat farm at Reardon (Ed pronounced it "Rare-d'n"). Ed had visited Newt from home in 1893 and again from Illinois in 1903 so he already knew the area pretty well. Before the move to Washington, Ed left Olive and his mother in Illinois and returned to West Virginia, presumably to sell the family farm and finish closing his parents estate. While there, he married Harriet Brill, daughter of Harrison and Ann Elizabeth Brill, in January 1904. The day after the wedding they took the train out west, stopping in Illinois to pick up Olive and mother who went on to live in Tacoma while Ed and Harriet found a home at Reardon. They lived with Newt and his family until late fall when he leased a section of school land on the outskirts of Reardon that had a small house on it. Ed and Harriet moved there and Olive and Elizabeth joined them shortly.

All, especially Harriet, were homesick in Reardon. The dry rolling hills of the wheat country — with no tree in sight and an occasional whirlwind kicking up dust — was very different from the green trees and valleys of home. A constant stream of long, newsy letters passed back and forth from East to West and the children grew up on stories of relatives and neighbors in Virginia and West Virginia. For years they kept up a subscription to the Hampshire Review, published in Romney, WV, which the children read just as thoroughly as the parents.

Ed continued to work for his brother until the fall of 1907 when he was able to lease a farm of his own a few miles to the East toward Spokane. The family did well there until a relative of the owner moved out from the East and wanted the land. They found another lease but the same thing happened when the owner's son married and took over the farm. This time they decided to give up wheat farming and in November 1912 Ed bought 40 acres in Big Foot Valley a few miles west of Clayton. It had one acre cleared, a fair sized barn and a two-room "bachelor" house into which the family moved. At least the country had lots of trees, so it looked a little more like West Virginia.

By this time they had four children, all born in Reardon (Earl — 1904, Melvin — 1906, Grace — 1907, and Kenneth — 1911). A fifth child, William Wallace, had died of pneumonia in infancy. Mother Elizabeth was still living with the family, but Olive had married George Klawunder in 1905 and moved to their farm north of Clayton. My Aunt Grace describes their first year in Big Foot as fol-

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lows:

Such a first year as we spent there [in Big Foot] was hard to believe. Shortly after the New Year my grandmother became ill with what I know now was a light stroke and this was the very first illness of her lifetime. And the ill and afflicted were cared for at home in those days. My mother uncomfortably pregnant, the bachelor's house literally "crawling" with bedbugs, we three [school-age] children had to start before daylight in a horse-drawn, canvas covered school van — (sled in winter, wagon in summer) — since the neighborhood school just across the road from our place had been closed

the year before in one of the first school consolidations in northeastern Washington. We got home well after dark too. We had barely started to our new school when mother found lice in our hair — so that had to be washed each night before bed, searched and combed with a fine tooth comb. A plug of chewing "tobacco" was sliced and steeped for this shampooing.

In February we three attending school sickened and what we then had gave to our younger brother — severe cases of scarlet fever during which we were quarantined. Finally the fever lessened followed by the peeling of almost all the skin on our

Kelso and Klawunder families taken in late 1913 in front of the original Kelso house in Big Foot when Ed's eldest sister Sarah Kelso Harloe and daughter Eva visited from Winchester, VA. Front row: Walter Klawunder, Harold Klawunder, Grace Kelso, Mildred Klawunder, Kenneth Kelso, Melvin Kelso, Earl Kelso; Middle Row: George Klawunder, Elizabeth Kelso (age 83), Sarah Kelso Harloe, Ed Kelso (age 44); Top row: Olive Kelso Klawunder, Eva Harloe, Harriet Kelso (holding infant Weldon).



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bodies, and we three older ones had the misfortune to have as an aftermath deep infections in our ears with resulting intense earache. Bags of salt were heated in the oven and poulticed on the aching ear. Mother would no sooner get one crying, aching child eased and comfortable than another would rouse — wailing in misery.

The snow was deep that winter, and the house was none too well built so our father was busy shoveling paths to the barn and woodshed, and he was busy keeping the wood boxes filled and the fires going to keep his sick folks warm. Finally in late March things began to improve. Grandma was able to get up more each day, regaining some much needed strength. Our abscessed ears finally ruptured and began to drain and though that required much dressing and cleansing, the aching misery was behind. The health officer came to fumigate so we got out of the house to go stay with Aunt Olive while the fumigation residue was aired out of the house, and when we got back three days later — wonder of wonders, no more bedbugs. We got back to school, and we all “passed” into the next grade, our first big garden and potato patch were planted and grew well; and in August we welcomed a new baby boy at our house [Weldon — born August 1913].

