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THE
CLAYTON/DEER PARK
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Mortarboard

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I HEARD FROM LENO YESTERDAY...

Leno Prestini's experiences in WWII as told through letters from his friend, Burton Stewart, to Burton's fiancé (and later wife), Linda Kelso, October 1942 to September 26, 1945

Compiled and edited by Chuck Stewart and Susan Stewart Rumble

Our mother, Linda Kelso Stewart, saved all the letters that our father, Burton Stewart, wrote to her during the War. After she died Dad kept them safe until his death ten years later in 1996. When we cleared out the house in preparation for sale, Susan got the cardboard boxes of letters and photos.

Leno was part of our lives for as long as we could remember because of his close friendship with our parents. So we were both interested in the Leno Project from its inception. One long winter's evening, Susan began to organize Dad's letters by date, and as she read them, she noticed the many interesting references to Leno, and that three letters from Leno were included (those few that Dad apparently considered suitable for a female audience). Realizing the uniqueness of what she had found, she hand-copied the Leno references and sent them to Chuck.

These snippets of data are a collection of intimate glances into Leno's personality. They are consistent with our memories of the person, but they say it like we never could. In a casual, matter-of-fact way, they bring the weight and authority of a close friendship that no one else remains alive to tell. We also got hints of life around Clayton during happier pre-war times. Here is some background to put things in context:

Burton and Leno

Leno Prestini, born in Italy, arrived in Clayton with his parents and brother Battista about 1915 (CDPHS Mortarboard #17, Sept. 2009) when Leno was nine. Charles Burton Stewart was born in March 1908 in Cody, Wyoming. He moved with his parents, Horace Burton (H.B.) and Emma Stewart, and his three sisters, Isabel, Dorothy, and Helen, to a 160-acre homestead northwest of Clayton in 1919 when he was 11 years old. He attended Clayton Grade School and probably first met Leno there. About 1923, H.B. took the job of superintendent of the high school at Hanford where the family lived during the school year, moving back to the farm at Clayton in the summers. Burton graduated from Hanford High School in 1925.

From about 1930 until the time of his enlistment in the Army in 1942, Burton worked as a hand molder in the Washington Brick & Lime terra cotta plant, making plaster molds for terra cotta building blocks from blueprints and drawings. During that same time Leno was a master modeler, making clay models from which plaster production molds would eventually be made. This is apparently where their close friendship began.

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As work at the plant began to slacken in the mid 1930s, they concocted ambitious adventures that took them gold mining near Z-Canyon on the Pend Oreille River, ski-touring to the top of Mt. Boyer and Calispel Peak, building a ski-jump at Carr's Hill and ski-jumping at other local venues, hard-hat diving with home-made gear in Loon Lake and elsewhere, and scaling the 100-ft. main smoke stack at the Clayton brick plant (CDPHS Mortarboard #10). These shared projects, most requiring sophisticated technical skill and engineering, all demanding strenuous exertion and endurance, gave them a unique bond of adventure and achievement.

In the late 1930s it became clear that there was no future in terra cotta modeling. Accordingly, Burton took a six-week course in radio engineering at Gonzaga and found some work around the area repairing radios. Leno began his career in oil painting about the same time. For both men, these careers dictated what their looming service in the US Army would be.

Burton and Linda

Linda Lucille Kelso was born in August 1921, the youngest daughter of I.E.G. "Ed" and Harriet Kelso. The Kelso family moved to Bigfoot Valley from Reardon in 1912 after having migrated from West Virginia in 1904. Being the youngest, her older brothers and sisters had left home by the time she reached her teens, leaving her with heavy family responsibilities. Her mother died in 1936, making 15-year-old Linda the homemaker for her aging father. Only brother Kenneth stayed on the farm to help with the work. Just after Linda's graduation from Clayton High School in 1939, elderly Aunt Laura moved in and soon became bedridden so that Linda had to care for her as well as keep house.

When Aunt Laura died in early 1942, Linda finally took advantage of her long-delayed independence and moved to Spokane to work for McKesson & Robbins drug wholesalers. However, after Kenneth was drafted later in the year, Ed could no longer manage the farm alone at 73 years of age. So he moved in with Linda who again had to keep house for her dad.

Somehow Linda managed to get out of the house occasionally during these trials, and she spent some of these opportunities with a friend of her brother named Burton Stewart. Burton and Kenneth probably knew each other from grade school (Ken was three years younger) and teamed up at Clayton Grange functions in the early 1930s where both were active members. Kenneth also accompanied Burton and Leno on some of their adventures, and he and Burton climbed Hooknose Peak above Z-Canyon in 1939. Linda accompanied the two fellows on several skiing and exploring trips to Mt. Boyer and Mt. Spokane.

