Eastern Washington University
EWU Digital Commons

Publications from Special Collections | Regional History

2002

Historical Accounts of the Esveldt Family and Pete Esvelt presentation

John P. Esvelt II

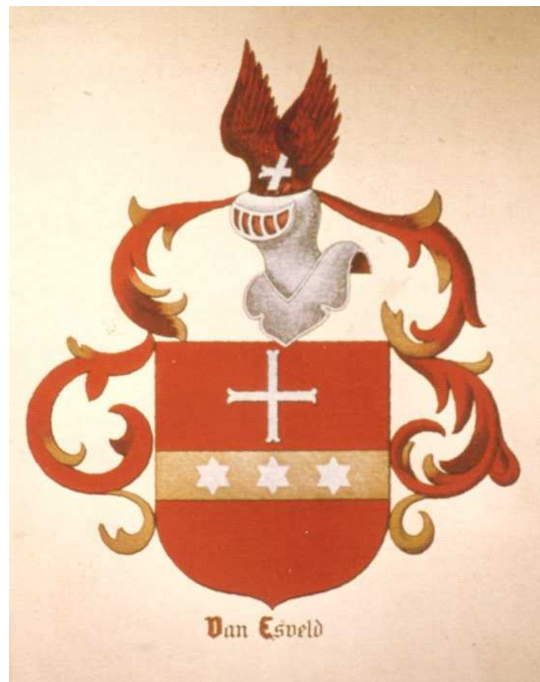
Pete Esvelt

Follow this and additional works at: https://dc.ewu.edu/spc_pubs

Recommended Citation
Esvelt, John P. II and Esvelt, Pete, "Historical Accounts of the Esveldt Family and Pete Esvelt presentation" (2002). *Publications from Special Collections*. 12.
https://dc.ewu.edu/spc_pubs/12

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Regional History at EWU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Publications from Special Collections by an authorized administrator of EWU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact jotto@ewu.edu.

Historical Accounts of the Esveldt Family



. . . a compilation of recorded literature and genealogy concerning the Esveldt family of America and Holland . . .

Terry Esvelt, editor
Northwest Publishing Co.
2002

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Forward i

Written by Craig Esvelt in 1974, with an addendum by Terry Esvelt in 2002

Preface iv

Written by John P. Esvelt, Jr. in 1964

A Narrative of the Esveldt Family in America

Narrative 1 1

Written by John P. Esveldt, Sr. in 1961-1962

Narrative 2 18

Written by John P. Esveldt, Sr. in 1963

Epilogue: 1920 – 1969 35

Written by John P. Esvelt, Jr. in 1969

Obituary of John P. Esveldt (1888-1973) 40

Map of Northeast Washington Esveldt Settlements 42

Obituary of Julia Benson Esveldt (1887-1967) 43

Diary of Pieter Esveldt (1792-1870) 44

Obituary of Frederick Benson (1859-1944) 47

Obituary of Amanda C. Benson (1861-1947) 51

Memoirs of Matthias Bengston (1826-1918) 54

Four Letters from Jan Pieter Esveldt to his cousin in The Netherlands 56

Written from 1907 to 1919

Narrative Three: Of a Third Generation of American Esvelts 61

Written by Russell M. Esvelt in 1986

Early Years Growing Up on the Farm 67

Written by Fred L. Esvelt in 1999, from Fred and Betty Esvelt: The Sharing of Two Lives

Descendants of Jan Pieter Esveldt and Henderina Munnik Esveldt 81

Ancestors of Jan Pieter Esveldt 95

FORWARD

The initial content of these "historical accounts" was to solely consist of the autobiography of John P. Esveldt II, of Colville, Washington who immigrated to America from Holland in 1892 and grew up near the frontier town of Spokane, Washington. And so, at the request of his son, John P. Esveldt Jr., of Dartford, Washington John Sr. undertook the task of hand-writing his life's story, which was to be edited and published for the family by John Jr., in order that future generations of Esvelts in America could know something of their ancestral background.*

John Sr.'s first writings, concerning his young life (Narrative #1), did not satisfy certain members of the family, and he was called on to expand his story to include the middle years of his life (Narrative #2). In addition, John Jr. obtained information concerning the Benson side of the family, which was added, John Jr. also sent letters to statistical agencies in Holland, requesting background information on the Family Esveldt. And he added footnotes to his father's writings — those that are indicated by numbers in the narratives.

All the historical information to this point was roughly compiled and edited by John P. Esveldt, Jr., and was in his care until the spring of 1973 when he was taken by death, just a few months after his father had passed away. At that time I was asked to finish any work on the papers that was left to be done, and distribute copies among the family.

More additions were made possible. Old family photographs were procured from various sources, reproduced, and added to the manuscripts. I took up correspondence with distant relatives in Holland whom my grandfather, the before-mentioned John Sr., had been writing to, not wishing to break what little ties we had left with the "Old Country." From these relatives I later obtained more historical information on the family, including a translation of the diary of Pieter Esveld who fought against the forces of Napoleon in 1813-14.

During the summer of 1974 my wife and I had the opportunity to visit Europe and meet these relatives (and others, besides). We were able to see the village of Uithoorn (pronounced out-horn), from where our branch of the family immigrated in 1892, and the house that John P. Esveldt Sr. was born in (and his father as well). The house had changed very little in all those years — a new facing was added in 1954, and the interior shop portion now serves as a store for housekeeping articles rather than a blacksmith shop. The present owner, Frederik Bosman, operated a blacksmith shop there in his earlier years, and his father, Evert Jan Bosman, bought the house in 1892 from Jan Pieter Esveldt I (for about $1400), who then brought his family to America. The house is located in the older, "romantic" section of the town — very quaint with its old brick buildings and cobble streets. Across the street from the house is a large canal which supports a variety of boats. In 1892 the population of Uithoorn was about 2000; now

---

* In regards to the narratives, the writer refers to himself as John Jr. and his father (Jan Pieter I, 1856—1927) as John Sr. Here, in the Forward, I refer to the writer as John Sr. and his son, John P. Esveldt III, as John Jr.

its population is around 21,000, owing a great deal to commuters who work in nearby Amsterdam.

In 1917 a genealogical study was compiled in Holland for the Esveldt Family - “Onderzoekingen Geslacht van Esveld” (translated: “Research into the Family of van Esveld”) covering the period of time from 1334 to 1916. From this was obtained a photo of the family crest, and I found various spellings of the family name used during those many years – Estvelt, Esveld, Esvelt, Essevelt, and Esveldt). It seems that Esveldts originally worked as foremen for Dutch farms before they eventually bought land of their own or took up other professions. As to the original Flemish translation of the name Esveldt, various possibilities can be cited, among which are “field of ashes," “fruitful field”, and “field where cows graze.” Interestingly enough, a village named “Esveld” exists in Holland, although today it consists of little more than four or five houses.

Additional historical information and items of interest, outside of those originally added by John P. Esveldt, Jr., have been added as footnotes in the narratives (distinguished by an asterix). It is with regret that the many nostalgic yarns concerning the “good old days” on the ranch at Daisy which were swapped around during Thanksgiving and other such get-togethers couldn't be included in these pages. They are left to those who remember them first-hand from long ago, or even those who know of them second-hand, to pass along to other descendents, growing more fantastic with each passing.

It is my hope that the accounts contained herein will prove to be both interesting and rewarding to the reader, offering him (or her) a family tradition to be proud of. It seems that appreciation toward an individual is felt most after his (or her) passing. And so these pages will provide a fitting tribute to those we loved.

Much credit should be given to John P. Esveldt III of Dartford, who spent a great deal of time and effort in gathering and compiling family information. We are indebted to his foresight. And thanks should be given to Frederik, Meindert, Dirk, and Jaap Esveldt of Holland who provided information otherwise unobtainable. It was nice to find family warmth and kindness a tradition in the Old country as it is here. And appreciation is felt for all descendants of Jan Pieter Esveldt I living here in America who provided recollections, clarifications, and photographs. After all, these accounts are a compilation by the family for the family, to be enjoyed by us and our descendants.

Craig B. Esvelt
Medical Lake, Wash.
November, 1974

Addendum to the Forward

Since the publication of the original “Historical Accounts of the Esveldt Family” in 1974, Russell Esvelt and Fred Esvelt each wrote their own life stories, in 1986 and 1999 respectively. The first chapters of each of their works that related their early years growing up on the family

farm are added to this compilation. In addition, copies of four letters that were written by Jan Pieter Esveldt to his cousin in The Netherlands between 1907 and 1919 were discovered and translations from the Dutch (provided by Berend Esvelt) are included in this addition. Finally, I have been able to develop an extended genealogy of the Esvelt family. For the ancestors of Jan Pieter Esveldt, I have been able to trace the roots of the Esveldts back several more generations to the early 1700's, to the earliest progenitor discovered, Hendrik Aartse van Esveld (1694-1766) of Barneveld, The Netherlands. We are indebted to Jim Howell of Haarlem, The Netherlands, for his work in tracking down the birth and marriage records of these early Esvelds in various city hall registers in The Netherlands. For the descendants of Jan Pieter Esveldt and Henderina Munnik, I have been able to trace most branches of the family to the present day. Both the ancestors and the descendants of Jan Pieter Esveldt are included in genealogies at the end of this collection.

Terry Esvelt
Portland, Oregon
April 2002

* * * PREFACE * * *

Of recent years, facts concerning the ancestry of the Esveldt family in the mother country of Holland have been an interesting subject for inquiry by various descendants in America. Most of the inquiry was concerning generations previous to that of our grandfather and his family who emigrated to the New World. The difficulties in obtaining information of this sort are overwhelming when the memories of living members of the family is practically the only source of information. Such memories of stories told by their parents fade very quickly, with the result that only the most rudimentary information extends more than two generations back. As each succeeding generation is added, the story of another past generation is gone. And so it will be with us. It always seems that historical events are not recognized as history until the participants are no longer available for consultation.

With these thoughts in mind, I approached my father some three years ago with the proposal for him to set down, in autobiographical sketch form, his own story of what I have always thought to be an extremely interesting and useful life. At the same time the outlines of the history of the previous generation could be recorded before the details are forgotten. The story of the emigration to the New World of the American branch of the Esveldt tribe and their adaptation to life of the raw western frontier is a story that should always be interesting to future generations of the descendants.

Today, in the spring of 1964, the Narrative has been completed, so far as it goes. This is basically to about the year 1920, and the beginning of another chapter, based on my home ranch at Daisy, Washington. Still essentially untold is the story of what was really Dad's life work, from age 31 until his retirement at 59, the carving out and development of a modern dairy ranch in the wilderness, so to speak, and of his and mother's retirement days.

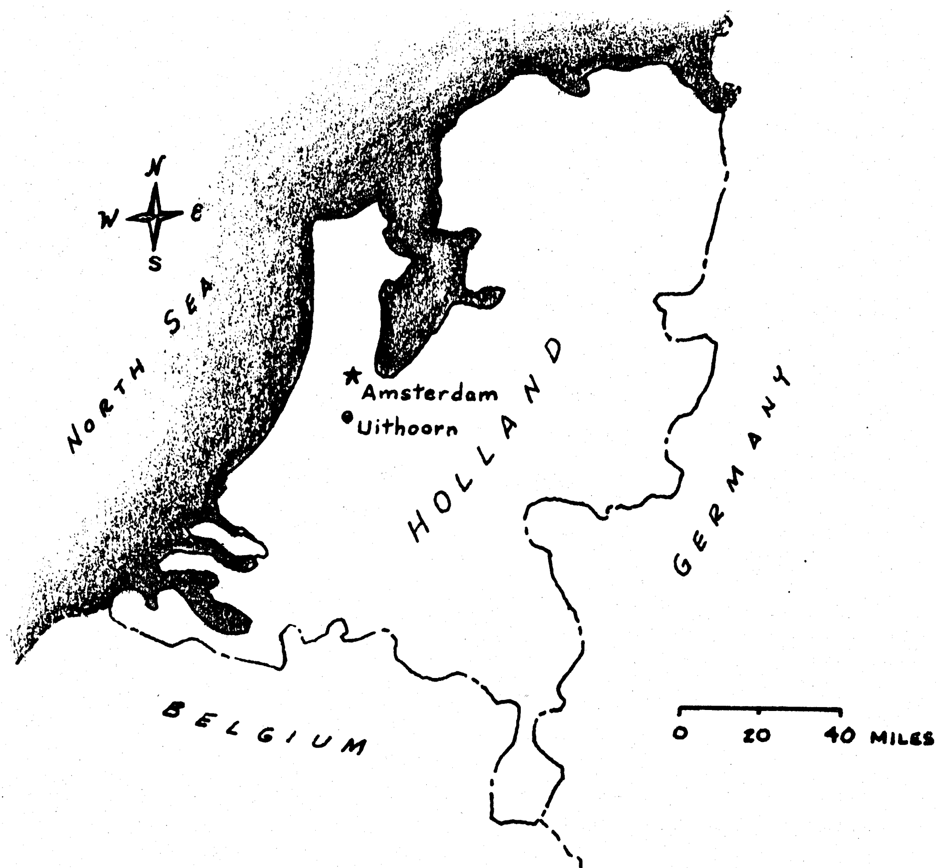
This seems the appropriate place in which to round out the story. In Dad's words, "what has transpired in the past thirty years is familiar family history." It seems somewhat presumptuous for me to undertake to set down the last forty years, since there is always the danger of its being a personally oriented perspective, whereas this volume is the heritage of all the descendants of our parents. Nevertheless, it has been done, and my apology is just that it seemed to need doing here. I hope my brothers will be tolerant when I incorrectly describe things about which they are better informed.

Added as Appendices are some items concerning the ancestry on the Benson branch of the family tree. Under no circumstances would Mother undertake her own story of the events described. These Benson additions should prove interesting, at least to those of the blood of Fredrick and Amanda Benson.

John P. Esvelt, Jr.
Dartford, Wash.
March, 1964

John Peter Esvelt II
Born 1888, died 1973
Writer of Narrative

Julia Alvina Esveldt
Born 1887, died 1967



A NARRATIVE

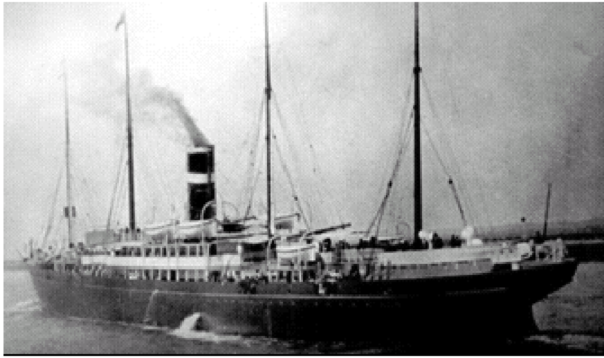
OF THE ESVELDT FAMILY IN AMERICA

by

JOHN PETER ESVELDT, Sr.

Jan Pieter Esveldt, 36, Hendrina Munnik Esveldt, 31, and their children, Cornelia (Nellie) 10, Maartje 8, Pieter Jan (Peter John) 6, Jan Pieter 4, and Gerardus Hendrik (George Henry) 2, emigrated from the town of Uithoorn, Holland (The Netherlands, or Nederland) to Amerika (America) in the year 1892. Their destination was Spokane Falls, State of Washington.

Leaving the port of Amsterdam on May 13, 1892, they arrived in New York on May 29, and in Spokane during the middle of June. Although they took the fastest service available at that time, it nevertheless took about a month to make the trip — 16 days to cross the Atlantic by steamer, and the balance of the time by rail from New York to Spokane.



The ship on which the the Esveldt family sailed, named The Amsterdam, holding 94 1st class passengers and 638 3rd class passengers.

The Esveldts and the Munniks were old families in a land where thrift, honesty and integrity are characteristics, and were well known throughout the "Hook of Holland", that section below sea level between the South Sea (Zuyder Zee) and the North Sea (Te Noord Zee).[1]

The village of Uithoorn, The Netherlands, about 1900

A large crowd of relatives and friends were at the port of Amsterdam to see them off. On the surface, at least, a spirit of gaiety seemed to prevail, for there was much handshaking and well wishing among the men, albeit an undercurrent of sadness, as evidenced by the handkerchiefs, tears and embracing among the women before the departure. After all, the

[1] Uithoorn was (and still is) a town about ten miles south of the center of the City of Amsterdam. The Munnik family lived in the village of Mijdrecht. The Esveld and Munnik families apparently did not stray far from a small radius in this area for generations. The Esveld family seems, however, to have come from Barneveld in Gelderland (Province), some 30 miles to the east, in earlier times.

