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Illustrations from "The Saturday Evening Post," April 3rd 1909.

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Mortarboard

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A History of The Deer Park Fair — 1931 through 1946 — (Part Three)

by

Wally Lee Parker

... something of an education ...

As I remember the Deer Park fairs in the 1950s, they always seemed to host a carnival — one of those traveling ones that set up for a few days, then moved on. Along with those carnivals would come more than a few strangers little concerned for the reputations they left behind, since they never intended coming back.

My folks understood this kind of uprooted life. They had drifted away from Oklahoma in 1933 — part of the thousands fleeing the dustbowl in search of work on the farms and orchards of New Mexico, Arizona, California and Oregon. Working at those places, they'd often stay in migrant camps. Most of the souls in those camps were the nicest, most

giving people you'd ever find — or so my mom would say. But scattered among them would be a fair number of cold, bitter hearts — the dangerous kind. As a result, the folks always cautioned us to be extra careful when surrounded by itinerants. By time you'd figured what they were about, those intent on doing mischief would have already done so.

For example, after these early Deer Park carnivals had pulled up and headed to the next town, there'd always be the stories about local guys — and not always the younger ones — freshly paid and flashing their money to impress the girls. And somewhere along the line a young woman they'd never seen before would sidle up to them and cling. Black hair. Liquid eyes. Fetching dress. A bit exotic. And from booth to booth and game to game

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she'd be whispering in his ear "*Win me this!*" "*Win me that!*" till most of his money had evaporated. Then she would too — though some versions would add that after she'd gone the fellow would reach back for his wallet and find his pocket neatly sliced from top to bottom; his billfold gone.

Hearing this kind of thing, my dad, in what was left of his Okie brogue, would sum it up plainly. "*Let some strange woman crawl all over him like that, damn fool deserved what he got!*" That being a sentiment most hearing these stories tended to agree with.

Were those stories true — or just a cautionary legend to be drawn up anytime the carnival came to town? I'm not sure it really matters. By the time Deer Park started hosting traveling carnivals as part of its fair, these kinds of stories had already become a small-town tradition. And towards the middle of the twentieth century, Deer Park was certainly typical of most any small town.

... 1940 ...

The March 21st, 1940 issue of the *Deer Park Union* announced, "*The tenth annual Deer Park 4-H and Community Fair will be held Friday and Saturday, September 13 and 14, and the Rodeo will be held on Saturday and Sunday, September 14 and 15.*" A month later the newspaper reported, "*Leaders who will be responsible for the various departments at the annual*" ... event ... "*this September were selected at the Association's meeting last Thursday night.*" What followed were 23 names, each taking charge of a different and widely varied area of concern such as livestock, flowers, school exhibits, floor space, entertainment, and publicity. These assignments signaled that the newly incorporated association was drawing from prior experience in laying the foundation for the upcoming event.

The August 29th *Union* reported "*Ten-gallon hats go on sale ... in a wide selection priced from 25¢ to \$1.25. Celebration boosters may be outfitted with the proper thing in*

headwear at the Deer Park Five and Dime."

The paper went on to note that "*all indications point to the largest group of exhibits to date*" for the fair proper. Adding that "*More departments have been added, and prizes in some classes have been increased.*"

That said, it was clear the rodeo had become the stronger draw on the basis of entertainment since "*A full racing program for both days (of the rodeo) has been arranged by Shorty Lambert.*"

"*Port Young is putting the finishing touches on a program of bucking, riding and exhibition roping and bull dogging.*"

"*Negotiations are under way to bring a tribe of Indians here to put on their ceremonies and stick games.*"

An article in the September 5th *Union* headlined, "*Will Pay Good Prizes for Bucking Contest at Rodeo.*"

"*The third annual Deer Park Rodeo will be run on a content basis this year, it was announced this week by rodeo chairman Port Young. In previous years money has been paid to everyone who rode a horse without regard to the type of ride made.*"

"*Daily prizes will be: Bronc riding, \$10; calf roping, \$25; bare back riding, \$20. To these will be added all entrance fees. One dollar per ride will be paid for steer riding and 50¢ for calf riding.*"

"*Entrance fees for riders will be \$2.50 daily for bronc riding and calf roping, and \$1.50 for bare back riding.*"

Even for those trying to ignore the war raging in Europe and the Far East, it was never far from mind, or the newspaper's front page, as this piece published in the *Union's* first issue for September reminded.

"*Deer Park came as close to the European war today as most of its residents want it to when it was learned that Lieutenant H. A. Knoertzer (born in Deer Park in 1911) had been transferred to duty in the Philadelphia navy yard on the staff of Squadron Thirty-Nine. Knoertzer was assigned to the squadron which is reconditioning overage World War (I) destroyers.*"

"*Although nothing can be stated for sure, it is believed that these boats may be destined for England in completing the United States' agreement to send them fifty destroyers.*"

"*Knoertzer is the son of Mr. and Mrs. O. A. Knoertzer, and a graduate of the local schools.*"

In the next week's newspaper, an editorial by the publisher, Mr. Karel A. Wegkamp, commented on the relative popularity of the rodeo against the fair.

"*This weekend brings Deer Park the biggest community show of the year, the tenth annual showing of the 4-H fair and the third annual rodeo program. For pure entertainment, you need go no further than a good rodeo, and we all know the local show is good. However, we recommend to you the agricultural and livestock exhibits in the fair building. These exhibits clearly portray the advances of our farming district in the past year. Our wealth and future depend on our agricultural development. Go to the fair, see farming at its best in Deer Park.*"

That said, bits from another column found on the September 12^{th's} front page promise the size and excitement of the impending rodeo.