By 1942, Burton and Linda were certainly "going steady" but they didn't become engaged until one of Dad's early furloughs from the Army. Dad was



**Burton, Linda, and Kenneth at Boyer Mt.
lookout cabin, October 1939**

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Kenneth Kelso (left) and Burton Stewart (right) on top of Hooknose Peak, October 1939



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concerned about being 13 years older than his prospective bride. Leno reassured him on that issue in his letters. They were finally married on a later furlough December 30, 1944.

Their Army Careers

Leno and Burton were both extremely independent. They much preferred conceiving, planning, and doing projects on their own than taking directions or instruction from anyone else. They especially enjoyed accomplishing things beyond the normal expectations of society, and only reluctantly submitted to work in regular jobs as a necessary evil. This did not suit either of them for Army life, Leno much more so than Burton. Both were very glad to get out when the war ended.

Leno was the first to enlist in the Army, on September 26, 1942. He was stationed in Texas until February 1943, then sent to Ft. Logan, Colorado, near Denver, where he spent most of his service. The

army apparently couldn't readily find a fit for Leno's unique talents, and kept him in a kind of long-term limbo in a "headquarters" group as only the Army could. They used him to paint posters and draw cartoons for the post newspaper. Later on he taught clay modeling to convalescents, which might have been a little more satisfying. But most of the time it was one meaningless drill after another. Even his furloughs back to Clayton were dreary as he had no car to use. In March 1945, he was sent to England where it is believed he painted "nose art" on allied bombers. He was discharged as a corporal in September 1945.

Burton enlisted in the US Army on October 7, 1942, at Spokane and found himself in the Air Corps stationed at an air base at Chico, California. After surviving the misery of initiation into Army life, he was blessed with an assignment at the base radio transmitter that gave him quite a bit of independence and the opportunity to do work that he

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enjoyed. Burton frequently vented his disgust at Army life and at the habits of the general run of men around him but considered himself pretty fortunate. He worked at the transmitter station until March 1945 when he moved to another airfield at Santa Rosa, California. He was discharged as a sergeant on October 9, 1945.

Burton often mentions Linda's brother Kenneth in the letters. Kenneth served in the Army from April 23, 1942 to August 1946. He was stationed in Hawaii, Samoa, New Mexico, and Greenland, serving in the communications area. Grace Gar-



**Leno and Kenneth on a water wheel
in Calispel Meadows, April 1941**

ner, Kenneth's and Linda's sister, describes his Army career in this excerpt from her genealogy [*Earliest Settlers Western Frederick-Eastern Hampshire Counties in Virginia Their Descendants*, Grace Kelso Garner, 1978].

Kenneth served our nation in World War II, first in Hawaii, and later in charge of communications on Samoa, the only Army installation on that island, it being a Marine Base. He developed a parasitic infection and was immediately sent to the cooler climate of our country, his own Northwest. After hospitalization, he was reassigned to New Mexico where the new jet engines were being tested. But this dry, hot climate caused a flare-up of his



**MSgt. Kenneth W. Kelso
(above) and Sgt. Burton Stewart
(right)**



tropical infection. He felt so miserable that when he heard over the intercom a call for volunteers to the world's most northernmost weather station (in Greenland), he volunteered immediately. Within 24 hours, he had orders giving him a two week leave after which he was to report at LaGuardia Field in New York for transport northbound. Kenneth, who was by then Master Sergeant, spent over two

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years in this bitterly cold camp. It was not until a year after the surrender of Japan in 1945 that he was able to leave Greenland, for their harbor was iced in until mid-August 1946.

From the Letters

What follows are excerpts copied by Susan from letters Burton sent to Linda in which he mentions Leno. The date and place are from the postmark on the envelope. In case the envelope was lost, the date is estimated from other letters and context. We occasionally insert explanation and context in brackets. Three letters from Leno and one from Kenneth are included that Burton enclosed in his letters.

October 14, 1942 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

We got to Chico here last night. I don't know how long I will be here, maybe a couple of weeks, maybe a few days...I am already getting tired of seeing so many smart corporals and sergeants. If I ever get to be one I'll make it a point never to be offensive to any dumb private....I suppose you saw Leno leave. I hope he gets some decent assignment out of it.

November 8, 1942 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I wrote to Kenneth and Leno last week. I should hear from Leno soon but I don't know when I'll hear from Kenneth, maybe not for a long time. Has he left Hawaii yet?

Kenneth wrote this letter to Burton from Hawaii on December 2, 1942, with some friendly advice about getting along on the drill field. He also has pleasant recollections of roller skating (apparently something Burton and Linda, maybe Leno too, also enjoyed) and skiing.

Dear Burton;
Isles, Dec. 2, 1942

Hawaiian

Received your most welcome letter and was glad to hear you enlisted and got where

you wished to get. I wish now that I had done the same and if I had been allowed a week or two more I would have done so as you know. They were calling for Radio operators here a short while back and I turned my name in but they didn't choose me so I suppose I will continue on being just a plain Infantryman but will keep trying and maybe someday I will make it, who knows.