"far and Wild West" of America was little known and a long, long way off[2], and there was a premonition they would never see each other again. Regrettably, this proved correct, for there is no plan by the only surviving member of the family that emigrated to Amerika to return for a visit to the place of his birth. This is said with some regret, as the urge has often been manifest.*

The time arrived for the Esveldt family to go on board, and as they stood on deck at the railing with everyone waving handkerchiefs of farewell, the air rang with the song which had become quite popular at that time, and which, when sung in Dutch, had rhyme quite fascinating. Translated into English, it would run as follows:

We're going to America,
The ship lies on the sea.
Then sing we all, merrily, tra la la la la.
Hurrah, who's going along?

The writer, something of an individualist, which is sometimes a Dutch characteristic, who was only a small boy at the time, insisted on going up the gangplank alone. However, before starting up he suddenly decided he wasn't going to Amerika, and resisted violently. J. P., Sr., who remained calm under trying circumstances and who never resorted to physical punishment, picked up his offspring and carried him on by force. The incident was soon forgotten by the many new things on shipboard.

Several days later, when the ship was in mid-Atlantic, the same little boy disappeared, and the whole family along with the captain of the ship and all the crew on deck were looking for him. He was finally found on the prow of the ship. He had crawled through the railing and was sitting on the edge with his feet hanging over the side, looking down at the curling waves along the ship. Well, his Guardian Angel must have been with him, which also seemed to be the case in a number of incidents later on in his boyhood.

In Holland the caste system with the people was in effect when the folks lived there, which system had been handed down for many generations. There were the three classes, with practically no intermingling among them on a social basis. First, there were the rich, fairly numerous, but only a small percent of the total. Then came the middle class, making up something less than a third of the whole, which consisted of merchants, business men, property owners, and included farmers who were moderately wealthy. The third, or poorest, included the laboring class, who hired out their services to the other two classes. There were no slums in the cities, and poverty, as known here, was practically nonexistent.

---

[2] Spokane, Washington, USA, seems to have been somewhat known to many Dutch people from an early date, since much Dutch capital was invested in the Spokane area. Dad relates that his father had read and was fascinated by James Fenimore Cooper's "Leatherstocking Tales," and his vision of Amerika was shaped accordingly.

* J. P. Esveldt did return to his homeland for a visit during the summer of 1971. He again saw his birthplace, visited relatives, and toured much of Europe.

The Esveldts on the father's side, and the Munniks on the mother's side were of the middle class. Jan Pieter Esveldt was the owner and operator of a blacksmith and machine shop, inherited from his father, Pieter Esveld. The oldest living son always inherited the father's business.[3] He had about ten men working in the shops, all artificers of steel and iron, skilled craftsmen and artistic workers. It must be remembered that all manufactured articles at that time came from comparatively small operators. Huge corporations had not yet come into existence.

The Munniks, relatives on the mother's side, were builders of ships. The steel work that went into the ships built by the Munniks came from the Esveldt shops, which served a wide variety of demands for steel work from other sources. All accounts were carried by the year. Settlement came the first of the year. That was the custom. Bad accounts were unknown.

The ancestry on both sides of the family as far back as known was pure Dutch and of high moral character. On Dad's side they were dark, of medium build, and quick in action. Mother's father and brothers were blond, powerfully built, and very strong. Dad's grandfather fought with the Dutch infantry against Napoleon. In one of the engagements, young Esveld's company was overrun by Napoleon's lancers on horseback. He was knocked down, and as the horse jumped over him, the lancer drove his spear down, with the intention of pinning him to the ground. Young Esveld saw his danger in time to turn over quickly, causing the spear to graze his skin, but it pinned him down by his clothing nevertheless. The force of the lancer's drive nearly unsaddled him, because he couldn't jerk his spear loose. Esveld jumped to his feet, held the lance by the shaft, and volunteered to loosen the spear head from his clothing if the lancer would spare his life. This the lancer agreed to. Esveld was taken prisoner, and then forced to fight with the French troops during Napoleon's campaign into Italy. At the end of the campaign he was discharged in Italy with a number of other foreign troopers, but without any money. There were no railroads, it was the middle of winter, he was broke, a long way from home and the Alps were in between. He had no choice. He started walking and begged on the way. That was one time an Esveld had to beg. Reports have it that he had a very tough time.** The writer is glad he made it.

This brings to mind the fact that there would be countless individuals alive today who would be happy that a certain ancestor made it.

---

[3] Grandfather Jan Pieter (1856–1926) was really the second son, but his older brother died at age 16 of tuberculosis, supposedly because of swimming in cold weather, so "Gramp" was next in line. [*Editor's Note: This isn't corroborated by birth records in The Netherlands, which shows that Jan Pieter Esveldt was indeed the eldest son. His younger brother Pieter (born 1860) died at age 16.*] In Holland at this time the 1st, 3rd. 5th, etc. sons in each family had to serve as military conscripts, and Jan Pieter also fell heir to this duty upon his brother's death. He was conscripted in a group of 7000, and had a choice of duty, so he chose engine room duty in the battleships of the fleet, because it was for only 6 months. It was the shortest and severest duty, with only those in perfect health accepted. It consisted of 2 hour shifts with 2-hour rest periods all day long, in extreme heat. When off duty they would fall directly to sleep in hammocks for the 2 hour period, wringing wet with perspiration.

** A translation of this Pieter Esveld's original diary, concerning his Napoleonic adventures, is included as an appendix.

As noted above, Jan Pieter Esveldt of Uithoorn, age 36, owned and operated a successful and profitable business, and was well fixed financially. His future was assured. The writer, when in his teens and living on the Little Spokane River, noticing that men worked for $1.00 a day for ten-hour days and work often hard to find at that wage, became curious. Nobody seemed to have any money or enough of anything except fresh air. Conditions in the State of Washington looked anything but rosy, what with periods of prosperity under Cleveland, McKinley and Teddy Roosevelt, in turn followed by the inevitable "busts," got inquisitive and asked his father why we hadn't stayed in Holland. The thought probably had occurred to the mind of J.P. Sr. many times before. However, in leaving, he had burned his bridges behind him.

The facts, in the main, were these. In Holland, as elsewhere in the late eighties, business was awakening and looking for new opportunities to expand. It was the beginning of new ventures, a new era, and of the huge corporations that eventually came into being. Near at hand was a new company being formed for the purpose of evaporating and canning milk, for domestic and export trade. Experiments had proved it feasible, and the prospects looked bright. However, it had not yet been proven whether the public would "take" to the new product. The promoters and investors had to take a chance on that score. Dad invested $20,000 in the project. It seems strange now, considering the amount of canned milk that is sold, but in the beginning the public would not accept the canned product. The company went broke and the investors, including Dad, lost all their money. In another venture about the same time he lost another $15,000.[4] This didn't make him feel any too happy. Even so, being young, if he would have stayed with his business, which he had intended to do, he would have recouped his losses.

The house picture at the left is the birthplace of the author (and the author's father) in Uithoorn, Holland, about 1886. At that time it served both as a home and place of business; today [1974] it still stands — somewhat remodeled — and serves as a combination home and curiosity shop.

As chance would have it, his only surviving brother, who was 5 years younger than he, had just returned from the "Great West" in Amerika, where he had gone several years before. His glowing accounts of the booming and unlimited new country – the railroads pushing to

[4] J. P. Sr. had never had much luck with business ventures. Back in Holland he had invested much of his company's time, money, and labor in a contract with a chemical company. The chemical company went near-bankrupt around 1891-92, and J. P. took a heavy financial loss. The result was that he could not stand the loss without losing face when he was not paid for a couple of years' production of his ironmongery, electing instead to liquidate all remaining assets and bring the family to the U.S.A.

the west, towns springing up everywhere, free land for the taking, the many opportunities everywhere, especially for those with capital; and, in addition, where everyone was equal, regardless of birth or religion. The picture fired his imagination. He decided to sell and go "West" to try out his fortunes, where his children would all (he and mother were set on having a large family) have an equal opportunity and where custom did not demand, as in Holland, that the business and property of the father go to the oldest son, and the rest of the children have to shift for themselves.

Having made up his mind, it didn't take long to put his plans into operation. All his interests in Holland were sold, which netted quite a sum of money. And so they sailed for Amerika. Whether there were any misgivings in the mind of our mother we know not. Her motto was that of Ruth: "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God; where thou diest, I will die and there will I be buried." And so it turned out. They rest in a small cemetery on the Little Spokane, near Dad's mother, Neeltje Blom Esveldt, children Margaret, George and Harold, and son-in-law Harry Rickard.

The grandmother, Neeltje Blom Esveldt, must have had the true pioneering spirit and as the writer remembers it, a very particular and determined spirit, for she accompanied her son Gerardus on his return to the "promised land." Her son Jan Pieter and family followed a couple of months later. The old lady had lost her husband 12 years before. She died the 10th of June, 1896, in her home on the Little Spokane (later named Dartford) where she lived with her son Gerardus.[5] As there had not yet been a cemetery established in that area, the need for one immediately arose with the death of Grandma Esveldt. Herb Dart, owner of the land in that part of the valley, promptly donated the necessary land for a cemetery, and Grandma Esveldt became the first occupant. As Spokane in those days was a long way off, she was buried in a hand-made wooden box of pine, covered with black sateen cloth. To this day, the smell of black sateen cloth recalls to me the picture of that funeral, with the black coffin on a wood wagon, drawn by horses, in the lead, and a long line of wood wagons and hacks following behind, filled with mourners and friends,

To return to the chronology of our narrative, the emigrants arrived in Spokane Falls in the middle of June, 1892, via the Northern Pacific Railway. The passenger cars and engine in those days were crude-looking affairs compared to present-day equipment.

The family immediately moved out to a house in Union Park picked out before-hand by Uncle George, which Dad bought. It was not what would now be called a modern house, but it was adequate, considering the times. It stood on the prairie amidst the bunch-grass and wild sunflowers, a green and yellow field in the springtime, quite pretty in a way. There were other houses and neighbors scattered around, but no streets. The location was several hundred yards northeast of where the Sperry Flour Mill now stands. This was just to the east of the eastern rim of the rough, uneven basaltic rock formation on which the business section of Spokane now stands. The streets of the city were not paved, and their condition in the

[5] Neeltje Blom Esveldt, of Jewish descent, came to America with her only two surviving children out of a large family. All the other children had died young. It seems that our nearest surviving relatives on the Esveldt side, resident in the Netherlands, descend from the writer's grandfather.

spring and fall were terrible, what with deep mud churned into the consistency of soup by horses feet and wagon wheels. The sidewalks were made of plank and the curbing of 3' x 12" plank set on edge. One of the pastimes of the writer when a small boy was running barefoot along the top of these plank curbings. Incidentally, another pastime was stealing rides on streetcars; not too difficult because there was only one man in charge and he was the motorman. Being up in front, he couldn't see the back end. Because the streetcars were so short and dumpy and also because there were only four wheels placed under the center of the car and the tracks were so rough, the ends of the cars had an unusual up and down jumping notion which wade the rides very exciting. The cops were a pain in the neck.

But on with the story. Esveldt Sr. had quite a sum of money when the family landed in Spokane. If he would have been familiar with conditions as they were and invested wisely, there is no reason why his descendants, now, couldn't be hob-nobbing with the Rockefellers and the Vanderbilts. But, alack and alas, he landed at an inopportune time, the beginning of the great depression of 1892-93-94. Furthermore, he had come from a country where honesty and integrity were taken for granted, and coming to a country where it was a case of "dog eat dog," and where fleecing your neighbor was considered permissible when possible, was something completely foreign to him and very difficult to get used to.

However, he started up a business on East Sprague Avenue on the shores of one of the numerous small lakes that existed in the potholes in that area at that time. His product consisted of what was later called Jello, a product that had not yet been introduced in this country. He turned it out in various fancy forms and shapes. It could be seen in the show windows of the meat markets all over town. It had to be sold strictly on its own merits, as coloring and flavoring had not yet come into practice. Money was exceedingly scarce, however, and in addition, the housewives, not being educated to it by beautifully colored advertising, were slow to accept the new product. Hence, he disposed of the business.

He next formed a partnership with another blacksmith and set up business downtown. The city was considered a frontier mining town at that time, having a population of about 20,000, and was wide open and tough. The toughness even extended to the outskirts. This condition prevailed among most of the boys and girls of the neighborhood, apparently without the knowledge of the parents. For instance, one of the diversions entered into by the youngsters in the neighborhood was the construction of a circus tent made of split sacks, in which there were swinging bars, trapeze ladders and the like, on which the performers, both boys and girls, performed. They were unhindered by any clothing whatsoever. Admission charge was 10 buttons or 20 pins. The trouble was, I wasn't old enough to appreciate the novelty of it all. There were other diversions.

Across the road from our house was another house in which lived another boy the same age as I, five years old. A feud of long standing existed between us, and we occasionally threw rocks at each other. This came easy, as the soil was principally composed of rocks. When I would throw, the enemy would dodge behind a lumber pile in his front yard, and vice versa. When he threw, I would dodge behind the corner of the house. Casualties were light, until one day the enemy decided he would climb on top of the lumber pile with a pocketful of rocks, from where he could throw better. This was a mistake, because he had nothing behind which to hide. His opponent quickly took advantage of the opportunity and at the correct time stepped out and threw. He made a bullseye, catching the

enemy in the middle of the forehead. He threw up his arms and toppled backward off the lumber pile. His mother evidently had seen the incident through the window and came out of the house screaming for the police. Her screams were soon joined by those of the victim. Oddly enough, a bluecoat with helmet and swinging billy soon appeared from nowhere. The mother continued screaming and gesticulating toward our house. Your hero was quickly shoved into a dark hole under a trap door in the floor of the front room by his older sisters. There I stayed for a couple of hours. Sisters were badly scared, as was I, but I had a suspicion that mother was holding her mouth to keep from laughing when she had her back turned. She was that way. Anyway, that put an end to the rockplay.

Mother had a happy nature and sense of humor. She would hold her skirts out at the sides and dance and pirouette around the room, singing snatches of Dutch ditties and songs until the kids would double over with laughter.

Both Dad and Mother were good singers and had good voices. Mother carried the tune and Dad the tenor. On warm summer evenings they would sit on the back porch singing Dutch songs and neighbors from round about would gather and sit on the ground in large groups to listen.

But times were hard, dreadfully so. As 1892 continued into ‘93, conditions kept getting worse. A great many men were out of work, their families out of food, and no work to be had.[6] About a quarter mile to the west, across the N. P. tracks, a division of U. S. cavalry was encamped. Many of the boys of the neighborhood would go over there and beg for something to eat. The soldiers would pass out hardtack. At a short distance to the northeast was an encampment of men called Cox’s Army - one unit of men of many units being organized throughout the States to converge on Washington D. C. They appeared before the White House and appealed to President Cleveland for relief. Their mission failed.

About this time Dad began to get dissatisfied, for a number of reasons. The city was tough, and no place to raise a family.[7] There were no signs of improvement in the economy, and his money was diminishing.[8]

He had in mind a country town to move to, and finally decided on a small settlement north of Spokane on the Little Spokane River. The place had no name, school, or mail service, but he figured these improvements would come with time. It was, nevertheless, on the main highroad to the vast north country, and seemed an ideal location for a blacksmith

[6] It was perhaps about this time that J. P. Sr. was forced to peddle homemade headcheese from door to door in Spokane to raise a few dollars to feed the family.

[7] It should be remembered that Spokane in 1892 had, indeed, only been in existence a few years. Barely 20 years earlier the first permanent white settlers had arrived and as late as 1879, there were only about 100 people in the village. Incorporation came in 1881, the year the Northern Pacific railroad arrived. The real boom started in 1883, with the beginning of the Coeur d’ Alene gold rush, and by 1900 the census showed 36,000 people, growing to 104,000 by 1910.