"*Thirty-five head of bucking stock and sixty-five head of cattle will furnish plenty of thrills for the spectators and plenty of spills for the hundred odd riders who will participate. ... Horse racing will be staged both Saturday and Sunday with one hundred thirty dollars plus entry fees in prizes. ... Grandstand and bleacher capacity has been arranged for about seventeen hundred and room for hundreds more in cars around the arena. ... Parking space for several hundred cars is provided inside the grounds, and the show should be almost entirely dust free. Acid solution and water has laid almost 100% of the dirt.*"

The next Thursday, September 19th, under the headline "*Hundreds Win Prizes at Deer Park Fair: Nearly Four Hundred Dollars is Distributed to Exhibitors,*" the *Union*

extensively outlined the prior week's fair, mentioning the majority of the prizewinners by name.

And then, under a headline that read "*Bronc Riders Thrill Local Rodeo Fans,*" another frontpage article announced that "*Deer Park's third annual rodeo and racing show was an entertainment success from every angle in spite of the fact that the show suffered a financial loss, and the Saturday crowd was below average.*" It went on to detail, "*On Saturday night the Indian war dance in the rodeo arena drew a large crowd, as did the dance in the fair building.*"

Once again, what appears to have been the majority of the winners of various events, this time at the rodeo, were listed by name.

The rodeo was concluded on Sunday, and the next Monday, September 16, 1940, it was announced nationwide that the Selective Training and Service Act — the first peacetime military draft in U.S. history — had been passed by the congress and signed by the president. The next Thursday, the *Union's* editor responded with this editorial.

"*Conscription is among us. In other words, compulsory military training, the thing that we Americans have always looked down upon in other countries, is now a part of our own governmental setup.*"

"*An American congress has passed, and an American president has approved the most unamerican piece of legislation ever enacted. The present lawmakers have taken their first long step in the destruction of the Bill of Rights, and the destruction of American liberty.*"

"*Watch carefully, Mr. and Mrs. American, the next step toward totalitarian government will be the muzzling of the press and radio which has already been hinted by certain members of the national assembly.*"

On November 7th, 1940, with what was then known as Armistice Day — the day marking the end of the First World War — just days away, the *Union's* editor once again voiced the hope that America would stay out

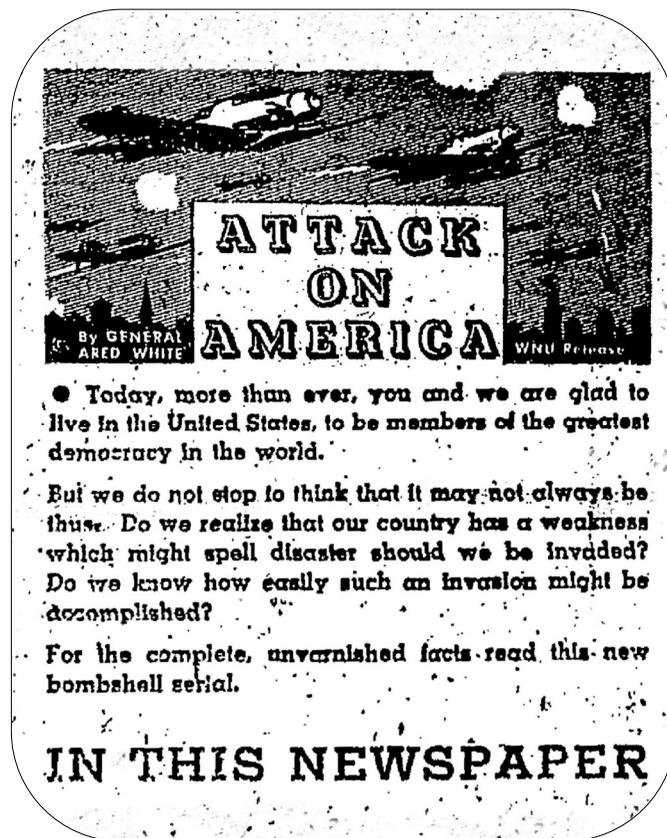
of the war.

“Monday, November 11, this nation pays homage to the heroes of our last war, the World War, the war to save democracy. The reward of our fighting men was scant enough for their services. Pay tribute to their memory, but remember, another war, greater and more horrible than the last, now rages on the battlefields of Europe. Our friends of twenty-five years ago are pleading for assistance. They need our help and they have our sympathy. But let us not forget 1916. No man or group of men can plunge this nation into war. This country will remain at peace as long as the American people want peace. Let us therefore, on this Armistice Day, rededicate ourselves to peace. An honorable, indestructible peace in America.”

... setting nerves on edge ...

In the spring of 1941, May 22nd to be exact, the *Deer Park Union* reported that the next community fair was scheduled for September 12th and 13th, and the rodeo for the 13th and 14th. It was also noted that the next meeting of the fair association would be held on June 3rd.

Since the newspaper's first issue for June is missing from the archive, the gist of the above association meeting isn't known. The fact that the June 5th issue is missing is particularly unfortunate since the newspaper's next available issue, that of June 12th, began the serialization of a novel titled *“Attack on America”* — a serialization that continued into January of 1942. Any explanation as to why the *Union's* editor committed the next 29 weeks of his newspaper to printing the entirety of this novel probably appeared in June's missing issue. Nowadays this story is usually classified within a subgenus of science-fiction called future history. But in the spring of 1941, after months of radio broadcast and newspaper articles describing the apparent invincibility of the German and Japanese war machines, the title doubtless resonated with local readers.