You wrote you were having troubles with your column right and to the flank left, etc. All I have to say is who didn't. But just wait until they take you out in the field with the band playing and the colors flying to pass in review. You will like it much better. You will grumble at the work of getting ready for it but you would swim a river to be in it after you have done it once.

I finally got on an ocean and the first time I ever saw the ocean I saw it from the deck of a ship. We came over here and had a fairly pleasant voyage at that. We landed here in a regular paradise in the way of a climate. The only thing is it rains quite frequently but it is warm even while it is raining and you can sweat very easily even on a cloudy day. But it isn't nearly so hot as it was at Camp Roberts. The flowers bloom everywhere and all the year around. Also we have many kinds of tropical fruit everywhere and some of them have quite a different flavor than the ones you get in the stores in the states. All that is lacking is a nice snow covered slope and a roller rink. I suppose we will miss the skiing this winter. Hope you are happy in the Service.

Kenneth

November 9, 1942 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I got a letter from Leno this evening and I'm sending it on to you. [this letter has been lost] You'll probably enjoy reading it. I guess Chico is a little paradise compared to Texas. If you see my mother let her read it too. I don't know who his 3 married women were. Frances and Polly

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and who else - Frances gave me a box of candy but no kiss. Rainey was there too.

November 10, 1942 - Chico, CA.

“Dear Mama” [Mrs. H.B. Stewart, Clayton]

I had a letter from Leno yesterday and from what he says about Texas I am very well off here. He says down there that they have the same uncertainty - no one knows where they're going or what they are going to do or anything, and the weather is terrible.

November 18, 1942 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

How are you getting on with your painting or do you have time. Speaking of painting I think of Leno. I know he'd like to hear from you but as to sending him anything, I don't know. He is fussy and hard to please sometimes so it might not be appreciated 100 percent.

December 4, 1942 - Chico, CA. Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

We have a commercial artist here at the xmtr [transmitter] room. He's pretty good but Leno is better.

December 13, 1942 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

Leno's letter was quite interesting. I wrote to him at his old address. I don't know if he got it. I haven't heard from him.

January 14, 1943 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

You asked about Mrs. Prestini. I don't really know how much English she is able

to read and write. If you are in Clayton you might ask Leo Michel or some of the Costas.

“Sunday Evening” 1943 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I got another letter from Leno today - he is in the hospital getting something done to his nose. That's about all he told me. He still doesn't know what is going to become of him. I wrote Leno last night. Some of the fellows here have been in Sheppard field and say it's a good place to be from.



Leno in uniform

January 25, 1943 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I heard from Leno Sunday, he is just out of the hospital and still hasn't been able to get into anything connected with his painting. He talked of getting a furlough. It would be nice if he could get one the same time I did.

February 8, 1943 - Chico, CA

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

Leno is out of the hospital now and I think his new address is

*Pvt. Leno J. Prestini
23 Sp. Sg.
Fort Logan, Colo.*

At any rate he is in Fort Logan.

February 14, 1943 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

Also heard from Leno - the address I sent you was correct. He sent me a snapshot of himself which wasn't so good.

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February 27, 1943 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

It was nice of Leno to send you the crayons. I hope you have time to use them.

Postmarked March 19, 1943 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I heard from Leno today. His new address is Headquarters and Hdq. Squadron, Fort Logan, Colo. He is rather disgusted with army methods and everything. He doesn't say what he is doing. I could send it to you only it would have to be censored as he occasionally writes like a good many of the army men talk.

May 2, 1943 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I had a letter from Leno today, written just before he left Los Angeles. He had a 10 day furlough and spent it there. He was glad to see his folks and the dog. Bet that he would have felt better satisfied had he gone to Clayton. He is very dissatisfied with army life, and feels that he has accomplished nothing towards winning a war. This is the way I feel also.



Leno and pal at Ft. Logan, Colorado (Handwritten on front margin: 5'3" and 6'4")

Leno spent his furlough with his brother Battista in Santa Monica. At this time, their mother was living with Battista, who had left Clayton before the war to work for Douglas Aircraft and stayed on to work on ballistic missiles after Douglas became McDonnell-Douglas in 1967. In the spring of 1944, Battista drove Mrs. Prestini back to Clayton in Leno's car.

June 30, 1943 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I will be very interested in any pictures that you send and I think Leno would be to. His new address in case you don't have it is PFC Leno J. Prestini, 65th Mess Squadron, Fort Logan, Colo. Leno sent back the pictures I sent him. I guess he thought I had no more of them.