[8] It must have been about this time that J. P. Sr. dropped another $10,000 or so of his savings by entrusting his partner with the money to go east to obtain patent rights on a coke briquet he had developed, similar to Gasco briquets. He never saw his partner or the money again.

shop. This proved correct. In addition, as far as his sons were concerned, he couldn't have picked a better place, anywhere. It was a boy's paradise – mostly virgin, and beautiful.

To the family, the change was like starting life anew. The move was made in the spring of 1894. The house of Herb Dart, a rather large house, was vacant at the time, and the family moved into one half of it. A family by the name of Klein moved into the other half. We lived there while Dad built a shop and new house. Our new home was located about 50 yards from and on the north side of the river**,** facing the road, with a green sward sloping down to the river bank. The falls in the river were about 100 yards upstream.

After the family had become well established, Dad started a movement for a school. Through his efforts and the help of Frank Neumann and Francis H. Cook,[9] both men with growing families, a school district was formed, and a teacher hired, for a three month term. The following term was also for three months. During the third year two three-month terms were instituted. The fourth year was for nine months, and became permanent. The house consisted of a small abandoned frame building on top of the high bluff south of the river, a long and hard climb for the children.[10] The only heat in the winter time came from a crude fireplace in one end of the room, around which the children and teacher would crowd to keep from freezing. Plaster on the walls had fallen off in a number of places, exposing the lath, through which the beady eyes of pack rats would constantly peer. A great deal of noise was made by them, running between the walls and across the ceiling. Occasionally one would make the mistake of jumping through a hole into the room, whereupon an exciting chase would ensue until the rat was killed. The extent of learning consisted mainly of the three "R's" with a little geography, history and grammar thrown in. The limit that a pupil could go in class work extended about to the sixth grade, for that was approximately the limit of the teacher's knowledge or learning. But the system turned out very well, because all the parents needed the kids at home by that time to help with the work.

It was in the second year of the new school that the three Esveldt children, Margie, Pete and Johnny, found it necessary to empty the school house of its occupants, using smoke as the agent, which proved very effective. The story, no doubt, is familiar.

Five years after the forming of the district, a new school house was built, a half mile to the east of the old school and facing the county road. Although only a one-room building

---

[9] The Neumann's lived north of what is now Whitworth, along where Highway 395 now runs. He hauled lumber and logs to Spokane. Francis Cook is a well-known pioneer name in Spokane, having arrived in Spokane Falls in 1879 with a printing press and started the first newspaper. He was something of a promoter, started Spokane's streetcar system among other ventures, and finally, too heavily in debt, lost it all, and moved to land he owned on the Little Spokane where Wandermere now is. In the writer's words, he "did nothing but scheme, living on borrowed money." Here he built a huge ice house and supplied Spokane with ice. He also constructed a sawmill there.

[10] The editor of this narrative, J. P. Esveldt III writes: "Dad and I walked the bluff in 1962 where this schoolhouse stood and, though Dad located the site, there is nothing whatsoever there now to indicate anything of the sort. Only pine trees."

with ante-rooms, it turned out to be a big improvement. Attendance averaged about 45 pupils.

In 1897 the small settlement on the Little Spokane received the name "Dartford," "Dart" in honor of the pioneer who bought the land in that part of the valley from an Indian,[11] and "ford" from the fact that travelers had to ford the river there before a bridge was built. Hence the name Dartford. With the new name came the U. S. Post Office, established in the general store, which had been enlarged, and mail deliveries twice a week. About the same time a saw and planer mill was installed on both sides of the falls, a large new delivery stable, was built across the road from the blacksmith shop, and a three-story flour mill was built on the south bank of the river. There was also a combination bunkhouse and briquet factory on the north bank. Lumber yards took up all available space. New families moved in. Truly, the village was gaining in importance. As growing Spokane had no outing parks worthy of the name, and no suburban electric lines to the lakes, the Sunday crowds from the city came out to the Little Spokane.[12] Sunday School picnics, church picnics, business house picnics, and, lamentably, saloon picnics also. Buggies, hacks and covered phaetons by the score and bicycles by the hundreds. Naturally, fishermen too.

It is difficult for people of today, many of them Easterners, to picture the fish runs at different times of the year in certain rivers of Eastern Washington that took place something over a half century and more ago. The Little Spokane was an important one of them.[13] Beginning in early February and lasting into May were the steelhead and rainbow runs, beautiful fish, weighing from four to eighteen pounds apiece. On a sunny day it was a wonderful sight to see them jumping and flashing in the sunlight at the falls, often-times several in the air at the same time. Many of them jumped to a height of twelve feet or more on these magnificent leaps, and occasionally one would go over the top, though the falls were fourteen feet high. J. P. E., Sr., became expert at gaffing them in the air, and J. P. E., Jr., soon became as expert as his dad. The sport was dangerous at times.

In May and June the Sucker runs took place, literally hundreds of thousands of them,

---

[11] It would be interesting to know more about this transaction. What Indian could have had the authority to sell the heart of the tribe's ancestral fishery is hard to imagine, though the Indians had been encouraged by their agents to take title to lands. At any rate, the title must have been legal, and descendants of the Darts still own a portion of this original 160 acres.

[12] The writer's older brother Pete once reminisced about one particular winter Sunday when many of the young folks of the surrounding countryside had gathered to ice skate at the millpond. Everyone was struck by the graceful skating of an older couple, and soon all had backed off to observe. When someone asked who they were, Pete proudly answered, "That's my Dad and Mom." J. P. and Hendrina Esveldt had been a figure skating team in Holland years before.

[13] The Little Spokane River was one of the great salmon spawning streams of the Columbia River system. Unable to continue up the main Spokane because of the falls, virtually the entire Spokane River run spawned on the Little Spokane, from its mouth up somewhat above Dartford. The salmon runs ended abruptly in 1906 with the construction of the Long Lake Dam by the Washington Water Power Company. The "falls" mentioned were formed by the water tumbling over the log raft dam which formed the mill pond. The drop was about 12 feet.

in fact, the river bottom would become black with them. They were large and fat, weighing about four pounds each. The Indians prized them highly, but the whites were indifferent as long as steelheads were available.

In August and September the Chinook runs took place, in September and October came the whitefish, and in October, November and December, the silversides. The trout fishing, except during December and January, was always excellent.

Fishing, of course, was the Indian's livelihood. There were several villages of Indians up and down the river. The villages always consisted of tepees, and varied in number according to the season, but during the salmon runs they numbered from about eight to twelve per village.[14] The flats around the tepees were covered during the fishing season with drying salmon, hung on racks made of poles, high enough from the ground to be out of reach of the dogs.

The principal method employed by the Indians in catching salmon was by traps of different designs, ingeniously made of red willow, that were very effective. However, many of the salmon were caught with spears. These spears were bone-tipped and barbed, with wooden sockets that slipped over the end of the lance, or pole. Spears were attached to poles by a strap of buckskin and when they pierced the fish, came loose from the pole and hung by the strap, thus preventing the fish from tearing loose from the spear.

An interesting feature of the Indian fishing always took place during the height of the salmon runs. Platforms of poles were constructed, leading out from shore about ten feet, located on the principal riffles, up and down the river. The bucks would stand on these platforms with spear poised over the right shoulder.

When a salmon came within range he would throw with great accuracy. To the end of the pole was fastened a strong cord made of tightly braided horse hair, coiled and held in the left hand, and as the spear sped through the air, the coil rapidly unwound. The spear with the salmon attached was retrieved by means of the cord. The buck making the successful throw would immediately let out a terrific whoop, which was echoed in turn by all the other Indians up and down the river. The result was a continual roll of whoops.

But a change was taking place, and for a good reason. The spears were thrown with great force and sometimes missed the mark, whereupon they crashed into the rocks on the river bottom with disastrous results. As a consequence, the gaff-hook gradually displaced the spear. But the making of a gaff-hook required spring steel wire, a white man's product. This was quite easily obtained, mainly from old bedsprings or large umbrella ribs. The first hooks made turned out to be crude affairs the sockets made of wood, wrapped with narrow

[14] These Indians were members of the Middle Band of the Spokane Sen-ho-ma-naish tribe under Chief Paul. Catholic, they would not move upon the reservation established for the Spokane tribes only 20 miles to the northwest, where the Protestant Upper and Lower Bands had made their homes. Instead, they continued in their ancestral haunts along the Salmon Trout Creek, sinking deeper into poverty as the white man took over the country. They were finally moved with the Couer d'Alenes on the reservation near Plummer, Idaho, in 1899.

strips of buckskin and dipped in melted pitch. My father greatly improved on this method by making the hook-sockets of galvanized sheet metal, firmly soldered to the wire. The tipped spears completely disappeared. Dad made gaff-hooks by the dozen and sold them at 25 cents apiece. The purchaser furnished his own pole. These poles were made by the Indians out of slender, seasoned tamarack or jack pine, shaved and scraped smooth and straight and then blackened in small bonfires.

Brother George and I, imitating the Indians, became expert in the use of the gaff. It was often the principal means of raising pocket money. A large percentage of the salmon and whitefish were caught at night on the riffles of the river and in running the numerous branches and streams, clad in hip boots and equipped with a short gaff and lantern. A fair catch was a hundred salmon per night, or two to three hundred whitefish. Many of the salmon we caught furnished eggs for the local fish hatchery.

We associated with the Indians a great deal, becoming acquainted with their habits and watching their games. They were all full-bloods and could speak no English, and didn't seem to have any desire to learn the white man's language, although they were friendly enough. Their common greeting was "Hi-yu-skookum, kum tux," or "klal-a-waah." Conversation between themselves was always low and guttural and they never showed excitement. A misconception prevailed among the whites that seemed to be universal, namely, that all Indians were liars and thieves. Our family, from experience, found just the opposite to be the case. The Indians were far more reliable than the whites. It is true that some of the younger bucks liked liquor and at times became offensive, but they were no different than the whites in that respect. I am convinced that many of the misdeeds committed by the whites were blamed on the Indians, to hide their own skulking habits.

In May, when the steelhead runs would begin to taper off and the steelheads were more highly prized, and the river was teeming with suckers, the common rate of barter with the Indians by us kids was 48 suckers to one steelhead, and a steelhead was a steelhead whether it weighed six pounds or fifteen. This proved quite satisfactory to those involved, especially the Indian, because on the average he got about two hundred pounds of suckers for ten pounds of steelhead. It made no difference to the Indian if the suckers were a little boney, for the flesh was excellent and the squaws pulverized the dried fish, bones and all, before making them into cake patties.

In my opinion, the simple diet was one of the principal reasons the Indians always had perfect teeth, even into advanced old age.

It was common practice of Dad to permit the Indians free use of the blacksmith shop and tools, in making their fishing gear, and never once did he miss a tool of any kind because of the Indians.

They all liked Mother because she was kind to them. Occasionally, when a buck and his squaw and possibly a papoose or two, whom she knew, were passing through on a trip, she would invite them in to dinner. Invariably they were humble and polite and always crossed themselves before eating.

The Esveldt family about 1898 — Jan Pieter and Hendrina in back and children Nell, Margie, Pete, John, George, Jeannette, Henrietta, and Fred.

There were numerous other incidents. One, as an example, I will briefly describe. One morning a soft knock sounded on the kitchen door. Mother opened it, only to face an apparition − a young squaw with torn clothes, hair disheveled, with face and breasts cut, bruised and bleeding. Mother was holding the door open with one hand. The young squaw said nothing, but glided under her arm, sped swiftly and silently (the Indians all wore moccasins) through the kitchen, the front room and into the bedroom and dived under the bed. Mother said nothing because she understood Indians. She didn't have long to wait. Soon another knock on the kitchen door. Upon opening it, there stood a young buck, a bloody knife with about a two-foot blade in his hand (the kind used by the Indians for cutting red willows used in making fish traps). She quickly saw that he'd had too such firewater. It wasn't necessary for him to go through all his sign language − Mom knew what he was after. He insisted on coming into the house, but Mom stood her ground and kept saying, "Squaw no here, squaw no here." We kids were quite interested in the proceedings. Eventually he turned and disappeared over the ridge toward the village to the northeast. The young squaw stayed under the bed all day until dark. Then, just as quietly, she slipped out, ran swiftly under cover of darkness to the barn, a distance of about two hundred yards, and burrowed under the hay. In the morning she was gone. We never saw her again.

There were ten children born in our family − six boys and four girls. The ninth, Harold, died from convulsions in infancy. The last five, Jeannette, Henrietta, Fred, Harold and Virgil, were born in America, Jeannette in Spokane Falls and the last four on the Little Spokane. Pete, John, George, Jeannette, Henrietta and Virgil took after their mother, who was blue-eyed and fair. Mother's complexion was fair and without blemish. Margie and Fred took after Dad, who had brown eyes and black beard and hair. Nell was about half way between.

The moral character of the family was maintained at a high level. The girls were restricted in their social activities where there was any possibility of a doubtful character, but it can be said this was done largely through their own choice. The boys were given complete freedom, on the theory that if they were of good principle and basically honest, they could take care of themselves. Although, as the saying goes, there was a saloon on every corner, and drinking was common, and most of the boys carried a packet of cigarette papers, either a sack of "Duke's Mixture" or of "Bull Durham" and rolled their own, we brothers never drank, smoked or chewed tobacco. These habits were maintained throughout our lives.

Our parents never resorted to corporal punishment, nor did they ever say "Thou shalt not do this, or that." They were familiar with the Dutch temperament. We never went contrary to Dad's wishes, and if Mother said, in Dutch, "I'd sooner that you wouldn't", that was sufficient. I'm not trying to infer the children never had fights. The fact is, we had some dingers. But we were expected to settle our own differences, and that's the way it worked out.

To show my mother's attitude in these matters, as an example, Pete, my older brother by two years, in our numerous fights, usually broke loose and ran, with me after him. He knew from experience this worked to perfection. Because he could run faster than I, it gave him the opportunity to stop at each corner, turn, and stick out his tongue or thumb his nose at me. This goaded my temper beyond all reason. One day when we were racing through the house on such an occasion, Pete stopped at the corner of the door. It so happened that mama was sitting on a chair with a pan of potatoes in her lap, peeling potatoes. In passing I stopped instantly, and grabbing one of the largest potatoes, threw it with all my might. It caught Pete just as he was raising his thumb to his nose, in the solar plexus. He immediately doubled over, screaming as though he were mortally wounded. I stopped in consternation. My mother immediately picked up one of the largest potatoes, and holding it out to me, said in Dutch, "Here, Johnny, here Johnny, now kill him, now kill him." The net result of this procedure was better than a dozen lickings.

Nell, our oldest sister, did all the worrying for the family. She was afflicted with some superstition, inherited from my mother, who in turn, no doubt, got it from traditions in the family handed down from medieval times. For instance, a looking glass falling to the floor and breaking was sure sign of death in the family. A drop of blood falling from the nose, without any indication of nosebleed, was also a sign of death. When a boy, I remember my mother saying, upon receipt of a black bordered letter from Holland announcing the death of her last brother, that she had been expecting bad news - a single drop of blood had fallen from her nose a couple of weeks before. My impression was, however, that superstitions caused much unnecessary worry. It must be that the rest of the children were too hard-boiled – they failed, as far as I know, to accept any of these superstitions.

When we were young, all the kids had to be in the house or accounted for by nightfall, or Nell would have a fit. One day Pete, who was rather derelict in returning home on time in the evenings, left for Whitesels, a neighbor about 4½ miles up the main road, with the promise he'd be back before dark. He didn't return and by 10 o'clock Nell was frantic. A

cougar had gotten him, or he had been ambushed by bandits. Although it was pitch dark, nothing would do but that she had to go and search for him. Mom tried to dissuade her, but to no avail. She started up the road and commanded me to follow, presumably for protection. I was eight years old, and George, 6, Jeannette, 4, and Henrietta, 2, hanging on her skirts. The road was deep-rutted, narrow and dusty, and we stumbled along in the dark for about a mile with Nell in hysterics, wringing her hands and calling on God to save her brother. I'm afraid we kids took it rather philosophically. The next mile continued to get worse – the timber was thick and the trees so close to the edge of the road the limbs interlaced overhead, making a causeway which shut out what little light the stars afforded. The time came when Nell had to give up in despair. There was nothing to do but to trudge back home, giving our brother up for lost. The next morning, of course, he walked in, having stayed with the Whitesel boys overnight. Nell's relief and thankfulness was of short duration. Becoming suddenly overcome with wrath, she gave Pete the tongue-lashing of his life.

