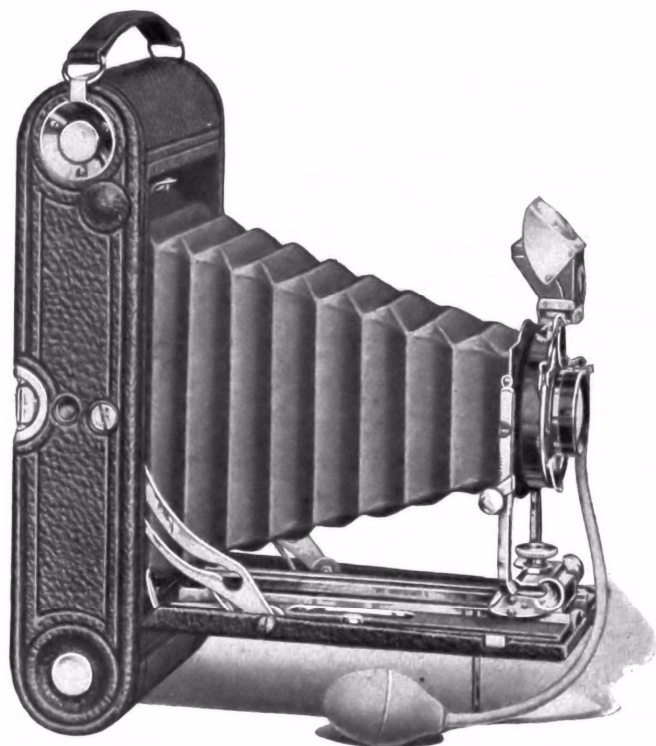


*Is a picture really worth  
a thousand words?*



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*Illustration from "The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine" for July, 1911.*

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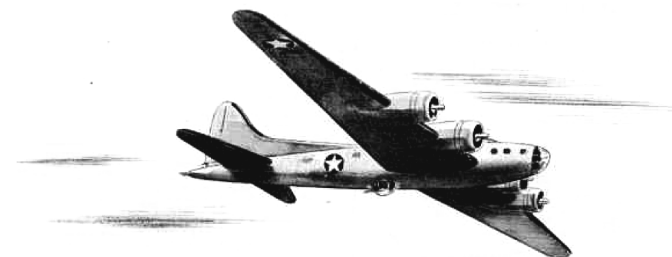
### *Twenty-Six Missions: The Robert Willis Grove Story*

by

*Wally Lee Parker*

*With the assistance of Gordon Grove, Mike Paulick,  
Charles Stewart, Ken Westby, and many others.*

*(Part Three)*



*... enlisted bombardier ...*

There's very little documentation regarding Robert Willis Grove's early days in the military. According to a one sentence announcement appearing in the October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1941 issue of the *Deer Park Union*, Willis had left for his first military posting near Wichita Falls, Texas, on the prior Saturday — that would be October 11<sup>th</sup>. At that time the Army Air Corps' Sheppard Field installation was just activating a basic-training center a few miles

north of Wichita Falls — with the first rotation of 400 new inductees due to begin on Tuesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>.

Along with basic training, Sheppard was also designed to serve as a major school for aviation mechanics. It appears that Willis stayed on after basic to complete the mechanics course — that inferred from the following article as printed in the April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1942 edition of the *Deer Park Union*. This article also indicates Willis's intention of engaging in especially hazardous duty by getting into the

shooting part of the war.

*“Willis Grove, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. R. Grove, may soon be a bombardier in the United States Army. A bombardier is the man who pulls the lever that releases the bombs. He also mans a machinegun on certain occasions.*

*“Word was received by his parents that Grove had been graduated from the world’s largest technical school at Sheppard Field, Texas, where he has been training for an aviation mechanic for several months.*

*“He made application and passed the tests for the bombardier training and has been assigned to MacDill Field at Tampa, Florida. He will take six weeks of intensive training at this post and six more weeks at another training camp. He will then be ready for active service.”*

As for why Willis wouldn’t have at least applied for pilot schooling before or after basic training — assuming he didn’t do exactly that — the basic educational requirement for pilot training had been raised from a high school diploma to at least two years of college in 1927 — almost 15 years prior. As with most such dictates, there appears to have been some exceptions possible — exceptions that allowed for flexibility if the immediate needs of the service required such. Understanding that can explain at least some of the discrepancies between the way things should have been done according to the rules and regulations, and the way things were actually done in order to keep the war effort moving forward.

Related to the nature of the other period of “intensive training” mentioned in the *Union* article, a quote from a massive, multi-volume study titled *The Army Air Forces in World War Two* states, “Bombardier students from 1942 on were required to take a regular six-week flexible gunnery course.” Unconfirmed, this is just a possibility for the period of training “at another training camp.”

Selected as the site for a major mili-

tary airfield in 1939, MacDill Field became operational early in 1941. Located on a peninsula within Tampa Bay, that on the western coast of Florida, one of the base’s missions during World War II was to train pilots and crews for bombers such as the B-17 Flying Fortress and B-25 Marauder.