July 7, 1943 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I had a letter from Leno that I thought was quite interesting so I'm sending it on to you. I don't think that he would care. [I'm scratching out] some few lines because they were typical of Leno. They were not bad really, but sort of suggestive and I don't think that it would be quite the right thing to do, for me to send it on that way - he intended the letter for me only. He seems to think that we did alright. I don't exactly know where he gets the basis for some of his remarks as I told him nothing in my second letter except that I would confess to buying you some left handed jewelry - about a year ago or some time I guess we had discussed the age question.

Letter from Leno to Burton, July 3, 1943. Dad blacked out some lines where he thought Leno's language was too rough. Leno's writing is transcribed pretty much

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verbatim, including creative spelling and irregular sentence structure.

Hello Burton

Glad to hear from you. Glad to hear you made Cpl. I made Cpl. the 20th of June 3 weeks after I made PFC. So I am still working in the Post Office drawing cartoons, printing signs for our sqd., making hikes with full pack including helmet and all. Also take 3 hrs week calisthenics, one hr a week drill and also take turns at drilling. Also have to attend non com school 3 times a week. And they also have exams every two weeks and they are really getting rough. So many formations I can't hardly keep up and have any time for my own. And they have already busted 5 for missing simple formations. I think they are going nutts here. I am not kidding. They are really putting things on the bean here. You should be glad you are where you are. So if I am busted soon you will know I have missed a silly formation....

Glad you confessed "Boy". [here Dad blacked out two lines] I am just kidding you. I think you are doing all right. After all its your business if she suits you, don't you give one whoop in hell what anybody else thinks. And don't you be worrying about you being to old for her.

She's got more horse sense than most girls twice as old. She knows what she is doing. You seem to forget that you are a dam fine fellow. She just didn't pick on you because she couldn't find any thing better. Boy if you really want her hang on to her. You know what you want and quit worrying about the future. Time enough to figure that when it comes along. And cut out that B.S. about being too young for her. [two more lines blacked].

Sure glad you had a chance to go to Clayton and had a little fun any way. I have been in the army all the time and haven't gone out with a girl yet. I don't have the time or money to fool around with and the ones I want I don't seem to

be able to make dates on account of army time. You know how that goes unless I want to miss bed check and so on. So you can see I am getting dam tired of not knowing anybody so I am going to try to get acquainted some time maybe. I have made a lot of dates for other people, but that's all.

Well good luck
and write again
CPL Leno J. Prestini
65th Sqd. Fort Logan

July 30, 1943 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I think Leno will like the pictures you intend to send him. Maybe he will send them on to his mother unless it might make her homesick and dissatisfied.

August 28, 1943 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

Leno will be in Clayton and Spokane on furlough about the 10th of next month so maybe you'll see him.

September 11, 1943 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

Leno should be home now and will no doubt come to see you. There is a fellow here in Chico now that has rented a vacant store building and is exhibiting and trying to sell his pictures, all landscape - some very good. Leno could do better, and you can do as well if you will try.

September 19, 1943 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I haven't heard from Leno but maybe I will when he gets back to Fort Logan. I guess I am lucky to be here in Chico. It would be alright for Leno to come and spend a few days at our house once in a while, wouldn't it, if he wouldn't spill cigarette ashes all over everything. A 10-day furlough doesn't give him very much time.

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September 23, 1943 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I had a letter from the McGrotyts. They said Leno had been there - that he didn't have much time after taking traveling time from a 10-day furlough.

September 29, 1943 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

[Burton now a sergeant]

I haven't heard from Leno. I would like to get a report on his visit to Clayton. I don't suppose he got married or anything up there did he? It's his turn to write so I'll just have to wait patiently I guess.

It would be fun camping out in cold weather or at least something different. I remember a few very cold nights I spent up there, they weren't so comfortable, but then we weren't very well prepared. Leno usually was along and he invariably neglected to bring enough blankets.

October 7, 1943 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I got a letter from Leno this afternoon. It was sort of rambling and disconnected. Guess he didn't figure he got the most out of his furlough in so short a time - and seemed to think they were treating them pretty rough there. He said your ring was a beauty and that he made a special trip to Spokane to see you. That was about all.

October 14, 1943 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I wish Leno hadn't lost my good tent.

October 16, 1943 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I really don't know what you could get for Leno. He is kind of particular sometimes but would appreciate most anything from Kenneth. Maybe a carton of cigarettes, he smokes a lot you know.

February 2, 1944 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I just wrote to Leno. I got a letter from him yesterday and he seemed to be under the impression that we had already got ourselves "hitched" - understood it was on my last furlough. I put Leno right and asked him to be present when it did happen.

February 23, 1944 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

It would be nice of you to make me some cookies. Why don't you send Leno a few while you are in the business. I'm sure he would appreciate it a lot. I think he feels pretty lonesome where is and in his frame of mind, too.

The next three letters mention "rent" on "the gold mine." This is their claim just above Z Canyon on the Pend Oreille River near Metaline Falls. The rent is apparently the annual claim fee which came out to \$2.50 per partner.