Mother was always calm and undisturbed. She trusted in the Lord. If she had known the facts of different things that transpired she would have had good reason to worry. There were a number of incidents, mostly on the river. The first one I can remember took place when I was six years old on one of the numerous trips I took with Lawrence Wells, next-door neighbor, gaffing whitefish. He fished from a platform in the middle of the stream under the ridge. He instructed me to stand on the end of another platform extending out from the opposite shore, beating the water to scare the schools of whitefish over to his side. He soon said, "Well Johnny, we have enough fish, let's go," and climbed up the ladder to the floor of the bridge, where he became engaged in conversation with another man. After a little time had elapsed he bethought himself and asked the other man if he had seen "Johnny," the blacksmith's little boy. Whereupon the other man replied in the negative. Wells looked around and, not seeing me, walked to the upstream side of the bridge and looked down on the platform. Not seeing me there, he crossed to the other side of the bridge, and in looking down, saw me waving in the current, under water. What had happened was that when I turned to leave the platform, my pole, with which I had been beating the water, collided with a bridge piling, throwing me backward into the swift current. In a flash I was whisked downstream. Fortunately, about thirty feet downstream was another platform similar to the one I had been standing on. In passing I grabbed one of the legs and, with the water roaring in my ears, soon lost all track of time. The next thing I could remember was being held up by the ankles, head down, and vigorously shaken to empty my lungs of water. Wells carried me up to the shop, where I soon recovered.

A like incident occurred when I was seven, though this time I was knocked into about twenty feet of water by the carelessness of swimmers, and again recovered by the same method.

Father Jan Pieter and sons John Jr., Pete, Virgil, George, and Fred. About 1918.

Nell

George

Jeannette

Henrietta

Fred

Virgil

Not all the narrow squeaks happened to me. One day, when about nine years old, I went down to the falls to gaff whitefish, and brother George, as usual, went along, to take the fish off the hook and pile them in a neat pile so I couldn't lose any time. I fished through one of several holes about two feet square in a platform about thirty feet square below the falls, George Whitesel, a farmer, having his horses shod at the shop, came down to watch me. Deciding he wanted to take a hand at fishing, he said "Carat" (George's nickname because the Americans couldn't pronounce George's name in Dutch), "run up to the shop and get an extra gaff." Meanwhile Whitesel squatted on his knees beside me to watch me gaff. In about fifteen minutes he got up on his feet and said, "I wonder what's keeping your brother so long, he should have been back before this." He started walking around the platform and, in looking down one of' the holes, saw a pair of bare feet waving in the foaming water about a foot below the surface. Stooping down, he quickly grabbed them and jerking them out, lo and behold, who did it turn out to be but brother George:

Apparently, when coming back, he had stumbled and dived head first through one of the holes, and, in doing so, grabbed an iron rod some five feet below the surface, and didn't let go. Unknowingly, this saved him from being swept away. When pulled out, Whitesel rolled him around and resorted to what seemed to be the usual practice, shook him while holding him up by the heels. After considerable coughing and strangling, George came to and was soon none the worse for the experience.

During these years our house became the gathering place for the young folks of the neighborhood. About the year 1900, father decided we needed a new house. In furtherance of these plans, he bought a new plot of ground on the west side of the road, about 200 feet north of the old location. A creek ran through the center of the plot. Here he built a modern (for those times) house and a new and roomier blacksmith shop. Also, about this time, my uncle, Dad's brother, who had been in partnership with him since the time we moved to the little Spokane, bought a farm near Chewelah and moved up there. Shortly after that when I had turned from 13 to 14, I was taken out of school permanently to become father's helper in the shop. I had helped out many times before in the shop, when occasion demanded. I became expert at the forge, anvil, horse-shoeing and all the other general work in blacksmithing.

In addition, it was the duty of brother George and me starting when we were aged 7 and 9, to leave each evening at 4 o'clock to look for the milk cows, often looking until after dark to find them, and occasionally failing to do that. When it is remembered that most of the country was still open, with no fences, this chore, together with our hunting trips, gave us an excellent opportunity to be come acquainted with every square foot of the countryside for miles around. With us boys, our time, taken up with work, fishing, hunting and trapping, skating and coasting in the winter time, swimming, raft riding, boxing, wrestling and hiking in the summer time, we were never at a loss for something to do.

During these years things had gone along uneventfully for our family. Father, in addition to the blacksmith shop had started a general country store, and we were fairly prosperous.

* * * * * * * * *

We pause here for a moment. It is now the spring of 1963. This autobiography was written in the winter of 1961 and 1962, and in the writer's estimation was finished and completed. The last sixty-odd years of what transpired in the narrative was condensed and abbreviated to about four pages, which, of necessity, permitted touching only upon the high spots of what took place in those six decades of time.

This proved unsatisfactory to the present generation, for they felt that much had been left out that would be of interest to them. It was requested that the story be extended, that it go into more detail, and historical events included that had been left out. Accordingly, the above- mentioned four pages have been discarded and re-written. We will therefore return to about the year 1901 and be a little more specific, even to the extent of risking boredom to the reader.

* * * * * * * * *

It was about this time that I was running barefoot across the wooden bridge over the Little Spokane in newly created Dartford, that a man in a buggy, going north, stopped and said "hey, kid, tell the people around here that McKinley has been shot." He then hurried on. This was getting important news quickly and direct, as there were no telephones or cars, and the paper came only twice a week. The news created quite a furor among the natives.

The year 1901 was the year the Boer (farmer) War in South Africa ended – a war in which we had taken intense interest. It caused a number of fistfights between us boys and boys of English descent in the neighborhood. I'm proud to say we never came out second best. It was some satisfaction, too, to know Americans in general sided with the Dutch.

During this period, life in the family, in the main, passed uneventfully. We enjoyed good health, the children were growing up, and the school year was a full nine months. Nell, the oldest, was finishing her schoolwork in Spokane, where she stayed with a private family, the Hookers, where she worked for board and room. Mr. Hooker was business manager of "The Chronicle." Margie, by this time, also was going to school in Spokane and was staying at a wealthy family by the name of Franks. Pete, who had reached the limit of what he could learn in the Dartford school at about the end of the Spanish-American War, attended the Monfort School at a distance of four miles north and walked back and forth morning and evening. The writer, who finished the eighth grade in the local school at 13, equivalent to about the sixth grade present rating, and whose 14th birthday occurred during that year's summer vacation, went to work in the blacksmith shop as Dad's helper, where he became quite proficient at the forge, anvil, horseshoeing, wagon and sled making and repair and iron work in general. Fortunately, I was stronger than the average, or I couldn't have stood up under the weight of the heavy logging and lumber-hauling horses that came to the shop so often to be shod. It happened quite often that a horse, while being shod, would fall asleep and the weight would become so unbearable that I would suddenly jump out from under, just for the satisfaction of seeing the horse fall flat on the floor. It soothed my temper considerably also. Dad never said anything. It might be said I had learned a great deal about

work in the shop before I was 13 – the age taken out of school – as I had worked at the forge and other shop work from an early age. And, too, Uncle George, who had been Dad's partner, moved to Chewelah, and as a consequence Dad had to have a helper. Brothers Pete and George were never called upon to work in the shop. Pete, an exceedingly hard worker, was always working out somewhere for wages, or spending his time on the farm at Chewelah with Uncle George. Brother George hadn't reached the age yet that he could stand hard work, and was therefore left in school. Jeanette and Henrietta, although young, were also in school. Fred was too young to attend. Virgil hadn't been born.

The above is an outline of conditions that prevailed during the latter nineties and early nineteen hundreds.

Dartford was still, more or less, a frontier village. Although a busy community for its size, the surrounding country was nearly all open and unfenced. Farms were small and consisted of homesteads or railroad land bought at fifty cents an acre. Of course the timberless land or open prairies like Peone, Five Mile, Wild Rose or Half Moon were already taken up. The road through town leading north into the Colville country, both summer and winter, was well-travelled. It was a common and almost a daily occurrence to see families in so-called prairie schooners going north, to take up homesteads, with some horses, cows, dogs, and two or three children on horseback bringing up the rear.

Of social life in the neighborhood and surrounding communities there was considerable – parties, box socials, dances and Christmas programs. If not too far away, walking was the common mode of travel. If the distance was too great, for instance four miles or over, hacks in the summertime and sleds in the wintertime were used for conveyance.

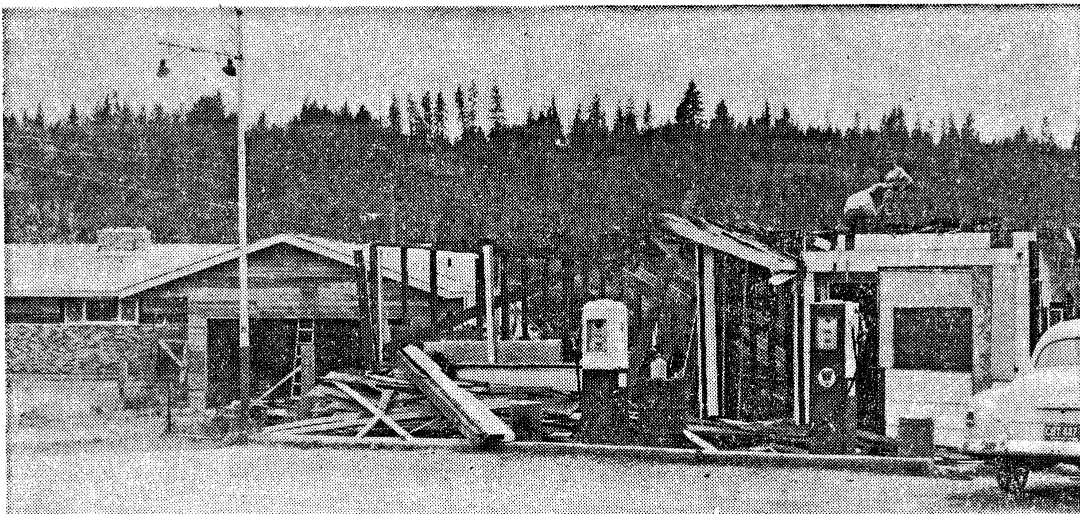
Our parents were somewhat puritanical in their beliefs, having belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church in Holland, and insofar as was possible in a new country, followed the precepts of the church. The girls of the family were brought up under strict and exacting rules. The boys were given much more freedom. However, the influence of the parents on the children was profound and lasting. Although morality in the West was lax in many respects, and drinking was indulged in by a large percent of the men (not women), and because of the fact that saloons were "wide open" as the saying goes, with saloons on nearly every corner in the tough districts of the cities, and one or more in every hamlet or town, with the exception of Dartford, in the country, the boys of the family were teetotalers and never became addicted to the use of liquor or tobacco in any form.

Ours was a healthy and vigorous family during this period, consisting of father, mother and eight children, four girls and four boys. The family was popular and known for many miles around. Our home, in a social way, was the gathering place for the young folks of the countryside.

When the family first moved from Spokane to the Little Spokane in the spring of 1894, we moved into the Herb Dart house that formerly stood on the present site of the square house, still standing, that Herb later built, across the road from the old park at the

base of the south hill. Dad had built a blacksmith shop on the north side of the river, east of the road and about 200 feet from the former north bank of the river.[15] He immediately started building a new house next to the shop, which we moved into the spring of 1895. Here we lived for seven years. In those days, title to property was rather loosely considered, and the fact remained that Dad's buildings stood on land legally owned by and with the eager consent of Herb Dart. As the years passed and conditions changed, Dad became convinced he should own, in his own right, the land on which his buildings stood. Deciding on a site more suitable to family requirements, on the opposite side of the road about fifty yards north, he finally persuaded Herb to sell him two and one-half lots. Here he put up a more modern house and shop, and it was here we lived until 1909. A branch of a creek ran through the property, hence there was plenty of water.

16 Spokane Daily Chronicle, Wed., June 10, 1959.



Old Store Goes Down

The old is making way for the new at the old town of Dartford, north of Spokane, where one of the two oldest buildings is being torn down to make way for the new RiVilla housing development. Being torn down above, according to J. Warren Stoneman, who with his son, Mason Lee Stoneman, is developing the area, is the original Esvelt store, built about 70 years ago on land homesteaded in 1880 by Herbert Dart. This leaves the old Ziegler hostelry, now a private home, as the only former commercial building left there. Seven new homes have been built on the site and about 50 more are planned. The homes, in the $25,000 to $30,000 class, will be served by the new RiVilla Water corporation, and each homeowner will be a shareholder in a recreation area which includes one-fourth mile frontage on the Little Spokane, a five-acre park and an island, Stoneman said.

With us boys, our time was taken up with work, fishing, hunting and trapping, skating and coasting in the winter time, swimming, raft riding, boxing, wrestling and hiking in the summer time. We were never at a loss for something to do. I became expert in boxing and wrestling which, as time passed, came in good stead on several occasions.

[15] This home and shop was on the east side of the present Dartford Drive, not far from the river. Later, when Lafayette (Fett) Dart built a new mill and wanted the land for lumber yards, J. P. Sr. purchased a couple lots west of the road, upon which he built a new house and shop (circa 1900). This house stood until it partially burned in 1950. What remained was finally demolished in 1961 to make way for new homes.

Fishing took up much time in my younger years. It was the source of most of my income. I will relate one instance. At age 12 I owned a 1000-shot air gun. Thinking this artillery too light for my needs, I longed for more effective firing power. A neighbor, Will Hulbert, a man of about forty, owned a beautiful Remington single-shot .22 rifle. While I was admiring it one day Bill said, "Do you want to buy it?" The answer was "Yes, but I haven't got the money." It so happened that Bill had just completed a fish pond by damming a stream in the canyon about one quarter mile north of the cemetery. Bill needed fish for his pond, so he said, "Tell you what I'll do. You plant my pond with 500 live trout and the gun is yours." To seal the bargain he placed the gun in my hands on the spot.

Well, catching 500 trout was no problem. However, keeping them alive when wading, carrying them in buckets full of water, a distance of one mile, mostly up grade at about twenty fish per trip, was another story. By the time I had planted about 200 trout I was getting pretty tired of the deal, but I didn't want to give up the rifle. Of course, Bill knew he had made a shrewd bargain. Anyway, casting about for a solution to the problem on easier terms, a bright idea came to mind. Seeing Bill a few days later I said, "Say Bill, I've delivered 200 of those 500 trout and still have 300 to deliver. Will you accept 2000 small live salmon in their place?" Figuring it was a still better deal, he jumped at the offer.

The next morning, taking a pan, I went down to one of the creeks in the meadow, caught a large, ripe female salmon, tied her to a bush, caught a ripe male, spawned the eggs, fertilized them, carried them up to the hatchery, got permission from Fred Knowlton to put them in a basket and when they were hatched during the winter and had absorbed the egg yolks the next spring, I put them all (something over 2000) in two buckets and emptied them into Hulbert's pond. My contract was completed and Bill was satisfied.

Many squirrels, ground and tree-, ducks, pheasants, blue grouse, woodchucks, turtles, snakes, toads, muskrats and various other animals bit the dust because of that rifle deal.

Game was plentiful and we thought it would always be that way. How sadly mistaken we were. Today, when I look at the river, it looks lifeless and dead. I can remember when the gravel and rocks on the bottom were always bright and clean from the constant agitation of countless numbers of fish all four seasons of the year. The thought is depressing.

Dad was an expert blacksmith, had learned the trade in his father's blacksmith shop when a boy, and at a time when practically all iron work was done in such shops. The shop in Dartford had plenty of custom work.

During the years up until about 1902, things in general had gone along uneventfully for the family. Dad, in addition to the blacksmith shop, had started a general country store, and we were fairly prosperous.