We don’t have any definitive record of how Willis may have obtained bombardier training, though we know he did. From comments found in a set of interviews published by an organization called the *Air Force History and Museums Program* under the title *Reflections and Remembrances: The U. S. Army Air Forces in World War II*, we know that immediately after Pearl Harbor a gentleman identified as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Harold Jefferson was assigned to the 29<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group at MacDill Airfield. Harold had been trained in the maintenance and operation of the Norden bombsight and its related autopilot controls. Due to a lack of qualified bombardiers with the 29<sup>th</sup>, Jefferson said the group’s commander assigned him the task of training the unit’s “enlisted bombsight maintenance personnel to function as bombardiers ... he directed me to begin a bombardier training program.”

The 29<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group was transferred out of MacDill field in June of 1942. This suggests the 29<sup>th</sup> and Willis would both have been at MacDill as of April, 1942. Whether Willis earned his bombardier wings with that group is unknown.

What we can say with some certainty is that in the spring of 1942 there appears to have been a lack of qualified bombardiers in the Army Air Corps — this due either to the inability of the system to handle the influx of trainees, or possibly the lack of trainees able to pass the math and logic related examinations that would qualify them for bombardier training. As noted in volume six of *The Army Air Forces in World War Two*, “When there was a shortage of bombardier graduates coming into

*Illustration on page 1865 from 1944’s “Pilot Training Manual for the Flying Fortress B-17,” United States Army Air Forces.*

*the operational units, the continental air forces completed their crews with enlisted men who had received individual bombardier training in their own units.”*

According to the July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1944 edition of a War Department technical manual titled *Military Occupational Classification of Enlisted Personnel*, the following is the job description for “Bombardier (509)” — the three numbers being the MOS (*Military Occupational Specialty*) code for an “enlisted bombardier.”

The manual reads, “Release bombs on enemy targets from a bombardment airplane.

*“Adjusts bombsight for such specific conditions as ground speed, elevation and drift. Identifies target and sights it through optical system of bombsight when pilot begins the run, releasing bombs when target is seen in correct relation to appropriate markings on bombsight. Corrects bombsight adjustments when course is altered. Reports effect of bomb hits to airplane commander. Inspects and makes flight adjustments to bombsight and bomb release mechanisms, Fires aerial machineguns. Reads maps to identify and locate ground targets.*

*“Must be physically qualified for high altitude flight.”*

The MOS number 509 is sprinkled throughout the few surviving documents Willis Grove’s family has that cover his term of service as an enlisted airman. But what is clear is that enlisted bombardiers were trained to the same level of knowledge and competence as commissioned bombardiers.

#### *... with the 92<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Group ...*

Willis deployed into the European theater as part of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Group. That group was organized on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1942, at Barksdale Field, Louisiana. It consisted of four B-17 squadrons — the 325<sup>th</sup>, 326<sup>th</sup>, 327<sup>th</sup> and 407<sup>th</sup> — though the 407<sup>th</sup> may have been something of a late arrival. On March 26<sup>th</sup>, several weeks after the initial as-

sembly, the 92<sup>nd</sup> was transferred to MacDill Army Airfield in Florida. And then, on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1942, the group was once again transferred, this time a few miles south to Florida’s Sarasota Army Airfield.

The only direct evidence we have of Willis’s time in Florida is a certificate indicating that “Private Robert W. Grove, 19060476, 92<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Group (H), AAF,” had been promoted to “Corporal, 407<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (H), AAF.” The document was dated, “the first day of July, one thousand nine hundred and forty-two.” The place, “Sarasota Army Airport, Sarasota, Florida.”

A number of separate Army Air Forces were created immediately before and during World War II, each with its own area of concern. Of these the 8<sup>th</sup> Army Air Force, headquartered in England, was tasked with operations over occupied Europe. In June of 1942 the 8<sup>th</sup> directed that all bombardiers within its sphere of operation had to be of commissioned rank. The stipulation did not apply to Army Air Forces outside the 8<sup>th</sup>, where enlisted personnel already certified as bombardiers continued to perform their specialty, often with distinction.

Regarding the enlisted bombardiers within the 8<sup>th</sup>, it appears those qualified at the time the directive was issued were commissioned as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants. It’s unclear why Willis wasn’t so advanced — perhaps because he wasn’t actually in England at the time. But as a result, we know of only one combat mission in which Willis sat immediately behind the Plexiglas nose of a Flying Fortress.

As for the makeup of various military components within the 8<sup>th</sup> Army Air Force, those often changed as wartime conditions and relevant tactics evolved. According to James Kemp McLaughlin, author of *The Mighty Eighth in WWII* and a pilot with Willis’s 407<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron at the time of the 92<sup>nd</sup>’s deployment to England, the compliment of B-17s assigned the 92<sup>nd</sup> consisted of 36 bombers — nine each for the group’s four squadrons.