March 2, 1944 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane [now 1414 W. Dalton]

The rent for the gold mine is due again so I wrote Leno and Bob Huffman to see if they wanted to send in their share of the money.

March 13, 1944 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I just finished writing a letter to Leno in reply to one he wrote me while on the train. I had to tell him how much he owed me on the gold mine. I hope he sends me the money soon as I am going to run short before the end of the month and even 2.50 would help. Bob and Jack should send theirs pretty soon too.

April 10, 1944 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

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Leno sent me his \$2.50 share of the “gold mine” but sent no letter with it - so in a few days I shall write and acknowledge.

May 20, 1944 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I had a letter from Leno yesterday. His camp has also gone through a lot of changing and reorganizing, and still doesn't know whether he is coming or going. He has a job in an office in headquarters. It is making some kind of charts, he calls himself a ten-cent draftsman. He is still very much out of tune with army life and I don't blame him a bit as he has had things a lot rougher than I have. Did you know that Mrs. Prestini had been in Clayton for quite some time? Battiste brought her back in Leno's car and then left the car with their cousins in Spokane.

May 26, 1944 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I just finished writing a letter to Leno again. He wanted more information on mixing soap and about how to use dental plaster. He is to teach modeling to convalescents in the hospital. Hope he likes the job better.

The “roller skates” in the letters that follow are a bit of a mystery. They are apparently the old metal kind with aluminum wheels that clamp onto your shoes. They may have acquired a bunch of used ones they intended to refurbish as a money-making scheme. I remember playing with one of the survivors as a kid—even then I could have agreed with Dad's assessment (9/13/44 letter below) that they were “nearly junk.” Leno's letter to Dad of 2/26/45 below indicates they finally sold them.

July 16, 1944 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

About those roller skates. I don't believe we should sell any just yet. Someone



Leno at the “gold mine” near Z Canyon

might want all of them and be willing to give \$35 for them. You can see what Leno thinks about it if you see him in August. Anyway, those aluminum wheels wouldn't last very long on concrete. It's quite possible that we might be able to make more by selling all the skates we could put in good condition for about \$2 or 3 per pair. That might be something Kenneth might like to work on in some of his spare time. I'll write to Leno and see what he thinks about it - we might be able to fix up 25 or 30 good pair out of the entire lot and give the rest to Mr. McGarey.

July 18, 1944 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I am returning the Prestini chicken picture [shown below] and sometime when you happen to be in Clayton give it to Mrs. Prestini as I think she herself wished to send it to Baptista (he signs his letters just - Bee)

September 13, 1944 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

Perhaps Leno will see Mrs. Berg about the skates. I hope so, for it is very difficult

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to make any deal by correspondence. The skates are nearly junk and even a small price would be better perhaps than letting them go to ruin. I haven't heard from Leno for a long time, in fact since that letter I sent on to you, so I don't know what he intends to do.

September 17, 1944 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I heard from Leno today and he is getting his furlough now on the 3rd of October he thinks. So if you see him say something about the roller skates. I should write to him though, I suppose.

October 14, 1944 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Moore Hotel, Seattle

[Linda was on assignment in Seattle for McKesson]

I wrote to Leno last night and reminded him about trying to dispose of the skates. If he does, have you the key to the garage, or did you leave it at the house with Frances? [Linda's sister Frances Kelso Frazier]

October 27, 1944 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I haven't heard from Leno yet. He should be back from his furlough by this time. I guess he hates the army life worse than I do if that is possible. Well, I really look for both him and myself to be out before Christmas of next year.

November 2, 1944 - Chico, CA

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I heard from Leno yesterday. He said he enjoyed his furlough very much. He saw Kenneth and regretted very much not finding you home. He went to Newport to see Miss Edington, and said he was out with Alice W... every night and got caught up on his "necking". Said he kept Alice so busy a few times that she didn't have time to giggle. I should think he would feel silly going out with her as she

hardly noticed him when there were a lot of the younger fellows around. I guess all of Alice's old friends are in the Army or Navy. Leno never mentioned a thing about his mother, so I don't know a thing about her plans. We must see her when I get home again.

December 5, 1944 - Chico, CA.

Miss Linda Kelso, Spokane

I had a letter from Leno today. He was writing about gold mining this time. He also asked about my 'future wife'. I guess he doesn't know that it isn't going to be future much longer. He also said he'd like to hear from you, about your painting or any subject you might select. Says it has been very cold in Denver - enough to make skating good - but who wants to skate when in the army - he says.

Charles Burton Stewart and Linda Lucille Kelso were married December 30, 1944, at the home of Ed Kelso in Spokane, Washington. The addresses on the rest of the letters reflect Linda's change in marital status.

March 2, 1945 - Santa Rosa, CA.

Mrs. Charles Stewart, Spokane

I see by the paper that Leno is home on furlough, it hardly seems 6 months that he was home before but I guess it must be.