Then, without warning, misfortune struck. Our baby brother, Harold, died in convulsions. Mother, a healthy, happy, fun-loving woman, sometime after giving birth to brother Virgil, became sick, lingered in agony for a year with stomach cancer, and died. Sister Margie came down with inflammatory rheumatism, and could only crawl around on

the backs of her hands and knees for months. Henrietta contracted St. Vitus' dance and became virtually helpless for about a year. Nell and husband Harry Rickard had moved in to help out during misfortune, only to have Harry crushed to death under a log at the mill at a time when Nell was expecting a baby (Bob). Brother George came down with typhoid pneumonia, and, after a serious chest operation, hovered between life and death for weeks, but finally pulled through.

Further, because the nation was experiencing a deep depression at the time, the customers at the store, one after another, failed to pay their credit accounts, so that by the time misfortune finally came to an end, we were, financially, on the rocks, heavily in debt, and virtually broken in spirit.

Dad never recovered entirely. We, being young, in time returned to normal. As Dad couldn't throw off the weight, he would only sit in a dark corner of the living room and brood. Of necessity, it was up to us, the three older boys, to straighten things out, pay off the debts. This we did, with hard work in the sawmill, harvest, fields and the woods. Personally, I have had an undying hatred for debts ever since.*

In the year 1909 Dad sold the property in Dartford and the family moved to the farm near Chewalah, Washington, which Dad owned. George and I, having good jobs in Dartford that we didn't want to leave, George at Cowan's Store, and I at the State Trout and Salmon Hatchery on the Little Spokane, chose to remain.

It was at this time our paths separated in a way, the family on one part, and brother George and I on the other. We will follow briefly the course of the family first and return to that of George and me later.

---

* George Esveldt, Jr., now residing near Seattle, offers this information about his grandfather, J. P. Esveldt, Sr., as was told to him by his father:

"At some stage in the early 1900's he started a grocery store in Dartford. He trusted everyone, and when a severe depression came along for a couple of years he had thousands of dollars worth of charge accounts on his books, almost none of which was ever repaid by the families in the area. Finally he had to close the store and went broke, owing the jobber suppliers what was then a huge sum of money. Instead of defaulting as his customers had, he and the three oldest boys went to work in the sawmill in Dartford, which I gather was partly a family interest, and paid off the wholesalers in about three years. My father (George), who was then in the eighth grade, had to quit school and work, with the result that he never got back to school again. He worked for three years just for his food and clothing; every spare dime went to pay the debt. As far as my father was concerned it scarred him for life as far as credit was concerned; never during the balance of his life would he buy 5¢ worth of any thing on credit — either he paid cash or we went without.

There were many stories about this period in their lives — one that sticks in my mind is about old man Dart, of the family that founded Dartford. He owed a large grocery bill, and one day gave J. P. Sr. a check that was supposed to be "on account" — then when pressed later for further payments on account showed the cancelled check which had been inscribed very inconspicuously "payment of account in full," so the Esveldts got cheated out of the balance even though the Darts later fared well, and the bitterness lasted for years."

The change the family was making was profound, from village life to the farm, and, naturally, changed the course of their lives. Dad was no farmer, and the boys had had no experience in farming. It was inevitable that they would meet problems of a serious nature, not the least of which was lack of funds. In this connection I might say that George and I continued to send them part of our monthly pay checks, knowing that income on the farm the first winter would be meager indeed. However, the members of the family soon got acquainted in the neighborhood, became active in social life, especially in the local church, and became quite popular.

Nell, being the oldest and a widow, took charge of the household. She was, by nature, a good manager, and kept a tight rein on the younger members. Pete dominated the work outside, and proved to be a rather hard taskmaster. The three girls, Nell, Jean and Mae, being gifted with good voices, played an important role in the church, while the boys, Pete, Fred and Virgil, played a lesser part. The boys got along well with the girls. In fact, Fred got along so well that a favorite expression of Pete's was that the girls of the neighborhood flocked around Fred like coyotes around a dead horse. A rather crude expression, but it conveyed the idea. Dad, eventually, began to take some pleasure in life.

At the first opportunity Jean and Mae finished their schooling at Business College in Spokane and college in Pullman, became teachers, and later married. Jean became Mrs. John Wagoner, and Mae became Mrs. Mont Maddox. The Wagoners had two children, girls, Vera and Margaret. The Maddox's had two boys, James and William. Sister Nell married later and became Mrs. George Wagoner. She had two boys, Walter and Robert, by her former marriage.

This left Dad and the boys alone on the farm without a cook, so they had to batch. They didn't do much farming from then on. Before the first World War Pete married Goldie See, a former sweetheart, from Midway, near Dartford. They set up housekeeping near the Copper King Mine, east of Chewelah, where Pete contracted "miner's tuberculosis", as did practically all of the other miners working there at that time. Quitting, he bought a hay farm near Bovill, Idaho, which he operated for a couple of years, and then died from the effects of the mine work.

Fred started to work in the mine, then enlisted in the Navy in the first World War, returned when the war was over and went to work in the Magnesite Plant near Chewelah. He married Tillie Shepler, a divorcee, with two grown children. Both Fred and Tillie worked at the Plant for many years, until their deaths. Tillie died some six months before Fred.[**]

About the time Fred married, Virgil left for the East, started delivering cars for the

[**] Fred was evidently the practical joker of the family. As an example, during a visit by the author's family, he told a naive nephew about a jacknife hidden in an "old sawdust bin" in the basement. The nephew spent a half hour rummaging through the bin, until Fred (nearly in tears) told him that there was really no knife, and that the bin was frequently used by his pet cat.

Ford Motor Co. to the surrounding states, married and settled down in Dearborn, where he and his wife continue to live.[] They have two children, Robert and Janet.

After the girls married, Dad continued to stay on the farm, much of the time alone, and got along the best he could, later moving down to Chewelah with Fred and Virgil. During this interval he visited with his married children occasionally. The summer of 1926 he spent with us (the writer's family) on the farm near Daisy. After mother died he never remarried. He was of the type that considered marriage sacred, there was only one woman, and the union was for eternity. His last few years were lonely – he just couldn't get used to the change in conditions. He died in Chewelah.[]

Margie married when the folks still lived in Dartford. She married Adam Christ, somewhat older than she, formerly from the Little Spokane country, and they settled on a wheat and horse ranch near Harrington. Three children came of the marriage, Lucille, Robert and John. The marriage did not prove successful, and when the children were still small, Margie left her husband, returning to the farm in Chewelah with her children. There she stayed for about a year, acting as housekeeper with Dad and the boys, after which she moved to Cheney where the children succeeded in getting an education. Some years later she and Lucy moved to an apartment in Seattle. They lived there for several years before Margie died, in 1943.

****

At this point we will return to the year 1909, in the fall of which the folks moved to Chewelah, and brother George and I decided to remain with our jobs at Dartford. To this Dad made no objection, no doubt thinking we were old enough to take care of ourselves and were entitled to this privilege. George was 19 and I was 21. Mr. and Mrs. Cowan, who operated the store, wanted George to stay very much, because they had become quite attached to him. Sam Drew, superintendent of the fish hatchery, was equally anxious to have me stay. Some two years before, when we three brothers were standing on the bridge over the river one summer evening (this was one of the former bridges of wooden construction, a common trysting place for the young folks of the neighborhood), he asked me to take a job at the hatchery. This was quite an honor, as any one of the young men around there would have jumped at the offer. I told Sam it was agreeable with me, but I couldn't leave Herb Dart, because he had been unusually partial to us three brothers. He then said, "If I see Herb and fix it up with him, will you come?" My answer was yes, for the fact of the matter was, I wanted the job. It was steady, the year around, good pay, the kind of work I liked and had had considerable experience in during my boyhood. In the years that followed it was obvious my work proved satisfactory, and consequently I planned to make salmon and trout propagation and kindred types, my life's work.

[] Virgil Esveldt and his wife now reside in Prudenville, Michigan.

[] J. P. Esveldt died of a heart attack in 1927. At the time he and son Virgil were living in a rented house near Chewelah.

When the folks were making preparations to move north, George and I cleaned up and furnished the cabin provided by the State, free of rent, preparatory to batching. This cabin was well insulated and comfortable, and situated near the banks of one of the streams that surrounded and made an island of the land on which the hatchery stood. This also included a house, rent free, in which Sam and his family lived.

The hatchery building was large and well-equipped, the buildings all painted white, the grounds neat and well-kept, bordered on the south by fish-rearing ponds for the full length of the island, on the north by the river, on the west by a branch of the river, all that part of the island in front of the hatchery in lawn bordered with flowers, and a rock-bordered fountain playing the center. It made a pretty picture.

My work consisted of three months in the summer and three months in the winter working in and around the hatchery. The spring and fall months were taken up with distributing trout fry by rail (gas driven trucks had not yet come into being) to the streams and lakes of that part of the state east of the summit of the Cascade Mountains. In the spring of 1909 it was my privilege to catch certain species of fish peculiar to the eastern part of the State which we delivered to Seattle for inclusion in the live fish exhibits in the Seattle World's Fair.

A large percentage of the fry we were distributing in those years were of the eastern brook variety, on an experimental basis. The eggs were shipped from Connecticut and Rhode Island in specially constructed crates, and were already eyed out when received, The experiment proved highly successful. The salmon that were raised in the local hatchery were planted in the Little Spokane River.

George continued to work at the store. Our batching efforts turned out satisfactory. The grocery bill averaged about $10.00 a month, which enabled us to save most of our salaries. I did most of the cooking and housecleaning, as Georges's hours at the store were longer that mine at the hatchery.

We made a practice of being neat, well-behaved, well dressed, and very particular in pressing our suits every Saturday evening. It naturally followed that we were very popular with the opposite sex.

It was in the early part of summer of this year (1909) that a girl from the East had come out West with her aunt to see the World's Fair in Seattle. While going through, she stopped for a few days to visit an old girl friend of her school days, who was living near Dartford. Apparently this girl from the East was of the adventurous type – a schoolteacher by profession, with a slightly perceptible accent, although American born. And, as young folks sometimes get unusual ideas, and, further, as there happened to be a vacancy at the local school, the Dartford friend persuaded the Eastern girl friend to apply for the school. The workings of fate are sometimes hard to understand. It so happened that my father was clerk of the school board at the time, so the application had to be made directly to him. When the two girls called, father was reading one-half of the "Review" and I was reading

the other half. Glancing up briefly, I noticed the strange girl was good to look at, but was not interested, for, after all, there were many good looking girls in the neighborhood, several of whom I liked very much, and one I was particularly interested in. The fact is, I was rather annoyed that my reading had been interrupted.

However, Dad seemed pleased with the interview and awarded the contract to the Eastern girl. She continued her journey to the coast and the Fair, and I saw her no more that summer. In the latter part of the summer, when attending a party in the community, I was surprised to see her in company with my favorite. It turned out that she had secured accommodations at this girl's home for the term.

There was no doubt, right from the start, that the new girl would be a favorite. She was full of fun and vitality, and the boys neglected the other girls shamefully to gain her favor. Sad to say, it left me in a quandary, for to show my prowess, I had to show the other boys I could gain the new girl's favors, without letting go of the other girl. In any circumstance, this would prove a difficult task. I succeeded in straddling the fence until the other girl had to return to college the latter part of September. Be it said to my shame, I neglected to answer her letters, leaving the field entirely clear for the new girl. She made the most of it.

That winter turned out to be very active in a social way. George was keeping company with Sally Cowan, a real live wire, and I was keeping company with the new girl – Julia Benson – a good counterpart to Sally. We made a foursome, popular everywhere and our attendance sought for at exclusive parties. Needless to say, it was a delightful winter. Result? Julia and I became engaged, regardless of the fact that I had vowed to myself in years past that I would not marry until I was 25 or over and with a substantial bank account. We set the marriage date for June 22.

As the spring months passed, I planned on requesting a two-week leave for our wedding and honeymoon. At this point, fate took a hand in a lucky way. In those days fish hatcheries were fewer in number, and operated entirely on funds appropriated by the legislature, on a two-year basis. In the middle of May, Sam stated we were approaching the end of the two-year period, would run out of funds June 15, which would necessitate emptying the hatchery and rearing ponds of all fish and closing down for about two weeks. For me it could not have come at a handier time. It gave us an opportunity to make the necessary preparations for the wedding. I rented the bungalow in the park from Herb, with the understanding we would take possession when we returned.

We invited only close friends and relatives to the wedding, and were married at Rickards in Spokane.

Returning from our honeymoon about a week later, I found that the hatchery had not yet received the money from the State. Although I had a fair bank account, I decided that I was now a married man and could not afford to remain idle. Looking around, I found on Saturday that Crane Co. in Spokane needed six extra men for a week, beginning Monday. This just about filled my requirements, so I applied, and was told to show up Monday

morning. Of the five others hired, one was a young fellow with red hair, so we called him "Red." Finding he was industrious, neat and particular in his work, he and I teamed up together for the week. As it turned out, the work we accomplished proved better than it had ever been done before. When it came to the following Saturday noon, and time to pay the six of us off, Red and I were requested to come back the next Monday morning. So began my employment with Crane Company.

At the end of the second week I was asked if I thought I could handle the job as manager of the warehouse, a heavily constructed building four blocks down the N. P. tracks where all tubular and other heavy goods were stocked. I was aware that the last three men assigned to that job had been "let out" because they had been unable to deliver. I also knew what was required a strong back, willingness to work, one fast with figures and a good pencil pusher. I agreed to take the job. And so it happened that at the end of the third week Sam came in, stated the legislature had appropriated funds, the hatchery would start again on Monday, and asked me to go back to work for the State. I had anticipated this and dreaded it. It would be a hard decision to make, but I had made up my mind beforehand, believing the chances for promotion better at Crane's, so I refused Sam's request. This surmise proved correct, and promotions succeeded as follows: from warehouse manager to assistant receiving clerk; to checker in shipping department; to shipping clerk; to receiving clerk; to city desk; transferred to main office in charge of country order department and staff; then to claims, credits and debits; branch-house division and railroad tariffs; tubular goods division consignment with U. S. Steel and National Tube; costs, pricing and discounts; and then, by an odd and fortunate twist of fortune, too long to go into detail about in this narrative, in charge of all quotations, the work of the Assistant Manager.

Photo taken at the wedding of John and Julia Esveldt (3rd and 4th from left), June 22, 1910

When we first moved to Spokane after our marriage, we rented an apartment in a modern apartment house on Third Avenue. Not liking the restricted accommodations of an apartment, we bought furniture and moved to a modest house on Crown Avenue. We were young and could look at the world through rose-colored glasses. A baby was expected in April. The morning of February 28, when down at work, a phone call came in, requesting

me to come home immediately, Julia was in great danger. Fortunately, my sister Jeanette was visiting us for a few days while having some dentistry work done. It was she that was responsible for the phone call.

Arriving home, I found several excited women in the house. They had Julia on the bed. About a half-hour before, while talking to Jeannette, she had fallen to the floor in a terrible convulsion. She was now quiet but had lost her mind – she recognized no one. The doctor arrived shortly and, seeing another attack imminent, ordered me out of the room. He, too, was excited, saying a second attack in cases of this kind was invariably fatal. I wouldn't go. It was a racking experience. The doctor marveled that she survived the second attack. An ambulance took her to the hospital immediately. She lived through a third attack in the ambulance and a fourth and fifth in the hospital. The doctor exclaimed, "This is a miracle!" He had administered powerful drugs to bring on artificial and premature childbirth, stating it would kill the child, but the action was justified in a possible but probably vain effort to save the mother. The drugs proved effective in quieting the patient and she lapsed into a coma. The Doctor left for home to get some badly needed sleep. Before midnight the patient began to move, showing signs of going into another convulsion. The two nurses in attendance told me to call the doctor instantly. The doctor refused to come, stating he had had no sleep for two nights, and besides, if he did come, he couldn't do anything anyway. It seemed that he thought the case hopeless. Returning to the room I saw the attack had already begun. The two nurses started screaming for help and in a few moments two additional nurses came in. To keep the patient from going into the usual horrible backward curve, one nurse held down one arm, another the other arm, the third the legs, while I threw myself across her middle. As the body and face were already turning black, the fourth nurse had inserted an expanding clamp into the patient's mouth to keep her from suffocating. In the struggle the front teeth were knocked out and fell into her throat, the protecting rubber pads on the clamp were torn off, thereby causing lacerations inside the mouth with bloody foam running out over face and pillow. The nurses had become frantic and were screaming for me to call the doctor again. In doing so, he probably heard the commotion, and arrived about a half hour later. Irons were used. The doctor held up the limp baby and gave it a smart slap on the back. It moved slightly. The doctor examined it and exclaimed, "By George, John, there's life — we'll try to save it!" This happened five minutes after midnight, March 1st, 1911. Miracle of miracles, the mother lived and so did the baby. The doctor took most of the credit. Secretly I thought most of the credit was due to the mother and baby for their unusual vitality. After the ordeal, the nurses put me to bed in a separate room. The patient had lost memory of her former life completely. Gradually, over a period of about six months, it returned.