Other sources suggest the group’s

personnel during Willis's time in Europe numbered approximately 290 officers and 1,500 enlisted men. Since each B-17 — beginning with the 'E' series — required a crew of ten when fully outfitted for combat, this gives some idea of the number of ground personnel — office staff, mechanics, supply personnel and so forth — needed to keep the four squadrons airborne. Later in the war the number of planes and aircrew in each squadron was increased, doubtless with an in-kind increase in the ground complement.

According to Lieutenant McLaughlin (eventually to become Brigadier General McLaughlin), the first aircraft assigned the 407<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron was an allowance of four very well used B-17Es. With that, training began.

While the training was ongoing, a portion of the shooting war was being played out just off Florida's shore. The first attack by a German U-boat along America's Atlantic coast occurred on January 13<sup>th</sup>, 1942. After that, shipping all along the coast, including within the Gulf of Mexico, was menaced, and actually suffered quite heavy losses — over three hundred commercial vessels sunk by the end of that first summer. Though the public knew the attacks were taking place, the actual numbers were purposely kept secret.

It's generally agreed that one of the main reasons for the U-boats' growing tally was the complacency of America's politicians — those in Florida fearing the adoption of effective countermeasures might disrupt the upcoming tourist season. Equally destructive were the maneuverings of a still bureaucratically entrenched military, in majority more concerned with the potential of a Japanese invasion of the western states than the almost daily casualties accumulating along the eastern seaboard. The most notable evidence of this was the fact that it was well into the summer of 1942 before general coastal blackouts were ordered — though it was clear early on that ships silhouetted by lights from coastal cities were easy targets for the U-boats during the night attacks their captains by and large pre-

ferred.

In his book, Lieutenant McLaughlin indicated B-17s from MacDill and other airfields routinely went on antisubmarine patrols — but with no success. By time the bombardment group was ordered to the European theater, sufficient countermeasures had been implemented against German submarines in coastal waters that most were moved into the more productive North Atlantic convoy lanes.

With that the war in North America's coastal waters was largely over. But for the young airmen of the 407<sup>th</sup> Squadron, the real thing was about to begin.

*... the airman's battlefield ...*

Military organizations such as the 8<sup>th</sup> Army Air Force were, in their entirety, weapons. As a weapon, the 8<sup>th</sup> was designed to accomplish a singular goal — to rain destruction downward on the enemy. The principle means of accomplishing such was by ordinance loosed from heavy bombers — in the European theater, said bombers were the B-24s and B-17s.

The degree of daily jeopardy any individual serving with the 8<sup>th</sup> faced was largely determined by his job. After basic training, Willis Grove was first schooled as an aircraft mechanic. Being part of a groundcrew offered little assurance of safety. More than likely he'd be on an airfield within range of enemy attack. And the job itself could easily be described as a myriad of accidents waiting to happen. Such considered, it appears Willis — for reasons of his own — actively pursued the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force's most hazardous duty, that of crewman on a bombardment aircraft.

The idea behind the B-17 was straightforward. Create a strategic bomber that would fly so high it would be beyond the effective range of ground-based artillery. At the same time, that altitude would tax the ability of any interceptors to bring the bomber down. What seemed to make this proposal workable were bombsight advancements that promised pinpoint accuracy from extreme alti-



***Boeing B-17E #41-2578  
at the Combat Crew Replacement Center, Bovington Airfield, England.  
Lead aircraft in the first 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force heavy bombing mission over occupied Europe,  
August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1942. On that mission the plane was attached to the 97<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group.  
A few days later the older bomber was reassigned to the newly arrived  
92<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Group in exchange for the B-17Fs that group had flown  
from the United States.  
(United States Army Air Force photo from the National Archives.)***

tudes. With that in mind, in the mid-1930s an early version of what would eventually become World War II's most iconic bomber emerged from Seattle's Boeing Aircraft Company.

To accomplish the above design parameters, the bomber had four powerful engines and an exceptionally large wing surface. However, as with many of the military's projects, the concept proved much more formidable on paper than as a working model.

As theory collided with engineering realities further augmented by bits of feedback from aircrews tasked with spending many hours aloft in the bombers, there were a number of both minor and major revisions. Large accumulations of design alterations were noted by tacking a descending letter to the craft's alphanumeric designation. The first B-17 to see combat was the 'C' version — those on

lend/lease to the Royal Air Force. Their unimpressive baptism within Britain's air war clearly demonstrated the wisdom of Boeing's program of ongoing reevaluation and refinement.

Early in 1941 the B-17E model began rolling off the assembly line. The most visible changes were toward the rear of the craft. The fuselage's dorsal spine was significantly thickened to add the rigidity needed to incorporate a greatly enlarged tail assembly. Said assembly included a much larger horizontal stabilizer (essentially the rear wing of the aircraft) and a massive rudder hinged to a towering vertical stabilizer. A machinegun position had been added to the tail of the fuselage. And a new gun turret was fitted to the upper fuselage just behind the cockpit. This brought the total length of the aircraft to 74 feet, while maintaining the craft's original wingspan of 103 feet, 10 inches.



With the addition of the tail gun, the full complement of aircrew was raised from nine to ten — the pilot, co-pilot, bombardier, and navigator (the latter two trained to fire the craft's cheek and nose guns), radio operator, flight engineer (who also acted as top turret gunner), ball turret gunner on those planes so equipped, tail gunner, and the two waist gunners.