It was not just the first year that times were tough for the Kelso family. Work was physically much harder than we can imagine today and trials more crushing and frequent. Since the Big Foot Valley place had only one acre cleared when they arrived, Ed and his sons were continually cutting timber, skidding logs, pulling stumps, and clearing brush until the place was finally cleared about 1920. When he wasn’t logging, Ed grew crops on the cleared land and built up a dairy. And remember, all this was done out of a two-room house while caring for an aged mother.

Growing up during this period, sons Earl, Kenneth, and Weldon were trained early in the art of axe and saw and began their adult lives in logging and lumbering jobs. Weldon started helping with the clearing very early! Aunt Grace says “He [Weldon] has been from almost his babyhood the hardest worker and the most ambitious member of our family. Ere he was three he would go to the “clearing” with my father and brother Earl, and ride one of the horses (hanging onto the harness’s collar hames) in to dinner (at noon), and like the men he was allowed coffee in his cup (even though it was well laced with

milk). All his adult life our father took a nap for about half an hour after this noon meal, and small Weldon joined him. The two arose after this healthful habit, the horses had had their rest, so back to the fields for whatever work needed doing there.”

Besides the trials of unceasing hard labor, a new tragedy struck almost annually for several years. In January 1914 young Melvin was accidentally killed, shot in the head while handling a shotgun he thought was not loaded. He was almost eight years old. Aunt Grace says that her mother Harriet’s coal black hair turned completely gray over the following summer (see next photo). The next year, in March 1915, infant son John Gordon died of pneumonia after a few weeks of life. Ed’s mother Elizabeth died in March 1916 at age 86, a continent away from her birthplace. One bright spot — the birth of daughter Frances Anna Laura Kelso on May 28, 1917, brought a temporary respite from grief and a baby sister for Grace to nurture. In 1919 an infant girl, Mary, was stillborn. Elizabeth and the deceased children are buried in Reardon, except for Mary, who was buried under an apple tree on the farm.

They did not suffer alone. The Newton Kelso relatives in Reardon and the Klawunders in Clayton kept in close touch and regularly visited back and forth. Ed’s older sister Laura was widowed in late 1915 and moved from Illinois to Washington to spend the rest of her life near brothers Newt and Ed and sister Olive. She was a nurse by profession and came immediately and selflessly to the aid of any of her kinfolk who were ill.

So the Kelso family persevered. Ed had decided that he would build a new house as soon as the land was cleared, which he finally accomplished in the spring of 1920. A few years earlier he was given all the used lumber from a boarding house he razed on an adjacent farm that had been the site of a large sawmill. When the crops were planted he poured the concrete foundation so everything would be ready for construction when the fall harvest was done. But trouble again intervened and building did not go as scheduled, though trouble turned to a great blessing in the end. Again I’ll let Aunt Grace tell the story:

Just before butchering time with all its lard rendering, its sausage grinding (with just a small hand-turned grinder which we youngsters turned and our parents fed the meat into the grinder in order to insure the proper mixture of the fat and the lean

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meat) the smoking of the sides with apple wood, and that long and precise curing of the hams and shoulders with that wonderful Virginia “Receipt”, my brother Ken (age 9 1/2) became ill. At our house in those days the first treatment for almost any ailment was a purgative, that horrid Epsom salts, so that is what poor Kenneth got.

He did not improve and shortly after noon of the next day (it was Sunday) the family doctor was called and he promptly and accurately diagnosed the trouble as appendicitis, and he (Dr. H.H. Slater) feared the organ had already ruptured so he, father and our Aunt Laura bundled the patient warmly and hurried to the nearest hospital which was 25 miles to the north of us at Valley, Washington. Surgery began late in the evening and little hope was held for his recovery, the surgeon of the hospital remarked to father when he asked for a prognosis was — “Kelso, he’s red headed, we’ll have to pin our hopes on that!!” Kenneth did recover though he was in the hospital over a month.