*“Attack on America”
An advertisement for General Ared White's
serialized novel clipped from
the June 19th 1941 issue of
the Deer Park Union.*

Perhaps the scariest aspect of the novel was the name of the author. This well-known and highly respected commander of Oregon's National Guard, Major General George Ared White, had long voiced concern for America's pitiful state of military preparedness. Describing a pack of foreign nations, Germany among them, attacking across the Mexican border appears to have been an attempt to cast his concerns into a form more digestible for the general public.

Added to this, within a mere ten days of the first chapter's publication, the German military invaded Russia — and as summer progressed into autumn, Germany seemed well on its way to swallowing up the largest nation — in square miles — on Earth.

... beginning in the summer of 1941 ...

According to the *Deer Park Union*, in late June *“Committee chairmen for the raising of funds for the United Service Organization (the national U. S. O. having been founded the prior February) were announced this week by John T. Little, chairman of the organization in Spokane County. Earl Mix (then Deer Park mayor) was named to head the drive in Deer Park. Lawrence C. Owens will head the Denison group and W. D. Wahl will direct the work in the Elk-Blanchard district.*

“The county organization plans to raise \$18,000 in Spokane and \$2,000 from the rest of the county. One hundred and seventy-five is the quota for the Deer Park Township.

“The money will all be spent for the maintenance and support of service clubs for the soldiers in the U.S. service. The government will supply the buildings and the committee will supply the entertainment, religious and educational program.”

The next issue of the local weekly reported *“The U. S. O. drive went over its quota in Deer Park on the first day, and contributions are still coming in.”*

As to the upcoming fair, the August 21st *Union* announced that *“Plans for the fair's evening program are going ahead rapidly according to Mrs. Al Bishop, committee chairman. She has received the promise that twenty-five or thirty army men from Geiger Field in Spokane will appear on the program with vocal and instrumental numbers.*

“The Silver King Show, with all the usual carnival attractions, including two rides, will appear on the midway this season. The contract has just been completed which acquires this additional entertainment for fair and rodeo fans.”

With the beginning of the fair only eight days away, and the rodeo nine, the September 4th *Union* reported, *“Ruth Olson, 19-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Olson, Clayton, was chosen Queen of the 1941 Deer Park Rodeo.”*

The day before the fair's September 12th opening date, the newspaper stated, *“Probably the best program ever offered in Deer Park in the way of a fair and rodeo will be presented this weekend. One of the finest strings of bucking horses in the country has been signed to appear at the rodeo. Phill Crosbie, one of the country's leading baritone tones will appear at the evening program, and the exhibits at the fair are among the best in many years.”*

The article also noted, *“The rodeo committee purchased \$500 worth of rain insurance covering the Sunday performance. If the weather does not permit the show, Lloyds of London will pay the Fair Association \$500. If the show goes on and it rains so that there is a poor gate, the insurance company will make up the difference between the gate and \$500.”*

The next week's review of the fair began, *“Staging the most wide and varied program in its eleven years of operation, the Deer Park 4-H Club and Community Fair Association put on a fair and rodeo last weekend that was a success in every sense of the word.*

“Hampered by cold wet weather the rodeo performance suffered a loss of about forty dollars, which, in view of the circumstances, was a fine showing. The fair itself will probably show a slight profit. A complete accounting is not yet available.

“A group of soldiers from Geiger Field in Spokane, featuring the baritone singer Pill Crosbie, made an outstanding hit on the program Friday evening. The high school gymnasium was jammed for the performance and the association recalled a profit of about fifty dollars from the performances.

“The carnival paid the association nearly fifty dollars for the concession rights.”

The last paragraph above suggest the nature of the fair association's financial agree-

ments with the various carnivals invited to setup a midway over the years.

The remainder of the article outlined the “hundreds of cash prizes and thousands of ribbons ... awarded to exhibitors and contestants.”

... a year of fundraising and indebtedness ...

In the latter part of February, 1941, the *Union* announced that, “A double block of land southwest of the Pentecostal Church will be purchased from the county as a public playground if the present plans of the playground committee are carried out.

“The group, with about twenty-five interested persons present, met at the high school Monday evening and decided to secure the site and to proceed with the development of a recreation center for children of the district.”

What was being announced was the founding of what is nowadays known as Deer Park’s James G. Swinyard Park. With the fairgrounds firmly established as an event to be held annually on firmly owned city property with suitable structures for the fair’s needs in place, a significant portion of the community’s attention turned to this new endeavor. That said, when the fair season ended, both the fair and playground groups turned to financial issues. Since this placed them in competition for donations, it appears they considered it advantageous to cooperate, as denoted by the *Union*’s October 16th, 1941 headline, which read “Fair and Playground Groups Join to Raise Funds.”

As the article to follow explained, “Seeking to pay off indebtedness on the ... fair building and municipal playfield, the two groups have joined in a campaign to raise the necessary \$1,500 and an active solicitation of donations will begin immediately. The groups will meet Monday evening in the City Hall with representatives of all granges and loges in the district to lay final plans for the collection of contributions.”