The usual weight of the 'E' series at takeoff was around 53,000 pounds — that with a typical 4,000-pound bombload.

The claimed ceiling for the B-17E was 37,000 feet — about seven miles. Bombing runs were normally carried out at least several miles lower than that. In part this was due to the simple fact that the highly touted pinpoint bombing accuracy from extreme altitude never materialized. Better effect was achieved by saturation bombing from lower altitudes — sometimes much lower altitudes. The tradeoff being, the lower the altitude the more susceptible the bombers became to ground artillery and aerial interception.

Enemy action wasn't the only hazard airmen faced. As the unpressurized B-17 gained altitude, the environment turned increasingly hostile to human life.

Following normal procedure, the captain would instruct the crew to don oxygen masks when the craft reached 10,000 feet. At very high altitudes any interruption of the oxygen flow could result in unconsciousness in less than a minute, and death in as little as twenty — that according to the intense 1944 documentary, *Memphis Belle: A Story of a Flying Fortress*. Because of this, icing inside the oxygen supply lines or the possibility of damage to them during battle was a constant concern.

Another issue was the cold. At high altitude temperatures could reach minus 30, 40, or even 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Frostbite was common whenever flesh was exposed, and could occur with extreme rapidity. A few forward positions in the aircraft had engine heat ducted to them — though such was usually considered inadequate. Electrically heated

flying gear was available, though many stories suggest such often proved unreliable. Heavily insulated clothing was the norm, even though it added bulk that became very cumbersome when moving around inside the cramped fuselage. Due to their added bulk, parachutes were seldom worn — rather a harness was fitted around the airmen that made clipping the chutes on a quick task.

The airman's lot was to fly into battle at extreme altitude while standing or sitting inside a thin aluminum cylinder. His jeopardy began as soon as his B-17 — some 16,000 bits of metal, Plexiglas and rubber cinched together by just over 300,000 rivets — started clawing skyward with up to four tons of high explosives on board. It increased as the aircraft entered enemy airspace. And it did not end till the aircraft rolled to a stop on English soil.

Sometimes the enemy would respond to a formation's presence by filling the air with metal splinters — with bursting flak. At other time enemy interceptors would pepper individual aircraft with machinegun fire. With flak or fighters, the enemy's objective was to puncture the thin shells of the Flying Fortress's with as many bits of high-velocity ordnance as possible until something vital enough to bring the aircraft down was hit. It didn't matter whether that vital part was something mechanical or something made of flesh. As long as it stopped working. Because of that, engines and the pilots were prime targets.

In reality the airmen had few defenses against these attacks. As bombers entered heavily protected areas, the skies would blossom with black smudges of flak thrown upward by artillery. Concussions would rattle the airplane. Bits of shrapnel would pepper the fuselage. Helmets and flak jackets provided a degree of protection — the aluminum skin of the aircraft, next to none.

Certain portions of the bombers were fitted with armor plating, but that was reserved for very critical areas, and even then, due to weight considerations, was very limited.

The bomber's main defense against attacking fighters was to cluster into for-

mations that supplied overlapping fields of machinegun fire. Fighters seldom followed bombers through heavy fields of flak, since the shrapnel produced was indiscriminate. But they did swarm before and after such fields. Their attacks were usually at very high speeds. The range of their effective fire limited to several seconds at the most. This speed was necessary considering the number of guns a well stacked formation of bombers could bring to bear.

If a bomber fell out of formation for any reason, its chance of making it home dropped dramatically. The air war was a war of attrition. No matter how wounded your enemy, your duty was to drive him to ground in such a way he'd never rise.

The records are jumbled and sometimes contradictory, but it's believed roughly 26,000 of the 8<sup>th</sup> Army Air Force's young men were killed in the European war. Another 21,000 were injured. As for why more were killed than wounded, an aircraft being riddled with bullets and shrapnel assured that individual crewmembers would often be struck down

while the machine stayed in the air. It didn't matter if such injuries occurred before or after the bomber reached the target, the aircrew's first duty was to complete their bomb run. After that, their best chance of survival was to keep their aircraft within the formation. Crewmembers did what they could for the fallen while airborne, but severe wounds at high altitude in temperatures so low blood would freeze almost instantly assured that the long trip home while standing watch over the dead and dying would give rise to a sense of helplessness likely to resurface for years after as the worst of nightmares.

That was the air war in Europe.

The 92<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Group flew 308 missions during the course of the European war. Those missions cost the group 154 aircraft. Statistics detailing the number of casualties within the 92<sup>nd</sup> — its share of the 47,000 young men killed or wounded while serving with the 8<sup>th</sup> Army Air Force — have yet to be located.

... to be continued in next month's issue ...