It appeared that the house project was doomed for quite a distant future, but something wonderful happened. Neighbor after neighbor and his wife and some of their “teen” sons and daughters began arriving and after unloading from their wagons and buggies (few cars among the farmers at the time) so much food that there was scarce a place to

put it, the men bringing their hammers, saws, planes, etc., said - “Well, Ed, let’s get it started.” A good old fashioned building bee. Father had luckily a keg or two of nails, but Earl, my oldest brother was given a list and hustled off to Deer Park to the hardware for more needed things. The women had huge bundles of materials from their “rag-bags” and they busily tore, sewed together, and rolled into huge balls mother’s accumulation as well as all they had brought. Later this was woven into the pretty and bright rag carpets which were in two of our bedrooms for many years. Such a feast as there was at noon. At the day’s end what had been accomplished was hard to believe; all the food not consumed had been put into my mother’s pans and dishes for the folks announced that some of the men would be back next day as well, and so they were. The chimneys were finished then, the stairs were finished, and the windows put in. During the remainder of the winter and the spring of 1921 father finished the house and we moved into it on June 14th, 1921.

Aunt Grace does not name the neighbors that worked on the house. The Deer Park Tribune articles from 1932 to 1940 that mention the Kelso family indicate that the Lambier, Berger, Lindh, Nessley, Ness, Forsberg, and Davis families may have been some of those kind neighbors though there probably were others. The Klawunder relatives from Clayton likely also helped out.

The month after the house raising Earl got the mumps and passed it on to all but two of the family. Ed had mumps in his youth and Grace also escaped, but this meant they had to run the farm and household during the busy summer season, doing all the work the sick ones couldn’t. The disease was especially hard on Harriet who was near the end of a pregnancy with my mother, Linda. In fact Linda Lucille Kelso was born with the mumps August 9, 1921. Aunt Grace said Linda cried very little in her first few weeks, undoubtedly because the mumps made crying painful.

Life through the 1920’s apparently settled down to “normal” hard work while the children grew up. Earl went to work logging. Grace graduated from high school in 1924 and went to Spokane to attend business college, after which she married Cecil Garner and moved to Kellogg, Idaho, where Cecil was working. This left Frances as the main companion of little sister Linda. Kenneth, then Weldon, entered high school at Clayton. All the

The Ed Kelso family in front of the new house in Big Foot Valley. Front row: Weldon Kelso (age 12), Frances Kelso (age 8), Harriet Kelso (age 50), Linda Kelso (age 4); Back row: Ed Kelso (age 56), Earl Kelso (age 21), Kenneth Kelso (age 14). About 1925.



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boys, of course, helped out on the farm after school and on weekends.

In September 1929 Ed and Harriet fulfilled a long-held dream by taking the entire family back to West Virginia to spend a whole year with their numerous relatives. Their transportation was one of the first ever “motor homes” — a sturdy little peak-roofed house built of lumber on the back of an automobile. The boys did the driving as Ed never learned. Uncle Weldon once explained that his dad gave up trying to drive when he discovered that pulling on the steering wheel and yelling “Whoa!” would not stop the car. When they arrived, the family lived in a rented house in Gore, WV. Earl stayed with Harriet’s younger brother James Brill and his wife who also resided there. Frances, Linda and probably Weldon went to school in Gore during the 1929-30 school year.

The Kelso family returned to Big Foot in July 1930. In the fall of the same year, James Brill sold their house in Gore and, with wife Ida and two young daughters, Anna Lee (age 5) and Dorothy (age 2), came out to Washington, too. They bought a farm in Big Foot beyond the Nessley place and became frequent visitors at the Kelso home. The move probably came out of discussions the families had during Kelsos’ year in WV. James and Ida Brill separated some time in the 1930s. James moved to Colville where he died in 1948. He is buried in the Greenwood Cemetery in Spokane next to his sister Harriet Kelso. Ida stayed on the farm, eventually marrying Earl Kelso in 1946. Earl quit his job at the Deer Park sawmill a few months later and the two moved to John Day, Oregon. Earl was killed in a logging accident there in 1947. Ida returned to Spokane where she lived until her death in 1977 at age 80.

After 1930, the Great Depression became an overriding fact of life for most folks in the area. Kenneth and Weldon, both just out of high-school and finding no work to be had, left home to join the Civilian Conservation Corps at camps in central and south-central Washington. From there Kenneth got a job in the Forest Service, and Weldon went to Kellogg to work as a hoistman at the Sunshine mine. In 1937 Weldon married Elva Rock of Colbert, Washington. Kenneth never married. Earl managed to find work logging and he and Ed also cut firewood for the neighbors in the fall with a portable gas-powered saw. But now Ed had to manage the farm

work pretty much by himself.