First, the nature of the 4-H and Com-

munity Fair’s debts were outlined. “Several years ago, it was necessary to borrow money to sponsor a W. P. A. project to repair the (Arcadia warehouse) building and develop the fair and rodeo grounds. One thousand dollars of this debt remains to be paid. The fair is self-supporting but is unable to build up a reserve that will retire this debt, and it is now necessary for the whole community to direct its attention to the matter.”

And then the playground’s situation was detailed.

“Then there is the new recreation field, two blocks south of the (then) City Hall. It was intended to develop this field gradually, buying pieces of equipment only as money could be raised and the ground prepared. However, we are unexpectedly offered a large W. P. A. project on it. ... The responsibility of the public as cosponsors of this project will be to provide five hundred dollars’ worth of equipment for the field. Most of this has already been secured and partly paid for.”

The December 4th *Union* reported on a fundraising dinner to be held on the 13th, stating that “The proceeds will be used to meet the debt of \$400 that the association must pay by December 27.” As a subsequent article would clarify, “The group still owes \$900” to the United Hillyard Bank “and \$400 of the amount falls due on Christmas.”

The association missed the deadline by a few days, making the payment on December 29th. That appears to have been good enough for the bank. Still, considering what had just happened, it’s hard to say anyone was truly celebrating.

... the first Sunday in December, 1941 ...

It was both expected and not. But when it came, it was from an unexpected direction — at least unexpected to a community’s whose newspaper had just a year before been editorially advocating an isolationist policy — or at least the hope that the rest of the world’s problems would stay offshore.

Looking back at what we know of the

local community in 1941, it’s possible the first indication that attitudes were changing was an announcement in mid-January that “Walter Winchell, your New York Correspondent, ace key-hole peeper and the boy who knows practically everything, will be a regular contributor to the Deer Park Union starting with this issue.”

In those prewar years, syndicated columnist Winchell was primarily known for his gossipy style of reporting, his vocal dislike of isolationist policy, and his absolute hatred of everything Nazi — including Americans who openly admired Adolf Hitler (of which there were a significant number).

Then too, at the beginning of that summer the *Union* began its serialized version of General George Ared White’s novel, *Attack on America*. That doubtless shredded a few previously complacent nerves.

The above seemed symptomatic of a begrudging but growing acceptance that America was eventually going to be forced into the rest of the world’s ever-growing war, regardless of its reluctance.

A very visible indication of how serious things were being taken locally appeared in several articles printed in the November 20th, 1941 *Union* — one of which read, “Fire, police, and health units of the state relief commission for home defense will be organized immediately, according to word received from Homer Houston, in charge of the local setup. Houston states that only these three will be started at this time as Deer Park is not in the immediate target area.”

After assuring residents that were not “in the immediate target area,” the article concluded, “Interested persons wishing to volunteer for any home defense work may secure application blanks from the Public Service Station (on north Main Street) or from Homer Houston.”

The same edition also noted that the Deer Park Lumber Company was doing its part. The article explained, “our local company is now working on its third contract with the box company that supplies the Wright Aer-

onautical Corporation with crates for airplane engines ... each crate requires about 365 feet of lumber.”

The local newspaper’s December 11th edition made no direct mention of the prior Sunday’s attack on Pearl Harbor, or the following Monday’s declaration of war with Japan. The very day the local newspaper was being distributed throughout the area, the United States was declaring war on Germany and Italy in response to their declarations of war on America. And by that evening, America was fully committed to a two-ocean war with the Axis powers.

Among the things the *Union*’s front page did include was this. “Volunteers for an observation and listening post in Deer Park are being sought by O. L. Lundale, who has been appointed to organize such a group. The committee will be on duty twenty-four hours a day during emergencies or trials. Their duty will be to keep a lookout for airplane attacks. Persons with good hearing and sight are desired, and those wishing to help are urged to contact Lundale or Earl Mix. The work and the membership of the group will be a military secret.”

This edition also included announcements that the city was considering “an ordinance creating a defense council and coordinating home defense efforts,” and that a local Red Cross unit might be formed.

An outline from local civilian defense work appeared in the next week’s edition, stating that the “committees to be formed include auxiliary police, air raid wardens, auxiliary fire medical unit, auxiliary utilities, engineers’ unit, transportation, supply and evacuation. Persons registering are requested to state a preference.”

It was also announced that “all amateur radio stations have been ruled off the air, and may only broadcast on special permission ... When permission is granted, it will be only for defense purposes.”

The arrival of the war had changed everything. Things once very important to the community seemed to diminish in value —

quite simply meaning the demands of war would require a severe realignment of priorities. Though it's probable few locals were considering how these changes might affect the next summer's community fair, they eventually would.

But such things were beyond the chaos of the moment. To put a point on the need to immediately reevaluate everything, on Christmas Day, this appeared in the *Union*. "For the first time since the beginning of

World War II, a local family has been directly affected by the Japanese attack in the Pacific. Mr. and Mrs. Chester Smith, who live five miles north of Deer Park, received word that their nephew, Seaman Loren Reed Bircher, 17, son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank T. Bircher of Kingston, Idaho, was killed in action, presumably in the attack on Hawaii. He had joined the navy on September 2nd."