## Motion Pictures in Deer Park

by

Peter Coffin

Motion pictures came into being in the 1870s with the development of flexible celluloid film with sufficient sensitivity to capture motion as a series of still photos taken at a high shutter speed. When reels of this film were played back rapidly, the series of photos projected the original motion with reasonable accuracy on a large screen that could be viewed by a large audience. By 1905 commercial movie auditoriums were fairly wide-

spread

The capability to show moving pictures in Deer Park must have developed in the first decade of the 1900s. In July of 1911 a free moving picture show was given by projecting the images from the Masonic Hall above the Temple Pharmacy (the Slater building now the present site of the Deer Park Lube business) across Main Avenue onto a screen hung on a furniture store wall. (Note # 1) A

Note:

(#1) Deer Park Union, July 7, 1911, "Side Notes."

large number of people were reported to have enjoyed the event. The Masonic Hall became the movie auditorium by September 1911 when a *Deer Park Union* newspaper advertisement reported re-opening a “*Moving Picture show at Slater’s hall with movies to be shown at 8:00 PM every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday evening.*” (Note #2) Where the first auditorium was located was not reported.

There was a showing of the Arcadia Orchard Company’s sales promotional movie in December of 1911 in Kelly Hall which was accompanied with 150 color slides taken of, “...*local and Spokane views.*” (Note #3) It is uncertain if the Kelly Hall was also a movie auditorium or whether this was set up specifically for showing the promotional movie. Parts of this film were shot prior to the 1909 to 1910 demolition of the steel Monroe Bridge in Spokane and the construction of the concrete replacement bridge. Other portions of the film were shot on September 7, 1911 when the Arcadia Orchards Company hired a passenger train and took a load of Spokane businessmen to the orchard and filmed the participants in celebration of the opening of water from Loon Lake into their High Line Canal leaving the train car in Deer Park to visit the orchards.

In early February of 1912 real estate businessman R. L. Turner sold his interests in the “*Deer Park Movie House*” to A.F. Winkleman and a Mr. Shinault. (Note #4) Shinault was reported as having been involved in the motion picture business since 1908 while Winkleman was the Deer Park office manager of the Little Spokane Power Company and familiar with technical and electrical details of movie projection. Shinault’s and Winkleman’s plans for operation included a Friday

### **Big Crowds See The Arcadia Valley Pictures**

**Wednesday night Kelly’s Hall was crowded to the doors for both performances of the Arcadia pictures. There were quite a number of local people caught by the moving picture camera. 150 colored slides were shown of local and Spokane views. Everyone enjoyed the pictures.**

**A special matinee will be given Saturday afternoon to enable those who were unable to gain admission Wed. night a last opportunity to see the pictures.**

#### **The Arcadia Orchards Film.**

*Above clipping from Deer Park Union, December 8, 1911.*

*To see the complete Arcadia film, plus an interview by Spokane’s public television station of society member Pete Coffin in which he explains the importance of the film to Deer Park’s history, follow the YouTube links provided on the facing page.*

#### **Notes:**

- (#2) *Deer Park Union, September 1, 1911, “Reopening Moving Picture Show.”*
- (#3) *Deer Park Union, December 8, 1911, “Big Crowds See the Arcadia Valley Pictures.”*
- (#4) *Deer Park Union, February 9, 1912, “New Theatre Is Under New Management.”*
- (#5) *Deer Park Union, January 24, 1913, “New Showman in Town.”*

souvenir night and a Saturday afternoon matinee devoted to children’s movies.

Sometime between February 1912 and January of 1913 the hall above the Temple Pharmacy was re-named the “*Arcadia Theatre*”. In 1913 a Mr. Anderson of Spokane purchased the entire moving picture equipment from proprietor/manager Heintz. (Note #5) What became of the Shinault-Winkleman operation is unclear. The new showing schedule included Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings. There does not seem to be any newspaper coverage of when this Arcadia Theatre ceased operation.

In June of 1915 the “*Arcadia Parlors and Moving Picture Theatre*” opened. (Note #6) It was completed by William A. Pease. In addition to the theater, a “*sanitary*” fountain area selling candy, fruit, nuts, and cigars was described in the newspaper article. This confectionary and theater were located in the northeast portion of the Olsen Hotel where it remained until moved to the new Mix building on east Crawford in the early 1950s. Both Wally Parker and Ken Westby have written

interesting articles about the theater. (Notes #7 & #8)

Either the movie business was very profitable and attractive to investors or a money losing situation as the Deer Park movie theater seemingly changed hands about every other year. In February 1916 W.A. Pease sold his interests in the Arcadia Theatre and candy shop to R.B. Smith of Bellingham, Washington. (Note #9) Smith indicated that he showed pictures of the Mutual Program. Within five months, in August 1916, E. L. Hauk and E.C. Lamp of Garfield, Washington purchased the business from Smith who then moved to his home on the west coast to take care of other business interests. (Note #10)

Nationally known movies were shown in Deer Park at this time such as Griffith’s “*Birth of a Nation*” which played on Saturday April 30, 1917. (Note #11) The *Deer Park Union*’s review was very favorable, stating that, “*The period of ‘reconstruction’ so vividly brought back to the memory of those*