Mrs. Prestini's chickens

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March 3, 1945 - Santa Rosa, CA.

Mrs. Linda Stewart, Spokane

Got a letter from Leno today. He's at Kearns, Utah, going overseas - he seems pretty disgusted. I'm sending it to you as I think it's written in sort of a quaint way - it is a trifle vulgar in a couple of places.

Letter from Leno to Burton, February 16, 1945

How you are!

Time I was answering your letter and also thanking you for the money you sent me for the skates. I was sure glad to get rid of them.

Things have been happening. They are shipping my ass over seas. Now I am at Kearns Utah going thru the same chicken shit Basic training I had at Sheppard Field and 6 mos of it at Fort Logan in the early days. And you freeze your ass off in these cold tar paper covered shacks missing the dam coal stoves. Boy after 2 1/2 years in this it even worse than just being drafted - what a mess. Where are we going nobody knows.

I got a ten day delayed route home, and you can imagine what that was like without a car.

They did have a party at the Grange for the boys who were home. Just like most partys at the Grange Hall. I guess you probly felt as I did when you were home just lost and mixed up and disgusted. I didn't hardly go see anybody. Costas were very nice to me. I took Mary Costa roller skating. Got the Twidwell Boy to drive us down and then took her out to the Spokane Valley with her sister. Silvio, and Leo I got to see and the usual [usual?]. Drunks slapping you on the back - disgusting - I guess they mean well, its just their way. I didn't get to see Lynda. Like I say I didn't go out of my way one inch to see anybody. I had a hell of a cold anyway and couldn't hardly talk. And I hit Kearns rite in the middle

of a good dam snow storm and wind was blowing. Could sleep in those dam cold barracks, after being herded around with their processing you know.

I left Clayton Sunday nite. Bob Huffman took me to town with Mary. I and her went to see a show then I put her on the Buss at 12 o'clock. Went up to my cousins place slept on the Davenport. Got up at 6 o'clock, asked me if he should go down to the train with me. I said no you need your sleep ----.

So I left Dear Old Spokane by myself - what a life. I'll be darn glad when this God dam war is over so we can have a life of our own again.

Well good Luck Burton
and write when you have time
Your Friend

Say hello to your wife for me and Good Luck to her to. And my Mother told me to thank you and Linda for everything and coming to see her.

March 30, 1945 - Santa Rosa, CA.

Mrs. Linda Stewart, Spokane

Well I guess Leno has gone now. I heard from McGrortys today and they said that his address was some APO out of New York, so apparently he is somewhere in Europe by now.

May 11, 1945 - Santa Rosa, CA.

Mrs. Linda Stewart, Spokane

There are so many things I want to do [on furlough] that I won't know where to start in. This time I think I'll follow Leno's plan and not run around seeing anyone at all - if they want to see me they can hunt me up.

September 4, 1945 - Santa Rosa, CA.

Mrs. Linda Stewart, Spokane

I heard from Leno a few days ago. He is anxious to be free again also. I'm send-
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ing you his letter as you might be amused
at his profanity.

Letter from Leno to Burton about September 1,
1945:

Hello Burton

Well the dam war is over. I sure hope the Christ we can get out soon. I don't suppose you have any idea when in the hell you can get out. I won't be able to get out until I get back to Tampa Florida to my old Outfit. I'm getting dam sick of train and boat rides. And also being in Clayton without a car. I haven't seen your wife yet but I was told she was at the lake the Sunday I was there but I didn't see her. I guess she was out swimming from what I gathered from Leo. Clayton is going from bad to worse. Sure hope you can be free soon. My brother was up here for a week but he came on the buss so he was bored also. Good Luck Burton. Hope you can get out soon. Leno

I got a chance to see our mother over at Renners.

September 26, 1945 - Santa Rosa, CA.

Mrs. Linda Stewart, Spokane

I am glad to know that Leno is out of the
army and home again. I bet that he won't

know what to do with himself for a while
now, especially without having a car.

October 9, 1945 - Sgt. Charles B. Stewart separated from the service at San Bernardino, CA, and headed for Clayton. He and Linda made their first home on the old Stewart homestead, until the cabin on Loon Lake was finished. Leno and Burton maintained a close friendship the rest of their lives. Dad had a job and family to support, so he and Leno were not able to dream up schemes and adventures on the scale of those they had enjoyed in pre-war days, although their attempt to raft down Z Canyon in 1958 with Billy Jarrett was as daring as anything they had done.

Until his death in 1963, Leno regularly visited our home, sometimes staying the night. He arrived in his red 1950 Chevrolet paneled truck with the horse skull mounted on the front, and brought the smell of cigarettes, oil paint and sometimes a whiff of whiskey, a lively smile and "heh-heh-heh" chuckle. He usually brought along his current painting in progress and there were long talks with our parents about what he wanted to portray and what each little feature meant. He also politely listened to us kids make suggestions, though I don't think he ever used them. Leno remains a pleasant memory of our growing up and we consider ourselves fortunate indeed to have known him.