— to be continued —

Challenge Hill Steam Tractor Collection

by

Peter Coffin & Chuck Lyons

On October 26, 2019, the Inland Empire Steam & Gas Buffs antique machinery club held a tractor viewing tour at Chuck Lyons' Challenge Hill Farm southwest of Deer Park. Mr. Lyons has assembled an extensive collection of antique steam and petroleum powered tractors and other farm equipment, and graciously allowed me to join the tour. One of his barns contains five giant steam powered tractors from the 1908 to 1913 time period. These tractors, in their day referred to as 'traction engines' to differentiate them

from non-self-propelled engines, predate the gasoline and diesel-powered tractors with which most of us are familiar. Steam tractors at that time replaced multiple horse teams pulling multiple bottom plows to break uncultivated grass root-matted sod. Additionally, they provided belt power for operating threshing machines, hay balers, small sawmills, and other stationary devices.

The descriptions in the textbox below describe different configurations of steam engines. "Single" indicates that the tractor has

The collection contains these steam powered tractors:

- 1908 Russell, 20 horsepower, a single-simple, side crank, side mount, straw burner.*
- 1910 Advance, 22 horsepower, a single-simple, side crank, side mount, straw burner.*
- 1911 Rumley, 20 horsepower, a double-simple, center/side crank, rear mount.*
- 1913(?) Nichols & Shepard, 20-70 horsepower, a double-simple, center crank, side mount.*
- 1913 Minneapolis, 22 horsepower, single-simple, side crank, side mount, straw burner.*
- 1913 Case, 60 horsepower, single-simple, side crank, straw burner, (earlier rated 20 hp).*

*Displayed at North Spokane Farm Museum on Wild Rose Prairie:
1890 Case, 10 horsepower, single-simple, center crank.*



Photo by Peter Coffin.

Above: The 20 hp Russell tractor. The boiler makes up most of the tractor with the steam engine mounted atop. The chains running to the front axle and spoked front wheels provide steering.

Below: Illustration of a "similar" Russell Traction Engine from the February 1907 edition of The American Thresherman.

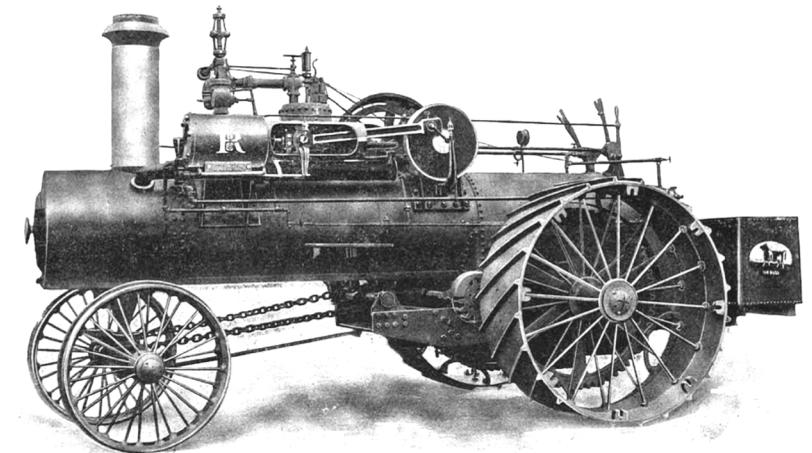




Photo by Peter Coffin.

Boiler front (smokebox) door on the 1911 Rumley tractor. Regarding the uniqueness of the Rumely in his collection, Mr. Lyons stated, "I have never seen another, heard of another, nor seen any catalog information showing another Rumely like mine. It might be a one-off."

but one steam cylinder, double indicates the tractor has two steam cylinders. "Simple" indicates that the steam is used only once before being exhausted. A "side crank" engine has the crank, and crank-disk mounted, at the end of the crankshaft beyond the main bearing, while a "center crank" designation indicates that the main bearings are mounted on either side of the crank(s). Rear axle stubs that are bolted to the sides of the firebox are described as "side mounted."

Steam traction engines might be given either or both of two horsepower ratings: A higher rating (such as the 60 hp Case — see sidebar page 1996 — being given a 'belt' or 'Prony Brake' horsepower rating), or a lower rating (such as the 22 hp Minneapolis — see sidebar page 1996 — given a lower, nominal

rating; of which it seems no one knows for certain the origin). Some carried both ratings (such as the 20-70 hp Nichols & Shephard — see sidebar page 1996). All six engines listed are approximately the same 'size' and weigh in at 8 to 11 tons. (3 to 5-times the weight of a modern ¾-ton pickup truck)

Most steam traction engines could burn wood, coal, straw, (even oil in some areas), straw being very popular in the Palouse because it was cheap and readily available. When used in late summer to power threshing machines, sparks flying from the smokestack presented ever present fire danger. Operating these machines required constant attention to ensure that steam pressure was maintained, that the boiler water level was kept above the boiler tubes and that the fire box was evenly

fired with fuel. Water quality was important; if the water contained minerals, these would precipitate out on the boiler tubes and thus require these steel tubes to be cleaned (and if badly neglected, scorching them to the extent of causing boiler explosion).

Besides the steam tractors, Mr. Lyons has collected over 130 gasoline, diesel, and propane wheel and tracked tractors dating from 1926, only half of which were on display for this tour. Most of the collection comes

from the 1940s and 1950s.

The Challenge Hill tractor collection contains many variations and brands of tractors used in the United States since 1900. The steam tractors are a treat to see. They make one wonder how well they worked out and how they sounded while in operation with all of their mechanical levers and shafts exposed.

— end —

Letters, Email, Bouquets & Brickbats

— or —

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

... how did Deer Park get its name ...