— *Pete’s article jumps to page 1876* —

#### **Notes:**

- (#6) *Deer Park Union, June 25, 1915, “New Arcadia Theatre To Open.”*
- (#7) *Parker, Wally Lee, “Letter to the C/DPHS Editor Regarding the Olsen Hotel Theater.” Mortarboard #22, February, 2010 — page 283 — Collected Newsletters, Volume 6.*  
[http://www.cdphs.org/uploads/3/4/2/0/34204235/newsletter\\_22\\_downsinglesizepageweb.pdf](http://www.cdphs.org/uploads/3/4/2/0/34204235/newsletter_22_downsinglesizepageweb.pdf)
- (#8) *Westby, Ken, “Regarding Deer Park’s Mix Theater.” Mortarboard #91, November, 2015 — page 1173 — Collected Newsletters Volume 25.*  
[http://www.cdphs.org/uploads/3/4/2/0/34204235/mortarboard\\_91\\_doublepage\\_web.pdf](http://www.cdphs.org/uploads/3/4/2/0/34204235/mortarboard_91_doublepage_web.pdf)
- (#9) *Deer Park Union, February 4, 1914, “Arcadia Theatre Changes Hands.*
- (#10) *Deer Park Union, August 4, 1916, “Amusements-Arcadia Theatre.”*
- (#11) *Deer Park Union, April 27, 1917, “Birth of a Nation, Monday, April 30.”*

#### **YouTube Videos: Arcadia Orchards Film.**

**Complete original film with enhancements by Mike Reiter.**  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFZEd-XBedw>)

**KSPS Television’s Northwest Profiles: Apples & Orchards.**  
**Peter Coffin explains the importance of the Arcadia Orchards film.**  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7i8Hd5NU8jg&t=7s>)



### *A Typical Night at Deer Park's "Silent" Movies.*

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1916, an ad appeared in the Deer Park Union (see facing page) noting that the fifteen-episode serial "The Girl and the Game" would begin showing at the Arcadia Theater the following Saturday. Each episode was about a quarter-hour in length, with the last being projected on June 16<sup>th</sup>. According to the era's movie magazines, the film was wildly popular, mostly due to the daring-do of its star, Helen Holmes — who reportedly performed the majority of the film's very hazardous stunts herself. In one scene Helen allowed herself to be strapped to the rod connecting a locomotive's large drive wheels. As noted in the July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1917 issue of Locomotive Firemen & Engineers Magazine, "If anybody believes that clinging to the driving rod of a locomotive traveling thirty miles an hour involves no danger of disaster to the clinger, Miss Holmes can quickly disillusionize them. She did this once in 'The Girl and the Game,' but it was the result of a misunderstanding and Helen will never do it again."

The frames below and opposite are copied from an article found in the October, 1916 issue of the Baltimore & Ohio Employees Magazine. We don't know if these are from The Girl and the Game — apparently among the movies now lost — but the images appear typical of the films produced by Helen's studio, the Signal Film Corporation.

— the editor.



MISS HELEN HOLMES AT THE THROTTLE

# ARCADIA THEATER

SATURDAY **Helen Holmes** in the Great  
March 11 Railroad Film Novel  
**"The Girl and the Game"**

Also "Over and Back" and "Weighed In the Balance"

Children under 12 will receive a bag of peanuts with each 5c admission



HOW THE AUTO WRECK LOOKED IN THE PICTURE PLAY

— continuing *Pete's article* —

who may have lived through it and reproduced afresh for those newer generations who now view it for the first time...". In addition, the *Union* said that the movie is a "...glorious spectacle." This movie has since lost this glowing assessment and acquired a reputation as racist propaganda.

After operating the Arcadia Theatre for approximately three years Hauk and Lamp sold the business to R.C. Maddux in late July 1919 and he renamed it the Maddux Theatre. (Note #12) Maddux owned the theater for less than two years before selling it to Mrs. H. M. Fensler in March 1921. The theater then became the Fensler Theatre.

The longest theater business ownership began in 1925 when Earl Mix purchased the Deer Park Hotel building and the Fensler Theatre and renamed it the "*Family Theatre*". His ownership lasted through the Depression, World War II, and into the early 1950s. Mix introduced sound reproducing equipment in the late spring of 1930. (Note #13) Mix sold the hotel in February 1946 to Gordon W. Evans, Norman Evans, and David Logston for approximately \$35,000, but retained a lease on the fountain, theater and electrical business. (Note #14) This transaction was reported as a very large transaction for Deer Park.

Excitement other than that on the screen occurred in July of 1950 when a fire in the projection room emptied the theater and cancelled the show. (Note #15) Citizen's Utility manager C.A. Brewer used a fire extinguisher to control the fire until the fire department arrived and put the fire out. The damage

was confined to one roll of film and some smoke damage. His action prevented serious damage to the projection machines and within a day the theater was back in normal operation. As a child my wife, Judy, experienced the excitement and theater evacuation!