TOWN OF WAYSIDE DESTROYED BY FIRE

By: Peter Coffin

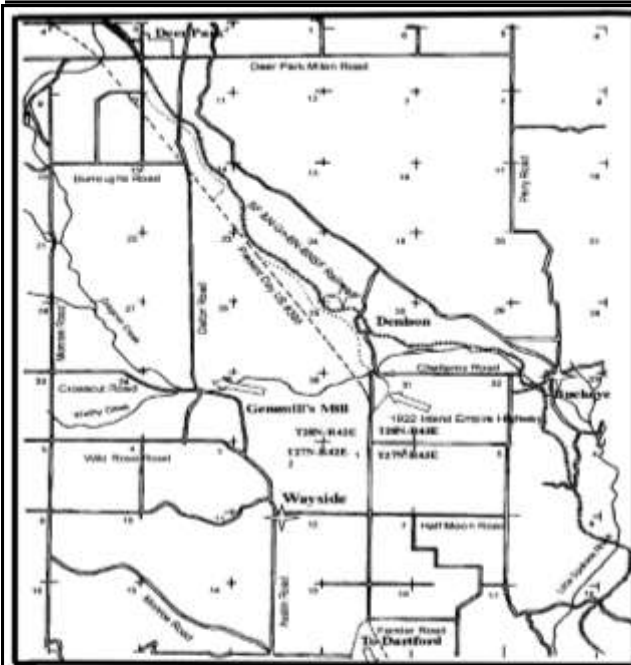
Several small towns were built along the roads in northern Spokane County late in the 19th century and early in the 20th century at the same time as Deer Park. Dartford, Buckeye, Chattaroy, Dennison and Wayside were among them. Portions of the first four small towns still exist but Wayside ceased to exist in late June of 1924. The following is a June 26, 1924, Deer Park Union newspaper front page article describing the fire that destroyed the small town of Wayside.

TOWN OF WAYSIDE DESTROYED BY FIRE

*Old Landmark six miles southwest of Deer Park
Practically Wiped Out By Fire*

THREE BUILDINGS LEFT IN TOWN

*The inland town of Wayside, one of the old
landmarks of Spokane county, was practically de-*
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1905 Road Map of Wayside, WA Area



P. Coffin
5/27/10

(Continued from page 397)
stroyed by a fire that originated in a garage of the Deeter store about five o'clock Monday evening, the cause being unknown. A high wind whipped the flames and in a short time the garage, store buildings, and other homes and outbuildings were a mass of flames, causing such a hot fire that it was impossible to drag an automobile and a truck standing near the store away from the flames and they were destroyed. The wind blew the flames directly across the road to the Methodist Church and parsonage and they quickly ignited, although nearly all of the furniture from the buildings were carried to a place of safety by those present. The Odd Fellows Hall and two homes on the windward side of the store building were not destroyed, owing to the high wind that blew the flames away from
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Below: A May 2010 photograph looking west on Half Moon Road towards the Wayside town site and the intersection of Half Moon Road and Austin Road. Most of the town was situated to the left (and south) of the intersection near the white buildings.

Above: 1905 Road map of the Wayside, Washington area. At that time, the main road between Spokane and Deer Park ran north through Wayside on present day Austin road and veered northwestward to present day Dalton Road. In 1922, the Inland Empire Highway was built about one mile west of Wayside. Traces of it remain today as concrete road surfaces through the Denison area to just southeast of Deer Park.



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them. Eight buildings in all were destroyed with their contents. Some of these were barns and chicken houses and the loss on them is not heavy. Mr. Deeter lost his entire stock of goods and his household effects, the family living in the store building. The loss is estimated at approximately \$20,000 and the insurance on the property is not known. All of the buildings burned were old and well seasoned by years of service and burned rap-

idly. The store building was one of the oldest in this part of the county, having been a trading point on the old Colville Road since the early days of this section. At one time it was hoped that the burg would make a sizeable town and considerable money was invested in various business enterprises. It is impossible at present to tell what the future will be for it as it is not yet known whether any of the burned buildings will be rebuilt.

Clayton/ Deer Park Historical Society Minutes, October 9, 2010

In attendance: Grace Hubal, Pete Coffin, Bill Sebright, Mark Wagner, Sharon Clark, Warren Nord, Duane Costa, Bob Clouse, Mary Clouse, Eleanor Ball, Don Ball, Lorraine Ball, Marilyn Reilly, Bob Gibson, Florene Moore, Margie Burdega, Kay Parkin, Lonnie Jenkins, Ella Jenkins, Alan Berg, Sue Rehms, and Rachelle Reiter.