Once again the question of how Deer Park got its name came up, this time during the "general gossip" segment of the historical society's November meeting. What this discussion revealed is that there's more than one version of this story, and regardless of which of these is being told, the teller always seems sure their version is the right one. The general rule among historians is that the closer you get to the original source — or at least the oldest version attributable to the original source — the more credibility any given story has. Perhaps the largest of the caveats associated with this is that you need to be wary of any indication on the part of the original source of an intention to deceive — usually to either protect or besmirch an otherwise good name.

To answer questions about Deer Park's name, we could look for a truly scholarly source, one such being the April 1918 edition of *The Washington Historical Quarterly*. For a number of prior issues the *Quarterly* had been printing a multipart article by Edmond S. Meany titled *Origin of Washington Geographic Names* — said article later being

bundled by the University of Washington Press into a hefty tome stamped with the same name. By its April issue, the *Quarterly's* serialized version was into the 'D's. And as expected, there was Deer Park.

Professor Meany described Deer Park as "a town in the northern portion of Spokane County." Well, okay. I think we can all agree with that. And then the Professor says, "The name recalls a good hunting region in early days." And that's all.

To me this curiously abbreviated version seems a little thin on research. As evidence for this I'll submit the fact that the prior edition of the *Quarterly*, when covering the 'C's, doesn't even mention Deer Park's neighboring town of Clayton. My first impulse would be to assume that the note regarding Clayton's existence fell off someone's desk at a critical point. The *Mortarboard's* editor has some sympathy for this kind of literary malfeasance since my desk is very cluttered, and, according to the *Mortarboard's* more vocal contributors, it leaks important bit of data all the time. The ire-compelled incoming missives generated by any data so misplaced being one of the reasons the editor's column in

these newsletters has the term “*Brickbats*” in its title — one definition of a brickbat being a bit of rubble with note tied to that’s then thrown through an editor’s window with vigor.

On second thought, maybe Clayton was missing from Professor Meany’s list because, as far as I know, it was never officially incorporated as a town. But then, considering what a well-known economic powerhouse Clayton was during the era in which the professor was assembling his *Geographic Names* ... that’s not likely the reason either.

What a lot of people don’t understand about history is that to be reliable it needs to be constructed to the same standards required of the sciences. Which is to say, history is conjecture in search of its own level through evidence blended with hypothesis and tested by rebuttal. Like the sciences, it’s a grand philosophical argument — a Darwinian tsunami in which the stories most ballasted by fact will eventually right themselves and float to the top — heavy emphasis on eventually since facts tend to be weighty and usually settle toward the bottom until the waters still enough that reason can prevail.

I could make a guess as to why Deer Park’s name as presented in *Origin of Washington Geographic Names* is accompanied by such a bland story, but then I’m usually in enough trouble as is. What I’m going to suggest is that you consider this version — it being contained within an article from the March 28th, 1940 edition of the *Deer Park Union*.

Said article begins, “*Miss Josephine Boggs, daughter of Mrs. Gertrude Boggs, was the winner of a one dollar award last Friday morning when a letter she had written about Deer Park was selected for reading over the radio.*”

“*On ‘Your Home Town News,’ a KHQ radio program sponsored by the First Federal Savings and Loan, the best letter about Inland Empire towns are read and a one dollar prize is given to the writer. Miss Boggs’ letter on Deer Park was one of those selected.*”

I checked 1940’s Friday March 22nd

Spokesman-Review radio schedule and it does list a program on KHQ at 9 AM titled “*Home Town Editor.*” Since the *Spokane Daily Chronicle* confirms that name and there’s nothing similar in the rest of the schedule, and since the letter Miss Boggs wrote begins “*Dear Editor,*” I’m going to assume that “*Home Town Editor*” is a more accurate — or at least official — reading of the radio program’s name.

To quote the first paragraph of Miss Boggs’ letter, “*Because deer ran freely through a stand of tall, straight pine trees with scarcely any underbrush, our town was christened Deer Park by E. J. Roberts, railroad employee when the Spokane Falls and Northern Railway was built through the country in about 1890.*”

It turns out, the above-mentioned Mr. E. J. Roberts, though technically a railroad employee, was actually quite a bit more. As the December 13th, 1889 edition of the *Railroad Gazette* notes regarding the Spokane Falls & Northern Railway, “*Tracklaying on this road began at Spokane Falls, Wash., June 1, and was suspended at a point nine miles north of Colville, on Dec. 1. The total number of miles laid during the year was 98. ... E. J. Roberts, of Spokane Falls, is Chief Engineer.*”

To say Mr. Roberts went on to bigger and better things after his work with the railroad is evidenced by his ownership of one of those castle-like cottages in the heart of Spokane’s Brown’s Addition — the kind with square-cut granite blocks for the foundation and a turret rising to the third floor. E. J. lived there until his death in 1949, the castle now being a very popular bed and breakfast.

As for the letter’s author, Miss Josephine Boggs — her full name being Mary Josephine Boggs — she was a 1936 graduate of Deer Park High School.

We find several cryptic mentions of Josephine in the high school’s 1936 annual — a very hand-made edition due to the economics of the depression era. In the “*Prophecy*” segment we find it forecast that “*Josephine Boggs will become a farmer’s wife and raise a*

bunch of little groves.” As I said, cryptic. But then the annual’s “*Will*” segment sheds a little light on the “*little groves*” comment with the following quip. “*Josephine Boggs leaves Willis Grove to the tender care of Mary Mackley.*”

Considering that Robert Willis Grove was a 1937 graduate of Deer Park High School, are we detecting the suggestion of a triangle of some sort?