In August 1936, Dr. Charles Bruce Harloe, Ed’s nephew and the family genealogist, spent a week at the Kelso farm on a nationwide trip visiting relatives. In his book he expresses his appreciation that Ed organized a gathering of all the “pioneer relatives” in the vicinity. This must have included the George and Olive Klawunder family, Newton and Margaret Kelso from Tacoma (where they had retired from the Reardon farm in the mid-20s) and many of Newton’s children from the Reardon-Odesa area. In later years Dr. Harloe told me of an incident that especially impressed him on his visit in Big Foot. Apparently one evening several folks got a hankering for peanuts but none were to be had in the house. So Ed, Charlie Harloe and some others drove out to buy a can or two. They ended up driving clear to Reardon and back! Charlie was amazed that anyone would go 30 miles for peanuts. I’m not surprised — I’ve also seen that impractical but adventurous trait in my uncle Kenneth, my mother and myself!

After this pleasant time, the rest of 1936 marked a somber turning point for Ed’s generation. As a result of diabetes, Harriet developed an infection in her foot that rapidly spread. Her leg was amputated to try to arrest the infection but she died during the operation, October 14, 1936. Frances had left to live with Grace and Cecil in Kellogg that summer, where she met and soon married William Riley “Red” Frazier, an Arizona miner working at the Sunshine Mine. This left fifteen-year-old Linda with the household responsibilities while still going to high-school. Fortunately, Kenneth left the Forest Service to help Ed on the farm and Ed’s sister Laura, age 76, also moved in. It was good for Linda to have some help around the house, but Aunt Laura’s health was declining and she became bedridden just after Linda graduated from Clayton High School in 1939. Now this 18-year-old had to nurse her invalid aunt, as well as keep house for her brother and aging father.

Laura died in February 1942 and Linda moved to Spokane that spring to work at the McKesson & Robbins drug wholesale house. Kenneth was drafted into the Army soon thereafter, leaving Ed, age 73, at home alone (Earl was drafted in 1941). He simply could not manage by himself so he sold the farm and bought a house in Spokane. Linda moved in again to keep house for him. The house-



Ed Kelso and Family circa 1945. Left to right: Ed Kelso (age 76), Linda, Kenneth, Grace, Earl, Frances, Weldon

hold was made happier when sister Frances with young son Billy moved in while her husband Red served in the Seabees. The postman was kept busy delivering letters to and from Red in the Pacific, and between Linda and her fiancé, Burton Stewart, who was an Army radio man in California.

Linda and Burton had been introduced through brother Kenneth who was part of many of the expeditions Burton and Leno Prestini cooked up in the late 1930s. They had begun courting about 1939 and were married in Ed's home in Spokane on December 30, 1944, while Burton was on leave. He was discharged in October 1945 and the couple

moved to the Stewart farm a few miles north of Big Foot, leaving Ed alone. At this point he sold the house in Spokane and spent the rest of his days in the homes of his children. Aunt Grace closes with a portrait of this final period in his life. "He liked to go on hunting trips with his sons. He kept garden and flowers weed-free wherever he chanced to be. And he considered a good game of pinochle the perfect ending to his day — which is our prime family entertainment to this very day."

After a very short illness, I. E. G. Kelso died December 27, 1951, in Wallace, Idaho.

Society Minutes — December, 2008

Eight brave souls weathered the elements on this late fall day to attend the December 13th meeting of the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society. Board members Bill Sebright, Pat Parker and Wally Parker, and society members Pete Coffin, Sharon Clark, Marilyn Reilly, and Lorraine and Warren Nord all made the journey to the Clayton Drive In.

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 AM.

The report of society treasurer Mark Wagner was accepted by proxy in his absence.

It was announced that Wally — the society's Editor of Print Publications — has resigned from the ongoing Prestini Project due to artistic differences. The purpose of the Prestini Project has evolved too greatly from what Wally had envisioned that purpose to be. Wally feels that the original intention of the project, that being to reawaken interest in Leno's artwork, would best be generated by an intense public relations effort that would include a continuous stream of articles probing all aspects of Leno's life and art. Other members of the Project feel that articles of that nature would make the goal of a purchasable coffee-table book and DVD — intended to premiere at the proposed 2010 art showing — redundant. Wally would prefer to explore various aspects of Leno's life and works in a more creative and less commercial manner, and feels that the goal specific orientation of the Project does not allow for that kind of creative freedom.