In April 1950 Earl Mix purchased a block of church property east of the Deer Park Hotel on the south side of Crawford Street. It was reported that he was contemplating building a new theater. By the spring of 1952 his new building was completed with the addition of a feed store on its east end. The date of the completion of the new theater in this building was in late 1955 as the Tri-County Tribune announced the opening on the front page of its December 16<sup>th</sup> issue with Fred Soper as the manager. (Note #16) At approximately this time Mix sold the theater to Wayne and Louella Mackey.

It was during this time of moving theater equipment from the Hotel building to the new theater on east Crawford that Don Reiter took the Arcadia Orchard Company film home and stored it in a farm outbuilding. Mike Reiter remembers that there were several movie reels stored in the outbuilding and that the Reiter children played with one of them rolling the reel of film out on the driveway. The surviving reel is the one that the Clayton-Deer Park Historical Society had digitized

According to (Dona Mackey) Morris, Wayne and Louella Mackey had a "*circuit*" (while they were working day jobs). They traveled to small towns with a projector and movies and set up in schools or grange halls. In the early 1950s they bought the indoor theater from Earl Mix and in 1952 they

#### Notes:

(#12) *Deer Park Union, August 8, 1919, "Arcadia Theatre Under New Management."*

(#13) *Deer Park Union, April 17, 1930, "Talking Pictures to be Postponed."*

(#14) *Deer Park Union, February 14, 1946, "Earl Mix Sells Hotel Building."*

(#15) *Deer Park Union, July 14, 1950, "Projection Room Fire Empties Family Theatre."*

(#16) *Tri-County Tribune, December 16, 1955, "Deer Park Indoor Theatre to Open Next Month."*

(#17) *Tri-County Tribune, November 19, 1959, "Theatre to Close."*

built a drive-in theater on the east side of south Fir Street just north of the presently vacant Rosaur's store. They ran both theaters for several years, eventually closing the indoor one on December 6, 1959. (Note #17) The Mackeys always made a point of showing movies with either a G or PG rating.

The indoor theater location eventually became Pinky Pakker's variety store, and

when one walked towards the south side of the store the wooden floor footsteps sounded hollow where it had been levelled up from the sloping theater concrete floor.

The drive-in closed after the 1981 summer season and since that time there has been no theater in Deer Park.

— end —

## Letters, Email, Bouquets & Brickbats

— or —

### Bits of Chatter, Trivia, & Notices — all strung together.

#### ... unparliamentary English ...

This item from the *Deer Park Union's* Twin Mountain correspondent appeared in the newspaper's June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1922 edition.

*"The farmers are almost shut out of Deer Park since the trucks have been hauling over the roads and cut them up so badly. Some places are impassable with a touring car."*

The following week the correspondent from Williams Valley had this response.

*"Several autoloads of folks from here attended the dance at Pine Park Saturday evening and traversed the road that the Twin Mountain correspondent termed bad. We think it is worse than that. The ruts that have been made by the motor trucks remind one of the enemy trenches in modern warfare, and the unparliamentary English that is generally used by those who use the road only accentuates one's imagination along this line."*

#### ... the deal ...

A small cadre of society members have been spiffing up the meeting hall — an example shown on the next page. The interior's been cleaned and painted. New light fix-

tures installed. Tables and chairs gathered. Display cabinets donated and/or purchased. Storage shelves and the like set up. And on, and on, and on. Which is to say, the place is looking very nice.

As to the source of all this energy, it's kind of like in the old days. The neighborhood kids would find an old abandoned shack in the woods. Missing doors and windows, not a problem — some old gunnysacks tacked to the empty frames would stop the wind. If there wasn't a ready-built shack, maybe the rusty hulk of a stripped-out car, along with a few moldy sheets of plywood and a few dozen stray boards, could make something grand, or at least something to keep the rain out. In other words, a hangout. Or even better, a clubhouse patterned after the ones shown in those Little Rascals episodes littering afternoon television when we were young.

Well, this isn't the 1950s when there were lots of deserted buildings scattered in the woods. And our current clubhouse — never abandoned as far as I know — most certainly wasn't forsaken when we found it. It's the property of the City of Deer Park, and only on loan to this slightly older crop of neighborhood kids — some of whom still enjoy watching an occasional episode of the Little Rascals,





*At the 'A' Street Building — April 23<sup>rd</sup>.*

*Mike Reiter reported, "Rick (Broadrick) and I went down to do a little trimming on the west side of the building." Rick's at work in the above photo.*

though now on YouTube. And since this meeting hall was a perfectly serviceable building to start with, deflecting the wind and rain has never been an issue.

As for the terms under which we occupy this building, it's with the expectation that we can use it to do something worthwhile

for this community. In a nutshell, that's the deal. If you believe preserving the history of this area is something worthwhile, this is the place to come. We've more than enough work to go around.