If so, all ended well for Josephine. Willis graduated from Deer Park High School the year after Josephine. Just this last summer his service during World War II was featured in a set of *Mortarboard* articles titled *Twenty-Six Missions: The Robert Willis Grove Story*. At war’s end, Josephine and Willis were married, and, as per the annual’s prophesy of a “*bunch of little groves*” — assuming two could be considered a bunch — thereafter along came Gordon and Leslie Ann.

So, is Josephine’s rendition of the origin of Deer Park’s name the right one? It’s certainly plausible. And quite often that’s the best we can hope for.

... when names and numbers are useful ...

Another thing that happened at last November’s meeting — this after the meeting had officially closed and general chatter ensued — the *Mortarboard*’s editor had a brief discussion with the *Deer Park Tribune*’s editor regarding the difficulty in pinpointing the location of historical buildings and businesses mentioned in vintage newsprint due to the habit of our local newspapers — *Deer Park’s Union* and *Tribune*, Clayton’s *News-Letter* and *Moose Bulletin*, and Loon Lake’s early *Times* — to print neither street names or numbers in relation to such.

Over the course of Deer Park and Clayton’s history there have doubtless been hundreds of businesses opened and closed — many noted as names in the newspapers. But where exactly were they? And where exactly were all the private residences and farms identified solely on the basis of the then current or prior owner’s name?

Apparently the assumption was that everyone living in the community at that time knew where these places were. And now that there’s no one left old enough to remember — or at least remember accurately — that traditional assumption doesn’t help at all when it comes to historical research.

If this leads you to assume that the locals of the time didn’t see a problem with all this locational vagueness, the following article from the June 6th 1940 *Deer Park Union* seems to suggest otherwise.

“*If you don’t know where you live, stick your head out the window some of these fine mornings and the sign on the corner will tell you right where you are.*”

“*The Spokane County Planning Council has arranged to mark the names of the principal intersections without cost to the town.*”

“*Names of streets will be painted along east and west Crawford and north and south Main. Other well-traveled streets are also being considered. Arrangements were made Tuesday, when Captain Edgar Hawley, secretary of the planning commission and Mayor Earl Mix, the local member, checked over the district.*”

Despite what was said above, street signs as we understand them wasn’t what 1940 Deer Park had in mind. As the *Union* explained, “*The signs will be forty-two inches from the sidewalks and will consist of a thirty inch (high) federal yellow band around the poles and black letters. Eight by eight yellow posts with black letters will be set where phone and power poles are not available.*”

So, vertical lettering on existent or freshly planted posts marking some of the more important streets. At least it was a start.

... being able to find the little things ...

When the subject of new items being donated to the society’s growing collection of historical artifacts came up at last November’s meeting, Pete Coffin, longtime society member and frequent contributor to the *Mortar-*

board noted that our “museum” is in desperate need of a curator. I consulted my *Random House Dictionary* — the ten and a half pound one — and it defines curator as “a person in charge of a museum, art collections, etc.” And the truth is, we desperately need such.

Beginning about 2007 I started begging for an archivist — specifically for someone to begin the even then massive task of cataloging the society's heavy influx of photos — those arriving in both paper and electronic format. I'm still begging. Because of that, I've little hope that the society will find someone to fill the similar job of curator anytime soon.

As for the difference between a curator and an archivist, reportedly curators are usually entrusted with the cataloging, storage, and display of three-dimensional object — paintings, ceramics, farm implements — while archivist are normally taxed with the cataloging and storage of records on paper, film, or various forms of electronic files. While it may

not seem like there's that much difference — and there is a significant bit of crossover between these jobs — each is actually its own specialty.

The thing is the jobs of curator and archivist are skill sets that can be learned. It's probable a few days working with any of the region's smaller museums — Colville, Loon Lake, Newport — would clarify where anyone new to either of these tasks should begin. The simple truth is, having people to fill these job descriptions is absolutely essential for any credible historical society. And that's something else I'm sure these local museums could affirm.

In your editor's opinion, if we want to be taken seriously we need to begin acting as responsible caretakers for the things entrusted to us. Having a curator and archivist, even amateur ones, will move us significantly closer to that goal.

———— Wally Lee Parker ————

Minutes of the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society ———— December 14, 2019 ————

In attendance at the society's museum, 300 Block East 'A' Street, Deer Park: Marilyn Reilly, Bill Sebright, Wally Parker, Pat Parker, Mark Wagner, Mary Jo Reiter, Pete Coffin, Judy Coffin, Rick Brodrick, Don Ball, Elaine Ball, Linda Sanders, Bill Phipps, Mike Reiter, Roberta Reiter, Nancy Fisher, Roxanne Camp, Larry Bowen, Chuck Lyons, Lorraine Nord, Tom Costigan, Rachelle Fletcher, Gordon Grove, Florene Moore, and Michael Wolfe.

Society President Bill Sebright called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM. He reported: 1) He received pictures of the Arcadia Orchard flume, the Loon Lake level control structure on the northwest side of the lake, and

a Loon Lake pontoon boat from Eric Moulton. 2) Bob Wiese sent pictures of an Arcadia identification tag. 3) Bill took a picture of the “Christ on the Cross” that Leno Prestini painted in 1961 and gave to the Priest of the Clayton Catholic Church. 4) Pete inspected the Eagle and wasn't happy with the results. I forwarded his email to Doug Flewelling, but haven't heard from Doug, yet. 5) Bill will be doing at least two presentations to the Arcadia School's 4th grade in February. 6) The Arcadia Orchards will also be the theme for Clayton Brickyard Day.