The C/DPHS will continue its affiliation with the Prestini Project, with Bill Sebright being the society's representative.

In other business, issue #8 of the Mortarboard was made available — as well as the first printing of Volume 2 of the Collected Newsletters.

Wally reported that drafts of the first two chapters of 'Tuffy's War' were delivered to Tuffy for corrections and approval. In a follow-up phone call, Tuffy stated that he was pleased with the beginning, and was looking forward to seeing the rest. Commenting on the amount of detail included in the script, Tuffy said, "You sure did a lot of listening."

The article will be printed as a series beginning in the January issue of the Mortarboard. It is expected to continue on for the next four or five issues.

Webmaster Bob Clouse sent an email indi-

cating that there were a total of 567 visitors to the society's website in November. But the most interesting part was that on one particular day we had 21 visitors that viewed 563 pages between them. That would be 26.8 pages viewed per visitor.

Bob also reported that of this morning, there had already been 347 unique email addresses signing in one or more times. If this continues, we are likely to come close to matching our highest visitor count to date.

Pete Coffin has indicated that he will talk about methods and sites for on-line searches — searches for maps, ancestry, and so on — at our next meeting. That will be on the 10th of January.

Warren Nord is still trying to track down the date that Burton Stewart and Leno Prestini climbed the big smokestack at the Clayton brick plant. The society would be most interested in hearing from anyone with insights into that event.

An article about that adventure, written by Burton Stewart's son, Charles, is scheduled to appear in the February issue of the Mortarboard.

In his research Warren did find that the station part of Carl and Ray's original service station was moved from Loon Lake to Clayton on June 11, 1946. Originally it had been located at the corner of State Highway 291 and Maple.

Warren asked about the original route of the "Colville Road." Several names and routes were discussed. Pete Coffin has long been interested in the route that the original 'Cottonwood Road' took through the Deer Park area, and stated that people often mistake that for the 'Colville Road' which actually ran along a north/south route a distance to the west — in the Ford and Walkers Prairie area.

Warren had also found information stating that water pump by the old fire station on Clayton's Railroad Avenue was a spare pump, not the main one. This pump was a topic in issue #7 of the Mortarboard. That article can now be found on page 73 of Volume 2 of the Collected Mortarboards.

Regarding the photo accompanying that same article, Warren Nord is going to talk to Art Stelling about the story that Art's Dad would shoot the icicles that formed on Clayton's leaky water tower in the winter. They were worried about the weight of accumulating ice toppling the water tower down onto the Stelling's nearby house. Shooting

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apparently seemed the safest way to break the accumulating ice free.

Bill reported that Ned Dillmann had talked to him about the old grave markers on the former Jack Hopkin property. And Pete Coffin agrees with author Marilyn Newkirk that Woodland Cemetery is most likely the one reported to be a mile north of Cleveland Road.

Pete suggested it's likely numerous pioneer graves scattered across the community are now permanently lost.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:17 — although no one seemed anxious to go out where the gray and gloom suggested worse weather to come.

Saturday, December 13, 2008

Wild Rose Community Center Taffy Pull

— by Florene Eickmeyer-Moore —

Today the Wild Rose Community Center was the site of the annual taffy pull and potluck dinner — a tradition at least sixty years old. John and Charlotte Yingst are the tradition's current driving spirits. In fact, John recalls that the center's taffy recipe came from an old German cook who moved away sometime during World War II. But before the cook left, he gave his



Robert Yingst



Bruce Finafrock

Cali Rushing

taffy recipe to John's mother, Edna, and also to Hazel Muhs (Mary Losh's mother), Bessie Eickmeyer (the author's grandmother), and Eva Losh.

John's son, Robert Yingst, was today's maker and puller—with Bruce Finafrock helping pull the taffy "clear across the room." Every kid was given a piece of taffy to pull and eventually eat. And every family ended up taking some home.

Among the community members taking part were Mike Burdega, age 90, Merwin Eickmeyer, 88, John Yingst, also 88, and Gordon Tilson, age 82.



John Yingst Merwin Eickmeyer Gordon Tilson Mike Burdega

Photos by Florene Eickmeyer-Moore