Society president, Bill Sebright called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM. He showed an *Outpost* that has the Clayton Eagle on the front and nice article on the inside. Another *Outpost* has an article about the Sons of Norway and a battle between Vikings and Indians over 900 years ago in what is now north Spokane.

Treasurer, Mark Wagner reported that there is \$4,291.18 in checking. There was \$254.41 in deposits for the month. We still haven't received an invoice from Knight Construction for footings, form construction, and placement of the Eagle. It was unanimously decided by the C/DPHS to send a check for \$1500 and a thank you letter to Knight Construction.

Grace Hubal, Secretary, reported that the Society cookbook is coming along nicely. She is still receiving recipes.

Bob Clouse, Webmaster, reported that more than 2200 hits were made on our website, very close to last month's. Bob talked about the Society Museum. He shared two architectural prints. What would be the advantages or disadvantages of us merging with the Loon Lake Historical Society? Pete mentioned that the LLHS had many dedicated people to be able to keep the building open. A new construction would be very costly. Duane suggested we get an idea of what everyone wants. Sharon suggested that we set up a meeting with the

LLHS to talk about the possibility. Sharon said they didn't have enough room there for our displays. Duane suggested we join the LLHS and build on to their building. He also said they already had the security there. Pete suggested we send out a survey letter to the members first. Pete moved to send out a survey and Sharon seconded it. It passed unanimously. Pete and Grace will work on the survey and send it to our members.

Rachelle Reiter, DP Printing, is putting together a book for the Deer Park Chamber of Commerce. She wanted and got our approval for the article taken from some of Pete Coffin's writings.

Pete Coffin, Media Specialist, reported that the next big dig at the old Brick-plant will be when the leaves fall. Plaster castings were plentiful. Most were all but destroyed by time and weather. He is working on an Oliver Olson article on the building of the Eagle. There was a tape recording which was burned onto a CD. He is having trouble transcribing this because of the quality. These are two things he suggests we put in a future Mortar-board.

We have some unfinished business of nominating someone for the office of Vice President. Bob Clouse nominated Lorraine Nord. She was not present. Don Ball nominated Pete Coffin. The VP is in charge of committees and oversees the Society when the President is absent. It was unanimously decided to elect Pete; since we knew he was willing to be the new Society Vice President.

It has been brought up again about the CDPHS and the Loon Lake Historical Society merging.

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Sharon, Editor, passed out Mortarboard #30 and a draft of Mortarboard #31. It is 16 pages instead of 12. Number 31 has an article about Leno Prestini by Chuck Stewart and his sister Susan. She also shared the Volume 8 of the "Collected Newsletters," which is on sale for \$4 each. She shared a copy of the Deer Park High School Class of 1960, 50 Year Reunion book.

November 6, the Sons of Norway will be having a Veterans ceremony at Zion Hill Cemetery.

Bill Sebright received a "Fire Lookout" Newsletter as an attachment to an email. If anyone would like to receive it, let Bill know. There is a

lot of information about many forestry lookouts in many states.

The Heritage Network meeting will be at the Clayton Grange, Monday, October 18 at 9:30 AM.

Florene Moore shared a 1940 Science book and a book on brands. She picked them up at the Friends of the Library book sale.

Bill suggested that we think about giving a donation to the Clayton Drive In for landscaping. Meeting adjourned at 9:59 AM.

The next meeting is November 13.

Respectfully submitted by: Grace Hubal,
Secretary

Editorial Policy Regarding Correcting Errors and/or Omissions

Information published here is compiled from many sources, including personal memories. It is often difficult or impossible to verify such recollections through outside documentation. Our editorial policy toward the veracity of personal recollections tends toward the casual – since little harm is normally done by such errors. But our editorial process also invites public review and input regarding the accuracy of the information we publish, and when such review either suggests or reveals errors or items open to dispute our "Letters" department will act as a forum allowing the airing of such disagreements in an effort to ascertain the truth and correct any probable or demonstrated errors. We also believe it's important that such disagreements be recorded, even if they can't be settled to the satisfaction of all parties.

We encourage everyone to submit any arguments as to fact to the editor in writing — since the written form reduces the chance of further misunderstandings. As is standard policy, all letters will be edited for spelling, word usage, clarity, and — if necessary — contents. If advisable, the editor will confer directly with the letter writers to insure that everyone's comments and corrections are submitted in a literate, polite, and compelling manner — as best suits the editorial image of this Society's publications.

Society Want Ads

WANTED: Old family recipes for inclusion in a future Society recipe book. Recipes drawn from any given family's heritage are particularly desired — especially if accompanied by related family stories. Please submit to Grace Hubal, Society Secretary.

WANTED: Any stories, photos, or examples of traditional methods of quilt making.

WANTED. Information and photos regarding the history of Trysil/Zion Lutheran Church.

WANTED: Any stories and photos of your family's history in connection with their occupations and settlement in the Clayton/Deer Park Area

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