And so our first child was born and we named him Howard Arthur.

Two years later our second child was born on a stormy winter night in February. The doctor got stalled in his car several blocks from the house and I had to go out with a kerosene lantern to show him the way in. We had to flounder through snow, hip deep, to get back. The baby was born after midnight, February the 2nd, 1913. We named him Russell Merle.

John and Julia Esveldt with son Howard, on porch of house at N. 4801 Calispel, Spokane. About 1913.

When passing out the cigars later in the day to the boys down at Crane's, Ernie Marquardt hollered, "John, did you pull down the curtains before you left home?" I innocently answered, "No, why?" He answered, "Why, to keep the sun out; don't you know this is ground hog day?" They all roared at my expense, the callous brutes.

We had not lived on Crown Avenue a year when we bought a lot at N. 4801 Calispel in Thorpe's Addition, a newly created large vacant tract bordering on Wellesley. A small bungalow was started and finished sufficiently to move in by fall, working on it mornings and evenings and Sundays. A lawn and garden were put in the next spring, and a wire mesh fence, to keep out ground squirrels and cottontail and snowshoe rabbits. It wasn't long until the neighborhood was built up all around us.

Below: House at N. 1401 Calispel, Spokane, as it stands today (1974).
Right: John and Julia Esveldt with sons Howard and Russell, about 1914.

In my early twenties I developed serious heart attacks, which invariably came on at night and, as the doctor could give me no relief and because of their increasing frequency, I was driven into a state of mind that convinced me we would have to move to the country.[*] If I was going to cash in, I wanted it to happen out in the open where I had been raised. Quitting the Crane Co. was going to be a hard task - in fact, the most difficult decision I ever had to make. I had been with the Company ten years, and because of the position attained, my future was assured. Furthermore, I hated to sever relations with a group of young men and women that, through the years, had become intimate friends. Also, our two boys were in school, we owned a car, the family spent their vacations at the lakes, and we had enough money in the bank to build a new and modern home,

But the die was cast. In going to the country, we decided on becoming farmers, and I had never farmed in my life. We bought eighty acres near Daisy, Washington, of mostly unimproved land, but it had a creek running through it, a prerequisite. Soon we found that having a creek didn't necessarily mean one controlled the water in it. To accomplish this end we bought the eighty adjoining on the north, also unimproved, but on which springs rose that made up the creek running through the first eighty. We supposed this confirmed our control of the water, only to find, years later, that we had to fight a long and bitter battle in the courts to retain our rights. It cost me many a night's sleep when I would roll and toss until the sheets were wet with sweat. But there was no choice, the farm was at stake. Those that brought the action lost the case in both court decisions.

I left the employ of Crane Co. on April 1, 1920, after handing in my resignation January 1. We bought all the implements thought needed from Spokane firms on a requisition from Crane's. We also bought a team, harness, wagon and wagon box, and cow in Spokane, and silo, gas engine, silage cutter and saw and mandrel from Ziegler at Dartford, who was forced out of the dairy business by the war. We also took the precaution to buy enough foodstuff to last a year on the farm, consisting of flour, sugar, beans, rice, bacon, coffee, spices and various other items. All the groceries, part of the furniture, a couple bales of hay and a sack of oats for the horses, were loaded onto the wagon. Early in the morning, April 2nd, mama and the two boys climbed up in the seat, picked up the reins, and started for the farm by way of the old Cottonwood Trail. If she had good luck she could make it in three days.

I remained behind to load up a railroad freight car with all the implements, silo and engine, furniture and milk cow. It made a full car. Milking the cow and throwing the milk on the tracks, I locked the door and told the railroad office the car was ready to hook onto that night.

Driving to Myers Falls the next day in the Model 'T', I found the railroad car switched to the siding, fed and milked the cow, and continued on to the farm. The family had not arrived, so I started out on foot, finally meeting them above Gifford. They had made it through in the estimated three days, but were very tired. As it was getting late, we stayed overnight at the Cullen's place. That night it snowed about six inches and was still snowing

[*] The author once related that the doctor had given him only two years more to live at that time.

the next morning when we left for the farm. The wagon nearly slipped off the grade several times going down the Clobutcher hill. But we got to our new home (although it was only a log cabin), built a fire, and were happy. We were young, and it is fortunate young folks can look forward to difficult times with optimism.

I was faced immediately with the task of getting the railroad car unloaded, which was accomplished in the next couple of days, transferring the stuff to a Grange warehouse in Myers Falls. How long it would take to get it home I didn't know, for the roads were deep-rutted with deep sand and two long grades to go up on the way back. And too, the farm work had to be started without delay. The last load from Myers Falls was finished in mid-summer.

The two-room log cabin as it stood on the Esveldt property.

When we settled on the farm, we decided two boys would not be enough help, so we ordered another boy and a girl. Mom wanted a girl to help in the house and garden. The results are evident. When told the second one was a boy she cried. However, that was not new. When told the second one of the first two was a boy, she cried also. With me, it was all right, having all boys.

The first summer on the farm, Brother Miller, pastor of the church to which we had belonged when in Spokane, and his wife and family came up for a couple of days visit. We were of the same age. The church in Spokane had a couple of boys, 14 and 16, that had become orphaned a short time before, and, as he figured we could make use of some extra help, wanted to know if we would become their guardian and administrator of their estate. The boys could continue their schooling in Daisy. This we agreed to do. Fred Miller, the oldest, remained with us one and one half years before he struck out for himself. Earl stayed three years. They were not related to Brother Miller.

One of the first things that faced us upon arrival was to get up some fencing. Such fencing as existed was nearly all down. Also, garden stuff for the coming winter, and hay for the stock needed. There wasn't much of either. We had one cow, and it turned out to be a poor specimen, having been gypped when we bought her. The next year we loaded her into the wagon, hauled her to Colville, and sold her to the butcher for $10.00.

There was a mortgage on both eighties, so it was imperative that some kind of income be created without delay. Our plans called for the raising of alfalfa and going into the dairy business. Being out of funds, we sold the car for $500.00 (we had bought it new two years before for $429.95) and bought four blooded Jersey cows, the nucleus of our ensuing herd. We weren't gypped this time.

The first summer we met with near disaster. In June I plowed up a large patch of snowberry bushes on the south eighty near the tree line of the north eighty, rubbed the bushes and roots out, piling them in shocks. In August the shocks were set on fire. At noon, Mom's bugle call announced dinner. Looking over the smoldering ashes, everything seemed safe, so I went to dinner. After eating, being very tired, I pulled off my shoes and lay down on the davenport for a ten-minute nap. Suddenly Mom called, "What's all that smoke down where you were working?" Alarmed, I jumped up and took one look. Jerking my shoes on without taking time to lace them, and grabbing shovel and axe, I ran down the road to the causeway through the birch and cedar. Streamers of smoke were already crossing it, so, putting my arms over my head, I ran the length of it. Gaining higher ground, it became starkly evident that the situation was already hopeless. Thinking to retrace my steps, I was forced to give up the idea, because long tongues of flame were leaping across the causeway. Everything seemed to explode and, as there was a hot wind blowing, it suddenly turned into a "crown fire." The roar was terrific. Above the roar I could hear Mom and the kids on the other side screaming. Trying to make myself heard I yelled to Mom to send the boys to Overmans for help. Suddenly their screams stopped and I thought, "Oh, My God, they've tried to cross ahead of the fire and the flames have overtaken them." I'm afraid I lost my head. After all, our house, our implements, the silo still on the wagon, everything we owned, were in line of the fire. Along the base of the hill ran a high brush fence, tinder dry, clear through to the north line, an ideal, monstrous fuse for the fire to follow. Frantically tearing at this fence, I tore a gape in it, and thinking this not enough, ran another fifty yards and tore a larger gape. Because I had failed to lace my shoes, the friction wore through the skin on my heels and the blood was soaking my shoes. Dirt mixed with blood made a good grinding agent, and the skin was soon worn through to the flesh. Looking back, I saw the fire had jumped the road and was racing up the hill. By this time fear, panic and exhaustion had done their work. I collapsed. Yes, I prayed fervently. Let me say here, let no one that has never been in dire straits mock those who call for Divine help as a last resort.

Where the fire stopped, the peat was some three feet thick, and as fire smolders in peat for weeks, I dug a trench down to clay soil from the creek to the base of the hill. This trench we patrolled night and day for two weeks, Mom and I taking turns. When it came her turn at night, she took one of the boys with her be cause she was afraid. It did seem uncanny after dark – bare black tree trunks standing silently, and fire glowing down in the peat on the one side, and heavy timber on the other,

Accidents seem to be unavoidable on a busy farm, and we had several. For instance, the time when Fred was a small boy, he rolled down a steep bank and under the flying hooves of the horses on a difficult turn. When Johnny was knocked off a high timber in the shed when we were haying and fell 25 feet to the pole floor below. When Howard's hand

Esveldt boys, clockwise from top left: Russell, Howard, Fred and Johnny. About 1926.

was caught in the cable pulley and he was pulled to the peak of the barn with the sling load of hay. And me, with all my precautions, pitched off a high load of hay as it turned over on a steep side hill, and another time slid down an icy roof, fell two stories, and landed on the bottom of the concrete steps leading into the basement. There was, also, the time we lost half the new dairy herd from bloat. But it is a well-known fact that those that lose nothing, do nothing, and have nothing.

As there was very little cleared land on the two eighties, when we bought them, clearing land was a prime necessity. Consequently, the second summer we slashed all the timber on what we called “the swamp” and all the second grade growth on “the flat”, falling everything inward. This left a wide trail around the slashing. When it had dried out thoroughly, we called in the neighbors, stationed them around at regular intervals, and set fires at a dozen places. The resulting fire was spectacular. We burned the swamp, then the flat. Hundreds of cords of the finest kind of firewood went up in smoke, which I regretted, but we had to have the land for cultivation. What I regretted too was the gradual disappearance of the native pheasants as the timberline receded. Their numbers had been so numerous and it was a pleasure to hear their drumming in the springtime. This applied also to the hermit thrush and catbird, whose plaintive songs we missed so much in the evening. However, there was some consolation in the fact that their places were taken by robins, bluebirds, kill-deer, red-wing blackbirds, bob-whites (at first), Chinese pheasants and others, as the open land increased. Incidentally, the influx also included pocket gophers, ground squirrels and woodchuck. Fortunately, the latter provided good target practice for the boys, and conversely, lots of headaches for Dad.

The third year on the farm, excavation was begun for a new house. When finished, other buildings were constructed, additional land was brought under cultivation, the dairy herd increased, and the family prospered in a modest way.

What has transpired in the past thirty years is familiar family history. May we invoke the blessing of a Higher Power that the family may continue to prosper. This is our prayer.

* * * * * * * * *

Returning now to the family of John P. Esveldt, Sr., and wife Hendrina, who emigrated to Amerika in 1892 with five children, and to whom five additional children were subsequently born in Amerika.

John P. Senior passed away in Chewelah in 1927 and lies buried in the family plot near Dartford.

Hendrina, wife of John P. Senior, died in Dartford in 1906 and lies beside her husband at Dartford.

Sister Nell passed away in 1949 at McMinnville, Oregon, where she lies buried.

Sister Margie died in 1944 in Seattle, was cremated, and her ashes were buried in the family plot near Dartford.

Brother Pete passed away in 1921 in Lewiston, Idaho, and was buried there.

The writer, John P., Jr., is still living as of this date, and resides in Colville, Washington.

Brother George passed away in 1938 while superintendent of the Griffith Springs State Fish Hatchery on the Little Spokane River, and lies buried in the family plot at Dartford.

Sister Jeannette is still living, and resides at Gig Harbor, Washington.

Sister Henrietta is still living, and resides at Colville, Washington.

Brother Fred died in a hospital in Spokane, following an automobile accident near Cheney in August, 1957. His home was in Chewelah, Washington, where he lies buried in a cemetery near the magnesite plant.

Brother Harold died in infancy at Dartford in March, 1902, and was buried in the Dartford Cemetery.

Brother Virgil is still living, and resides in Dearborn, Michigan.

The grandmother, Neeltje Blom Esveldt, who resided with her son Girard (Uncle George) on the Little Spokane, on the site that later became known as Dartford, passed away in 1896. She was the first occupant of the Dartford Cemetery, where the family plot is located.

Her son Girard eventually moved to Chewelah where he had bought a small farm, did considerable prospecting, and passed away in about 1914. He was buried in the Chewelah Cemetery, east of town.

As of this date, John P. the 2nd is the only surviving member of the family of seven, and Uncle and Grandmother of the Esveldts that emigrated from Holland to Amerika in May of 1892.

* * * * * * This account and record finished this 1st day of January, 1964. * * * * * *

* * * * EPILOGUE: 1920 – 1969 * * * *

by John P. Esvelt III

"What has transpired in the past thirty years is familiar family history." So ends Dad's narrative, somewhere shortly after he and mother, with their two young sons, Howard and Russell, moved to the ranch at Daisy in 1920. But they were still young, in their early thirties, with their real life's work yet ahead of them.

The story untold in the Narrative is one of carving out and developing a modern dairy ranch out of the wilderness. It was pioneering, in every sense of the word, at first. It was rearing a family of four sons and watching them grow up to successful careers far beyond their log cabin beginnings. And it was retirement, with many years ahead amid old friends and relatives in Colville, near the home ranch at Daisy and an hour's drive from the old haunts at Dartford.

The story of the hopes and heartbreaks, successes and failures of the nearly 29 years of toil on the ranch is too much to tell in a few pages. When they arrived in 1920, the place was little more than a stump ranch, 160 acres with a log cabin and log barn, a few acres of cleared ground, and a very great deal of timber. When they turned the ranch over to their eldest son Howard in 1949, it was one of the showplace dairy ranches of Stevens County.

Life was not easy on the ranch, by today's standards. For the first few years, until the new house was completed and occupied in 1925, the family lived in the original log cabin. One large room was divided by a partition into living room and bedroom, while a lean-to was the kitchen. This cabin stood west of the creek in the center of what are now alfalfa fields. After moving to the new house, the log cabin was used for years as a machine shed before being torn down.

It was work every day of the week early and late. Dad and the older boys, when they were not in school, would be clearing land, planting and cultivating crops, caring for the expanding herd, milking, fencing, harvesting, cutting fire wood, mending machinery; learning to do, and doing, a thousand things which today would demand hired help. Mother was constantly busy keeping house, helping with all the chores, baking bread, churning butter, feeding the family, and giving birth to two more sons in that log cabin. Today's city dwellers and farmers alike can scarcely imagine what it was like then. There were no electric gadgets that switched on or ran automatically. Kerosene lamps and lanterns. No radios, television, no refrigerators. Fresh meat was right after butchering, only. For music there was the piano, or singing. Both mother and Dad had fine voices and loved to sing. Wood stoves for cooking and heat. Hot water came off the top of the stove.

But everyone in the country lived the same way, and it didn't seem as bad as all that. And it really wasn't all toil. There were neighborhood social affairs – the country Grange, the pinochle parties, the barn dances. Every Thanksgiving there was the big family gathering of the Esveldt clan, either at Daisy or at Mont and Mae's, across the river from Kettle Falls, when Fred and Tillie, John and Jean and sometimes George and Bun, with all the younger generation, would gather around the festive board. And afterwards, while the

women folk attacked the mountain of dishes, the political arguments would wax hot among the men – and the children played.