— Wally Lee Parker —

## *Minutes of the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society — May 11, 2019 —*

Meeting held at 316 East Crawford on A Street, Deer Park (Margaret and East A Street)

In attendance: Marilyn Reilly, Bill

Sebright, Wally Parker, Mike Reiter, Roberta Reiter, Mark Wagner, Bill Phipps, Marie Morrill, Rachel Fletcher, Nancy Fisher, Mary Jo Reiter, Lorraine Nord, Dale Dyck, Kristy

*Deer Park & Other Locations Currently Carrying Print Copies of the Mortarboard:  
City Library, City Hall, Gardenspot Market, Standen Insurance,  
Odyanski's Accounting, the Deer Park Chamber of Commerce, the Deer Park Library and the Loon Lake Library.*

*The Loon Lake Historical Society's Summer Hours — Saturdays, 10 a.m. till 2 p.m.:  
For more information, visit <https://www.loonlakehistoricalsociety.com/>.*

Dyck, Jean Dyck, Ron Endlich.

Society President Bill Sebright called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. He reported: 1) Carolyn Williams dropped off pictures of Einer Berg. Bill has scanned them. 2) Dave Burdega talked to Bob Owens' daughter. She said that the Owens family is ready to disperse everything that was in the Owens Museum. He said he would follow up and talk to her again to see what might come to the C/DPHS. 3) Lorraine Nord donated four Deer Park High School Antlers, 1943, 44, 45, and 46. We didn't have a hard copy of the 1943 annual. 4) Amy Trueblood Lindh (Don's daughter-in-law) sent Bill pictures of an old trade token a kindergarten student found on the Deer Park Elementary School playground this week. The school is located near the corner of Weber and D streets. The initials O. M. O. appear on the coin. We are trying to find out what they stand for. Someone suggested Olson Mercantile.

Another suggestion was that the initials stand for a president of the Deer Park Fair Association.

Ron Endlich spoke of his research into the Clayton brick plant. His interests lie in the terra cotta and specialty tiles produced there. He wants to have an exhibit on the works of the plant. Ron has come across information on the Loon Lake Copper mine.

Society Treasurer Mark Wagner reported the main checking account ended the month at \$8,925.23. There were deposits of \$60.00. The web hosting account ended the month at \$186.38 with a withdrawal of \$11.84 and \$394.20 (I will check on this) for web hosting. The Brickyard Day account is at \$1,432.06. Joe Polowski has a display case to donate to the Society for our new building.

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

Print editor Wally Parker reported: 1)

### *Deer Park Trade Coin Found.*

*On May 6<sup>th</sup>, Hudson Kariniemi, a kindergarten student at Deer Park Elementary School, found this assumedly vintage trade coin near the intersection of South Weber and East 'D' Street. It was sent to the historical society by Amy Trueblood Lindh, a teacher at the school. If anyone can determine the meaning of the initials O. M. O., please let us know.*





One hundred and twenty copies of the May *Mortarboard* (#133) have been printed for distribution. PDF versions for the Society's website and the Loon Lake Library have been sent. This 16-page edition contains part two of "Twenty-Six Missions: The Robert Willis Grove Story." 2) Ten issues of Collected Newsletters #38 have been printed. This issue combines *Mortarboards* #131, #132, and #133.

Webmaster Marie Morrill reported:  
 1) I have uploaded May's *Mortarboard*.

Mike Reiter reported: 1) That Rick Broderick and he replaced the outside light on the north side of our new building. 2) The address of our new meeting building is East 316 Crawford on A street as per Rodger

Krieger.

Purchasing a 50" flat screen TV was discussed. Mike and Rick will check on TV prices and costs to mount it in the northeast corner of the main room.

There was a discussion of signage for the building. Rachele Fletcher from Deer Park Printing will work up some examples. Rachele will also donate lettering for the door.

Next Meeting: Saturday, June 8, 2019, at 10:00 AM at our new building.

Meeting adjourned at 11:11 AM.

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

— end —

Volunteer proofreaders for this issue: Betty Deuber, Rick Hodges, Lina Swin, and Ken Wesby.

**Comments Policy**

*We encourage anyone with observations, concerns, corrections, divergent opinions or additional materials relating to the contents of these newsletters to write the society or contact one or more of the individuals listed in the "Society Contacts" box found in each issue. Resultant conversations can remain confidential if so desired.*

**Society Contacts**

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*When requests to reprint C/DPHS materials are received, such will be granted in almost all instances — assuming of course that we have the right to extend such permission. In instances where we don't have that right, we will attempt to place the requester in contact with the owner of the intellectual property in question. But, as a matter of both prudence and professionalism, in all instances a request to reprint must be made and must be made in writing (letter or email), before any C/DPHS materials are reprinted.*

From "The Coast" magazine, April, 1907



**See Yourself in Print.**

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

*Copyright considerations for any materials submitted are stated in the "Editorial and Copyright Policy" dialog box found in this issue. For any clarifications regarding said policy, or any discussions of possible story ideas or the appropriateness of certain types of material and so on, please contact the editor via the email address supplied on the same page.*

— the editor —

**About our Group:**

*The Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society was incorporated as a nonprofit association in the winter of 2002 under the title Clayton Historical Society. Our mission statement is found on the first page (upper left corner) of each issue of our newsletter, the Mortarboard. Our yearly dues are \$20 dollars per family/household. We are open to any and all that share an interest in the history of our region — said region, in both a geographic and historic sense, not limited to the communities in our group's name.*