Society Treasurer Mark Wagner reported the main checking account ended the month at \$7,548.33. There were deposits of

\$10. Checks were written for \$105.63 to Wally Parker for supplies and on to the Tribune for \$90.00 for ads. The web hosting account ended the month at \$586.98 with a withdrawal of \$11.84 for web hosting. The Brickyard Day account is at \$1,945.33.

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

Print editor Wally Parker reported: 1) One hundred and twenty copies of the December *Mortarboard* (#140) have been printed for distribution and a PDF version has been forwarded to the Society's website for online posting. A printable PDF of issue #140 has been sent to the Loon Lake Library. 2) The current 16-page issue begins with part two of the continuing “A History of the Deer Park Fair: 1931 Through 1946.” Next is a photo essay by Peter Coffin titled “The Big Dig.” After that is a piece by the *Mortarboard's* editor titled “In Search of Doctor John Loper Smith's Gold.” 3) If anyone has items they'd like added to future Letters/Brickbats columns, please write them up in either letter or outline-of-facts format and forward such. Though we refer to the *Mortarboard* as a newsletter — suggesting timeliness — it often requires “at least” several months before room can be found to include submitted materials in the magazine. Keep that in mind. Also, remember that the editor is an old man trying to juggle hundreds of facts within dozens of subjects. More than a little help is going to be required from you and yours when communicating. Think of your editor as having the verbal retention characteristics of a goldfish and you'll understand why putting things in writing is critical. 4) Since your editor is old, having volunteers step forward now to learn the basics of creating editorial content and laying such into *Mortarboard* templates would be a very wise precaution.

Webmaster Marie Morrill reported by email: 1) I have uploaded December's *Mortar-*

board onto our web site. I will not be at the meeting tomorrow. I'll be playing the piano at a Christmas breakfast.

Pete Coffin reported: 1) With all the old photographs of the Olsen Hotel buildings available I have written a possible *Mortarboard* article documenting its construction and past. I will give editor Parker this manuscript for his consideration. 2) Several inquiries about the old building south of the VFW hall provided the inspiration for writing a small manuscript about it. Again, I will give it to editor Parker. 3) After editor Parker's *Mortarboard* articles on the Deer Park Community Fair (“A History of the Deer Park Fair: 1931 Through 1946” — issues 139 & 140, November & December 2019), I wrote a possible *Mortarboard* article on the buildings of the Arcadia Fruit Growers Association. The buildings in Denison were impressive and are long gone. I will submit the manuscript to editor Parker. 4) Editor Parker sent me a web address containing many Washington Water Power Company pictures of the building of the Long Lake Dam and the Springdale and Long Lake Railroad (*see link below*). As my Grandfather Michie was hired to make sure the steam railroad engines were working properly, I have a personal interest in them. Mike Denuty wrote the *Mortarboard* article “The Springdale & Long Lake Railroad and the Deer Park Railway Company” (Issue 33, January 2011). I have printed several pictures from this collection to pass around.

Mike Reiter reported: 1) He had the glass replaced in three Society pictures, Dwayne Strong's aerial view of Deer Park, Gary Coe's aerial view of Deer Park Pine, and Art Stelling's record of Clayton's World War II men in the service. Mike is really happy with their work. Matt and GSI have done a great job. A huge thank you goes to GSI for donating the glass and installation, a cost of well over \$100! 2) He sent pictures of three

Link to “Building Long Lake Dam.”

<http://www.bigbendrailroadhistory.com/2013/09/photos-of-railroad-that-built-long-lake.html>

plates from Gordon Grove. They are circa 1914. One is a 1914 calendar plate from the Arcadia Store. Two others showed pictures of the Olson and Kelly buildings. 3) He sent a picture of Lawrence and Mary Zimmerer from Betty Deuber. The picture shows Lawrence and Mary looking over their historical picture collection. 4) Mike brought a Township voucher from his Grandfather, Louis Reiter, for \$14.87. Louis was paid for grading work near Short and Oregon Roads. The \$14.87 included the use of his team of horses.

Nancy Fisher brought many great materials, including mill pictures and Clayton pictures. She brought five Deer Park High School Antlers that completed our collection from the 1940s to 1990. There were letters from William Short, Jr. discussing the naming of Deer Park. He maintains that it was the

train crews seeing so many deer that brought about the name. She also brought manuscripts of the history of lumber mills in the area. Several of the area's well-known names were mentioned, including Pete Coffin's relatives.

Florene Moore showed her leather post card collection. She also brought the book Inland, the First Forty Years. Inland refers to Inland Power and Light.

It's time for dues again — \$20 per household.

Chuck Lyons said he would be willing to have a field trip to his "tractor museum" after the May Society meeting.

Next meeting Saturday, January 11, 2020, at 10:00 AM at our new building.

Meeting adjourned at 11:05 AM.

— end —

Volunteer proofreaders for this issue: Bill Sebright, Chuck Stewart, Lina Swain, and Ken Westby.

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Comments Policy

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

Editorial, Copyright, and Reprint Concerns

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

From "The Coast" magazine,
April, 1907



See Yourself in Print.

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

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

— the editor —

About our Group:

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

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

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