Meanwhile, little by little, things progressed on the ranch as improvements were made. But first came a numbing disaster. One day in 1925, while Dad and Russ had made a two-day trip to Spokane in the Model T, and while Mother and Howard were at work on the upper forty, the herd of mild cows broke through the fence into the alfalfa, then drank from the creek. They bloated. In spite of help from Overman's across the ridges, two thirds of the carefully built herd of cows died that day and night. That was two thirds of the income, two thirds of the cream, separated by hand cranking the separator and hauled to the creamery in Addy. It set things back at least two years.

Two big jumps forward, if not in easing the labor, at least in the comfort of living, were the move to the new house and the development of an electric power source.

Dad built the house virtually all by himself, between his other chores, with only some help in cabinet work. When we moved in, after five years in the log cabin, it was really living high. There were separate bedrooms for everybody, a bathroom with flush toilets and running water piped under pressure from the spring on the hill; hot water heated by coils in the kitchen stove; a basement for storage and central furnace heating (but not for the bedrooms upstairs), and it was much closer to the barns and chores. It still is used, little modified as the ranch house today.

The new ranch house in winter

The second big stride ahead in comfort came in 1935, with electricity. Dad built the whole affair all by himself. First he built a concrete reservoir atop the hill, from which a 3-inch pressure pipe delivered water through nozzles to a pilton water wheel fashioned of a Model T flywheel and blades hammered, red-hot and form-fashioned in a granite boulder to the desired shape. This drove a generator which furnished direct-current electricity for the already-wired house. It wasn't yet like the electricity in town. The lights dimmed a little with every light turned on. It was D.C., not the A.C. required for radios, refrigerators and all. The reservoir would empty after 2 or 3 hours and one had to go out and shut off the valve when one went to bed. But what an improvement over kerosene lamps! Ultimately, as the REA line bearing Coulee Dam power came through the ranch, the wires were connected to this source and the old power plant was no longer used.

From the house, at the base of the hill below Butcher Mountain, and surrounded by birch and cedar trees, one could look out over some 100 acres of green alfalfa fields enclosed by pine covered ridges, with the blue ridges and peaks of the Kettle River range of mountains across the valley of the Columbia to the west. Surrounding the house were lawns and flower gardens of Mom's prize gladioli and dahlias. To the right were the barns and haysheds which bulged in winter with upwards of 300 tons of alfalfa hay.

Howard Arthur *Russell Merle* *John Peter III* *Fred Lloyd*

The Esveldt Brothers

It all must have seemed idyllic and bucolic to a visitor on a quiet summer Sunday, a wonderful place to live and grow up on. And so it seems to this writer now, 35 years later. But it didn't seem so at the time, so far from the bright lights and the action. Hence, one by one, as they grew up, the sons left the ranch. Only Howard returned, and the same thing happens to his family of later years.

The four boys all walked the two miles to the Daisy grade school. At first there was a short-lived high school there. When it closed, Howard left school for the ranch, while Russell boarded with friends in Kettle Falls and finished high school there in 1928. He went on to Cheney State Normal School, to become a teacher, returning home henceforth only for summer vacation.

John (junior) and Fred went all the way through the eight grades at the one-room Daisy school, then rode the school bus to high school at Kettle Falls, graduating in 1938 and 1940 respectively. Both then went on to Eastern Washington College of Education in Cheney.

Meanwhile, Howard, in 1937-38 left the ranch to work in Spokane, but returned after a year with a wife and has lived there ever since.

The years were passing more swiftly now. Times were changing. Grand Coulee Dam had been built, and a long wide lake lay in the old river flat, covering the old town of Daisy. World War II came, lasted and ended, with sons Russell and Fred serving as officers in the Army and Navy. Howard was home on the ranch and Johnny was a shipyard engineer during the war.

Fred, Howard (with sons Jack and Larry), Johnny, Bill Maddox, and Russ, about 1942

Three years after the war ended, in the fall of 1948, Mother and Dad made the ranch over to Howard and left the ranch for good. Dad had built a trailer, and they headed south through California to spend the winter in a saguaro forest near Tucson, Arizona. When spring came in 1949 they returned to Colville, where they bought a lot at 505 South Cedar, and began building the house that was to be home for the remainder of their lives.

This was to be home for them both for 18 more years. It was a quiet life, but an active one for all that. There was time for all the things that called but had to be passed during the too-busy days on the ranch. There were church activities, the Pomona Grange, Democratic party activities, the Stevens County Fair Board, fishing trips and more fishing trips, and visiting sons and daughters-in-law, grandchildren and, finally, great-grandchildren. During this period Dad served as a church elder, Master of the Stevens County Pomona Grange, Stevens County Democratic Party Chairman, Manager of the Stevens County Fair, Secretary of the Stevens County Sportsmans Association and other offices. Mother went along cheerfully in all of this, participating and proud that her ex-farmer husband could be thus honored in his retirement.

In June, 1960, Mother and Dad celebrated their golden wedding anniversary, surrounded by their four sons, four daughters-in-law, twelve grandchildren, two of Dad's sisters, and a host of old friends and well-wishers from the country around.

Johnny, Howard, Fred and Russ, about 1952

Looking back over fifty years, so long ago in retrospect and yet so short; Dartford, Spokane, Daisy and the ranch, the Golden Years at Colville. Not many couples are blessed with the opportunity of looking thus far back, or over such a record of toil and achievement. And were they to name the one achievement high above all others that their years wrought, they would point to the four sons of whom they were so proud. And so it ever happens, when there is reason. And for such, after all, do each one of us live.

Mother passed away in January of 1967 after a long illness at 79 years of age. God bless her. And Dad lives on the home in Colville. Now 80 years old, he is still alert and belying his age by 20 years.

House of John P. and Julia Esveldt at 505 S. Cedar, Colville

****

This epilogue was written by John P. Esvelt the 3rd, probably 5 years after he wrote the Preface to the Narrative. "Johnny" passed away in May of 1973 after an illness of cancer, and his ashes lie buried among the other departed Esveldts in the little cemetery at Dartford - the small settlement where his father grew to manhood and where he himself lived the last 10 years of his life. Without him, these accounts would never have been recorded.

1973

Area Pioneer, J.P. Esvelt Succumbs At Age 85

Funeral services for John P. Esvelt, pioneer of the Colville and Spokane area, were held Saturday, Feb. 17 from the Colville Christian church with Rev. Frank Needles officiating. Interment was in the Dartford cemetery, Dartford.

Moser Funeral Chapel was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Esvelt was born in Uithoorn, Holland July 17, 1888. He came to Spokane in the spring of 1892 with his parents, John and Hendrina Esvelt, then moved to Dartford, just north of Spokane two years later. His father operated a blacksmith shop there.

He lived in Dartford until his marriage to the school teacher, Julia Benson, in 1910. They moved to Spokane where he worked with a crane company for 10 years.

In 1920 Esvelt and his family packed their belongings into a horse-drawn wagon and moved to Daisy where they purchased a stump ranch, which they built into one of the leading dairy ranches in the area. His grandchildren now operate the dairy.

He retired in 1949 and moved to Colville. His wife Julia died in 1967, and in September 1972 he married Ethel Tye.

Mr. Esvelt was a long-time member of Grange, was Pomona master, had served several years on the Fair Board, and was manager of the fair for two years. He was the first Civil Defense director for Stevens County.

Survivors include his wife, Ethel at the home; sons, Howard A., of Daisy who operated the original ranch; Dr. Russell M., who is superintendent of schools in Wenatchee; John P. Jr., a consulting engineer in Spokane; Dr. Fred L., president of Columbia Basin College, Pasco; 14 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, including Dr. Jack D. Esvelt a Colville dentist, and Fred and Chris Esvelt, who now are operating the ranch for their father, Howard.

Also surviving are two sisters, Jeannette Wagoner and Henrietta Maddox, both of Beaverton, Ore.; one brother, Virgil Esvelt of Prudenville, Mich.

After the death of his wife, Julia, in 1967, John P. Esveldt remained active until his own death in 1973. During the warmer months of those years he enjoyed fishing trips, huckleberrying, weekend grange dances, and spent a great deal of time in his enviable flower and vegetable garden. During the colder months he visited his four sons, numerous grandchildren, and other friends and relatives, usually making himself available for carpentry work during his stays. Winters were a nuisance to him – something that kept him indoors and away from his gardening and fishing trips.

In the summer of 1971 he returned to his birthplace in Holland, where he again saw the little house that he had known as a young boy so many years before. He visited the two Dutch cousins that he had been corresponding with and saw much of his homeland, as well as other European countries. For him, the trip was an old dream come true.

In September of 1972, he married Mrs. Ethel Tye, a widow from nearby Kettle Falls, whom he had met at a grange dance. And so his last days were not spent alone, and, as always, he had many rich memories of past toils and achievements to reflect on – of an active and happy boyhood along the Little Spokane River, of raising a family of his own amid the hardships of building a farm in the wilderness, and of many light-hearted family get-togethers in his later years. After a prolonged kidney disorder during the winter of 1972-73, he died in Colville on February 17, 1973, and was buried at Dartford. He left many memories behind him.

Two views of the Esvelt ranch today. At the present time (1974) it is owned and operated by two of Howard's sons, Fred and Chris, who took it over from their father in early 1974.

Map of Northeast Washington Esveldt Settlements

Old 1885 Map of Northeast Washington showing the location of settlements of Jan Pieter Esveldt (Spokane: 1892-1894; Dartford: 1894-1909; Chewelah: 1909-1927) and John P. Esveldt (Dartford: 1909-1910; Spokane: 1910-1920; Daisy: 1920-1948; Colville: 1948-1973)

Obituary of Julia (Benson) Esveldt, appearing in “The Statesman Examiner,” Colville, Washington, on January 13, 1962.

* * * * * * * *

JULIA ESVELT RITES SATURDAY

Services for Julia Alvina Esvelt, 79, will be held Saturday at 11 a.m. from the Colville Christian church with the Rev. Eugene Hawking officiating. Graveside services will be at 2 p.m. at Dartford cemetery. Bastian Funeral Home is handling arrangements.

Mrs. Esvelt, who passed away Jan. 10 at local hospital, was born Sept. 6, 1887, at Center City, Minn. She came west in 1909 and started teaching school at Dartford.

She married John P. Esvelt on June 22, 1910, in Spokane and the couple came to Daisy in 1920, then Colville in 1948. She was a member of the Garden Homes home ec. Club, Ft. Colville Grange and Stevens County Pomona Grange. She was a former member of Colville Women’s Relief Corps and the Daisy homemaker club.

She is survived by her husband, John, at the home; sons Howard of Daisy, Russell of Lake Oswego, Ore., John Jr. of Dartford and Fred of Kennewick; a sister, Dora Benson and a brother, Ferdie Benson, both of Center City and a brother, Wallace Benson of Minneapolis, Minn.; 14 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

* * * * * *

Julia Alvina Benson about 1908

The following is the diary of Pieter Esveldt (1792-1870), written during his conscription in the Dutch army in the year 1813. The original handwritten diary is (at this writing in 1974) in the possession of Frederik Esveldt of Arnhem, Holland, and this English translation is by his son, Jaap, who resides in Rhenen, Holland.

* * * * * * * * * *

IN THE NAME of his ROYAL HIGHNESS, the PRINCE of ORANGE NASSAU, SOUVEREIGN RULER of the United Netherlands, etc., etc.

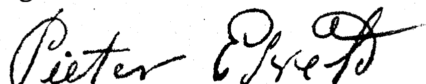
The Colonel ROM van POUDEROJEN, Director General of the General Recruiting for the State's Standing Army, Permits the Person with the name Pieter Esveldt, having served as Soldier with the 1st Regiment Imperial Servian Volunteer Corps, coming from Italy, being dismissed and allowed to go to Oudshoorn, such in accordance decision of His Royal Highness, dated the 16th of June 1814, No. 85.

Requesting all Military and Civil Authorities to let pass mentioned person free and unhindered

Amersfoort the 6th of September 1814.

The Colonel Director General aforesaid,

Signature of the here mentioned



* * * * * * * * * *

I Pieter Esveldt born in the 1792 in Oudshoorn and now in the year 1813, old 21 years on the 13th day of March, and on the 26th day of February 1813 drew a lot for conscription with the number 69 – and on the 29th of March left for S'Gravenhaagen and at that place, the 1st of April left for Braband through towns Delft, Rotterdam, Dordregt and sailed over the Maas to Breda and Antwerpen and there had a day rest. Then through the town Mechgelen to the town Brussel and there the 8th of April 1813 came in garrison in the barracks Sint Elizabet and there had to learn the french drill until the 30th of June and the first of July we left with a battalion of nine hundred men to the army through the town Leuven, town Tien, town Sintronje, the town Tongeren, the 4th of July in the town Mastrecht, thereupon through the town Gulik, the town Aken, the town Bergim, the 10th of July the town Ceulen and the town Bonn, the town Sentlieg, the Andernagt, the 14th of July in the town Coblencsch and the town Jangeweer, the town Pophard, the town Bingen, and on the 20th day of July through town Mensch on the Rijn the border of Brauhand, the Belgian, then over the Rijn into Duytsland In the town Hoogheym, the town Necks, the 21st of July in the town Frankford, the 22nd of July in the Hanau, a dayrest – thereupon in the town Gilhausen and the town Munster and the town Slugter and the town Fulda and the town Hingfeld and the town Vach and the town Eÿselnagt; further into Saxen the 31st of July in the town Saxoda and the town Erford on Mijn and the town Foedel and the town Noussienberg and the town Weynberg. The 5th of August in the town Leypsicht and the

town of Eidlenberg and the town Tourkouw; the 8th of August I had quarter in the town of Herdsberg.

Thereupon we all had to lay in the fields in outposts facing the enemy . . . . and had to see ourselves to get something to eat as there came no more supplies for us. Then we went to throw the farmers therefore out of their houses and (took) the butter, cheese, milk, (took) either cows or pigs from the stables until there was no more to get. And the 26th of August one got an ordinance that one had to march for night and day as far as the border of Bohemen. Then on the 29th of August we went into action against the Russians and the Imperial (troops). At 3 o'clock in the morning we got going and in the afternoon at 2 o'clock, I Pieter Esveldt was thrust by a Lancer with the lance into the right side and by this just thrown on the earth. As I was still laying on the ground he once more thrust me in my left hip. Then I was upright again and he once more thrust me through my greatcoat, then I asked for mercy. Then he said, "no mercy, Frenchman." I said, "no Frenchman but a Dutch comrade." Meanwhile I got a bullet in my left foot and after that comes the Russian infantry with the bayonet against my belly and takes me prisoner by my right hand and takes off my forage cap. Then I had to lay off and take off all and he had to search everything. Then he stripped me to my (under) shirt and took off of me two shirts, one pair of shoes and my lenitten braces and a vest and thereupon I was transported with 38 men prisoners until 10 o'clock in the evening. Then we came with the Prussian Cavalry, then I have laid there 2 days and 3 nights with my injuries under the open sky. Then a doctor has taken me the bullet out of my leg.

The third day I was carried off on a wagon to the hospital. But that farmer put us underway off the wagon near a village and I had to stumble on two crutches for a half hour long as far as a village — once more I was carried off on a wagon to the hospital. There I arrived in the dark evening. Then I was bound up by a doctor and the next day I was brought in a roofed-in wagon to the town Praag, a capital town in Bohemen, and there I, with other wounded men, was bandaged by a missus and there I got some money and wine and bread and then in that town I was brought into a hospital where I had to sleep for 3 days in the courtyard for under the roof of the house there was no place and then once more carried of a day and a night on a wagon as far as the town Kuttenberg where I laid 2 months in a hospital, from the 7th day of September until the 3rd of November 1813. Then I was cured again and was (taken) with a transport of three hundred men prisoners through Boheeme and Hungary, in the town Pest on the Danube and the town Presburg laying also on the Danube and crossed over by a pontoon bridge and marched on again and at the border crossed a water caleed the Deijs and then I came into Wallaohije and brought through that country and the 28th of December 1813 I came in a village of market place called Lukas (the border of Turkijje) and there on the 30th of December 1813 I enlisted again from the transport of prisoners in the First Imperial Servian Volunteer Corps for as long as the war would last with the French, with 7 guilders bounty money in paper, and then for twelve hours brought back again as far as the town Timmeswaar, small but with strong fortresses around it and there have been in garrison for 16 days and at that place have thrown away my French suit and put on a new Imperial suit, a dark brown frock with yellow stripes and sky blue long trousers with yellow stripes, a red cloth casket, and black knitted scarf, a blue vest and shoes with laces, a long rifle, a Turkish long sword and marched off on the 16th day of January 1814 to Italy and then had to march in winter through snow and cold, and the first town where we came in Hungary was Vijfkerken on the 7th of February. And the 16th of February in the Windische land in the town Canarese and in the town Marburg and the town Sielien and the 6th of March in Steyermarken. Had quarter with a farmer for nine days and heloped there sawing and chopping wood and then marched on again and then through Corssatien in the town Laubach and the town Breiwolt. The 28th of March in Coorts the border of Italy and the town Odina and the town Salietie and the town Cöiljano and Stravisa and the town Viesentien.

The 10th of April in the big town Varona and the town Costafrank and the town Napole and the town Bressia – a beautiful town – then the town Mansa and the town Tiara. Then we stood there near a village as outposts and had to patrol all night for sixteen days, half an hour from the town Nandewa where the French lay with 3,000 men troops and after all they silently left in the night without a drumbeat. Then we pursued them and marched round the town Milan, a very big town with marble gates in it, and then through the town Sooma and the town Beskira, a small town but a very high fortress so that one could not see the houses, near a large water and the town Roma. From there we marched on for another 20 hours up to the Swiss mountains, but no where any Frenchman was found. We therefore marched back again through the whole of Italy as far as Corssatica in the Laubach and there on the 14th day of July 1814 laid down my weapons and was transported the 19th of July through a village Overlaubach, the 20th ditto the village Planina, the 22nd ditto through town Breewold, the 23rh of July through village Tessanna as far as the town Triest, a seaport laying at the gulf of Venesie and there waited for 6 days in the transport house until the 27th of July 1814. IN the morning at 5 o'clock I got my passport in my hand to allow me to march home and then marched for 10 hours to the town Coerts, the first town of Italy; after that to the town Mina and the town Gemona and as far as the border of Oostenrijk, village Vantafel and the 31st day of July in the town Villach, a town which was more than half shot or burnt down by the French. The 1st day of August in the town Spitaal and the town Mint, from there, at the border of Beijeren, a village called S'Migäll and then in the town Radslad and the town Worven and the town Hallijn and then through the big town Zalsburg and through the village Wagen. From there in the town Wasserburg, bot quarter with a blacksmith but put out to board with an innkeeper and ate there deer meat. The 10th of August in the town München, Risidence of the King of Beijeren and the down Dachau and the town Friedberg. The 13th of August through the big town Augsburg, from there to the village Zomerhiujen and Giensburg and then up to the border of Würtenberg the town Urm, where lays a large stone bridge over the water. Halfway over the bridges stands the Bavarian sentinel and the other sentinel from Würtenberg. From there I was transported with the land fusiliers through the town Geijsseliinge and the town Coppingen and the town Eisseling and the town Caustad and the 19th of August through the town Heidelberg. From there in the town Heesendarmstad and there been 2 days, from there crossed a water and through the town Hoogheijm and over the Rhine where the bridge lays on boats in the town Mensch; from there in the town Bingen, had to sleep in the tower, from there in the town Sangewwer and through the town Poppard. The 23rd of August in the town Coblens, in the town Andernagt and the town Siensieg and the Remagen; the 26th in the town Bonn, the 27 in the town Ceulen and into Guelderland, in the town Neuss and the town Greveld and in Urdingen and the town Rijnberg; the 31st of August in the town Santen and the 1st of September in the town Cleef; the 2nd of September 1814 in the town Nijmegen on the Waal, a beautiful little town, the first town of Holland where I could speak Dutch with the people. Had a good quarter with two ladies. From there in the town Arnhem, from there in the town Waageningen from there nothing else than through sand and heath to the town Utrecht and then had to go for my passport of the Prince in Amersfoort, then back again to Utrecht and the 7th of September 1814 at 6 o'clock in the morning sailed from the town by boat up to the Zwauerdam bridge, from there went home in Oudshoorn the 7th day of September 1814 at 3½ o'clock in the afternoon I came home with my beloved father, mother, sisters, and brothers with great gladness.

The here undersigned has seen and experienced from the 1st of April 1813 until the 7th of September 1814 as soldier being

Pieter Esveldt

Oudshoorn the 5th of December 1814 in Rhineland.

Obituaries of the parents of Julia (Benson) Esvelt, appearing in Minnesota newspapers.

* * * * * * * * * * *

FREDRICK BENSON SON OF FIRST 1852 COLONIZERS DIES

Born in Chisago Lake Settlement 85 Years Ago; His Father Matthias
Among First Six Settlers at Chisago Lake; Services at Trinity Lutheran.

The earthly sunset did not arrive in the long life of Fredrick Benson until Sept. 2nd, 1944, but when he crossed the bar, he had seen within his life span of 85 years, the first clearing in the paradisan lake wilderness of the Chisago Lakes settlement, in which his father, Matthias Bengston, had swung the clearing axe as early as the year 1852 and had built a first colonizer's log cabin home.

Today he is resting, in the long sleep; one of the builders and architects in pioneer labor, which brought us the county of Chisago, Minnesota, in all its improvements, as we know it today.

Fredrick Benson was born in the township of Chisago Lake on February 11th, 1859. He was the son of Matthias Bengtson, whose birth place was Lonsboda, Skane, Sweden, and the son of a mother, Karna, who also was one of the original colonizers in Chisago, coming here in 1854.

Fredrick Benson was born on the original farmstead of 40 acres, located on Little Lake one mile north of the site that later became the village of Center City.

He was one of 12 children sired by one of Chisago Lakes Settlement's first pioneers, Matthias Bengtson, and all through his years to far past his prime, his labor likewise was that of the pioneer.

His boyhood was lived alongside his father, aiding in the creation of a home and a farm in the heavy forested wilderness and the development of a 40 acre farmstead – one of the very first in the Chisago Lake Settlement.

As he grew up to adulthood, in the primeval lakelands, he became one of the first to enter business at the village of Shafer. When he pioneered at Shafer, the only person who owned land there was a Mr. Gronquist. That was the year 1890. Mr. Benson built the first mercantile building at Shafer and for a year operated it as a General Country Store. He also bought and platted ground adjacent the Chisago Lake Swedish Lutheran Church at Center City; built 80 stables for the communicant's horses, and many log cabins for the settlers.

On July 2nd, 1882, he married Amanda Gustafson, who was born in Sweden. In the years 1885 and 86, Mr. Benson and his wife leased and operated a hotel at the then thrivingly busy logging town of Franconia. Next to Taylors Falls, it was the most colorful and busy lumbering river port on the St. Croix. Both the Bensons, democratic to the core, impressed the men of the logging crews and the lumberjacks, and did a good business.

But throughout Taylors Falls and the Chisago Lake Settlement had arisen a need, the need for water, for wells. Throughout the county backs ached and groaned from the never-ending cartage of water from river, lake, and creek.

So Fred Benson took on well-sinking, which became one of his outstanding services to the county. The one alone, at Lindstrom, will ever be a pioneer's monument to him in human service. He began with a horse-pull rig and before he was through he had equipment which could drill wells for Railroad Water Towers.

He too has seen the evolution of threshing from the horse-tractioned and hand-feed

thresher to the streamline thresher of today, and worked through the evolution in blazing hot summer through 54 years.

In his later years, Mr. Benson operated the "Dew Drop Inn," on South Center Lake, which is located on what was the southern part of the big Chisago Lake he knew as a lad. It lies across Hi-way 8, just opposite the Center City–Lindstrom School. There, beside his duties as operator, he kept six cows and did a bit of farming on a small scale, even when he had passed four score years.

Fredrick Benson is one of the very few living charter members of the Chisago Lake Lutheran Church at Center City, which was founded in 1854. His father, Matthias, who was one of the first six colonizers at Chisago Lake, lived to nearly the century mark, succumbing when he was 93 years of age.

Fredrick Benson was the father of eleven children. Those who are living today are: Dora Benson, residing at and operating the summer resort, Dew Drop Inn; Arthur Vivian, now a defense plant employee in a shipyard on the Pacific Coast; George, of the Minneapolis Stock Exchange; Wallace, with the Minneapolis–St. Paul Sanitary District; Ferdinand, head of the meat department at the Co-op Store, and operator of Klines Summer Resort; and Mrs. J. P. Esvelt of Daisy, Washington. Among the children who have passed away during recent years were: Roy E. Benson of Canada, and Dewey of Minneapolis. Children who succumbed when they were little more than infants were: Belind, Roy and Luther. He is survived by his living children, his wife, Amanda, 20 granchildren, and 7 great-grandchildren.

The Final services were held at Trinity Lutheran Church Wednesday afternoon where the venerable Patriarch of the County, one of the last of the founding fathers of Chisago County, Fredrick Benson, was paid high human and spiritual honor by Rev. Milton Maker. The sermon pointed out the fact that the deceased made of the primeval wilderness a dwelling place for the many who followed him. No greater tribute can be paid anyone.

Representative Al Oberg sang two very beautiful elegies and the friends who carried the pioneer to his final sleep under the evergreens at Fairview were: George P. Rolig, Albert Rolig, Arthur Shoquist, Harris Rolig, Russell Benson and Oscar Nyquist.

Fredrick Benson gave his all of stout hear, indomitable courage and neighborly cooperation at a time, 85 years ago, when only an unusual man and woman would venture forth against almost insuperable odds, and uncomplainingly build squares of clearings for human habitation in the forest so that from there could arise church buildings, courtrooms and courthouses; schools and business places. His wife, a pioneer mother, worked at his side. Their memory will never die. But for them and their kind, we would have had no Chisago County as we know it today.

* * * * * * * *

Chisago County Press, Lindstrom, Minnesota, Sept. 14, 1944.

AN INTERVIEW GIVEN BY THE RECENTLY DECEASED CHISAGO LAKES SETTLEMENT COLONIZER, FREDRICK BENSON

In last week's edition of the Chisago County Press appeared the account of the final rites of the 85-year-old colonizer, Fredrick Benson. Several years ago he granted this compiler an audience, in which without realizing it, he revealed the priceless good he achieved in being one of those who made the Chisago Lake wilderness one of the most beautiful farming and garden glorious habitations for mankind in the state of Minnesota. He was one of the Swedish

pioneers, who, almost without a dollar to their names, and with only their hands, courage and stout heart, hewed a dwelling place for the thousands who inhabit the county today.

In looking over the roster compiled by the first pastor of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran of Chisago Lake, Rev. P. A. Cedarstam, in which he listed the year of arrival of the first colonizers to the Chisago Lake Settlement from Sweden, we find the name of Fredrick Benson's father, Matthias Bengtson. Pastor Cedarstam lists him as arriving in the year 1852. Evidence, quite substantial, places Matthias Bengtson among the first six colonizers to begin the titanic pioneer labor of founding the Chisago Lake Settlement, from which arose the little cities of Center City, Chisago County, and Lindstrom, as the cores of marketing and supplies; of schools and culture; of hcarming homes and well attending churches.

And in that pristine lakeland, embraced and studded with almost impenetrable maple and oak; elm and cedar, birch and pine, and approximately thirty species of hardwood and softwood, was reared the son, Fredrick Benson, who came to life in his father's log homestead on February 11th, 1859.

Fredrick Benson vividly recalled his boyhood, when friendly Chippewas lived not so far away in their wigwams; when everybody walked miles every day, through long aisles in the woodlands instead of cement walks; when one did not receive a scholastic degree in education, but earned one in facing the problems of everyday life and solving them; of helping one's neighbors without monetary demands; of facing disaster and disappointment without pathologically infantile regression to hysterics, condemnation and vengeance.

Fredrick Benson was one of 12 children born to this first settler. He worked side by side with his father as early as he was able to carry an axe. The sire, Matthias Bengtson, cleared 40 acres of heavy oak. During that clearing period which lasted through several years, the father hauled the oak that he felled through the cold winter months to market. For all that back-bending labor, a full winter season; for his oak lumber material; and for his cartage of the oak to the market he received as payment, one lumberwagon. While the lumberwagon was a miracle in service to the pioneer, the son Fredrick said he would never forget it, as an example in the coldish greed evidenced in the gross disparity between labor and material, and the pitifully inadequate payment. But the pioneers never faltered. In spite of everything they persisted, and hewed on.

The father, Matthias, was a skilled carpenter and builder. He was a near genius in the building of the modern home of that day – the lowly log cabin. He could smooth the logs of the outer walls with a broadaxe to such a smoothness that they resembled planed boards.

In their own log cabin home, on the farmstead, whose site was on Little Lake, north of what later became Center City, were many hand-hewn conveniences fashioned by the father. The fireplace was composed of baked blue clay, and there the cooking was conducted and the home heated.

The son Fredrick, during much of the interview, smiled wistfully as he re-lived the memories of that log cabin home, of his colonizer father, of his brothers and sisters growing up in the beautiful wilderness, and of his dear pioneer mother, Karna Bengtson. Only by persistent questioning could we get him to talk about his role in the pioneering of the county.

When Fredrick Nels Benson, the son of Matthias, grew into adulthood, he ventured forth as a founder himself, going to the village of Shafer, Chisago County, where he found by one person, a Mr. Gronquist, who owned any land. That was in the year 1880. At Shafer, Mr. Benson erected the first mercantile building and operated a general country store there for a year. Later, he purchased more land, particularly the platted grounds adjacent the Chisago Lake Lutheran Church at Center City, where he built the stabling shelters composed of 80 units, which housed the horses and conveyances of the church's congregation who came long

distances via wagon and buggy in summer, and by sleigh in winter.

"It was like wondrous music, those sleigh bells on cold winter Sunday mornings," he recalled, "and I can hear them yet."

On July 2nd, 1882, Fredrick Benson married Amanda Gustafson who was born in Sweden. They became the parents of 11 children. Six of those children survive Mr. Benson, namely, Dora, of the summer resort Dew Drop Inn; Arthur Vivian, war defense shipyard employee on the Coast; George, of the Minneapolis Stock Exchange Wallace, with the Mpls.–St. Paul Sanitary District; Ferdinand, head of the meat department at the Chisago County Co-op and operator of Kline's Summer Resort; and Mrs. J. P. Esvelt of Daisy, Washington. Among those children who passed away in recent years are: Roy B. of Canada; and Dewey of Minneapolis. Those who died in infancy were: Roy C., and Luther and Belinda.

Also surviving Mr. Benson are his wife, Amanda, two sisters – Mrs. Cora Olson of Minneapolis and Mrs. Mathilda Anderson of Kalispell, Montana.

In 1885 and '86, Mr. Benson and his wife leased and operated a hotel at the busy logging river port of the then existent village of Franconia. His commentary on the loggers and the lumberjacks bore out the fact that those men, though not superficially mannered, nor prudishly inhibited, were the best mannered, sincerest and most human of all his guests.

In the meantime the cry had gone forth in the Chisago Lake wilderness and from Taylor Falls – water! Human backs of young and old were straining under the daily chore of procuring water from creek, river and lake. Wells were urgently needed. Hotel business being all labor and scarcely a penny in profit, in those days, Mr. Benson decided upon becoming a searcher for drinking water. In 1886 he completed his intent to master well-sinking, and started forth. He began with a horse-pull rig, one horse to a drill, and graduated from that to a steam outfit. For 18 years he continued in this service, second to none in appeasing a major need of human beings. At one time he had four crews working day and night. When the numerous farms were serviced, he sunk a well for the former starch factory at Center City, where he sunk a six inch tube well.

Beside the magnificent watered well at Lindstrom, which was described in detail in an earlier installment of this history, he sunk the wells for the St. Paul and Duluth Railway, now the Northern Pacific, at Hinckley, Minnesota; and the well for the Soo Line Railway at St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin, where he was required to go through the hardest material in the earth's surface – the trap rock of the Dalles. In all, Mr. Benson sunk 662 wells of all categories in the 18 years he devoted his time to the service. And the well at Lindstrom, alone, will constitute a monument for him, not builded of marble, but of the never-ending thanks and appreciation of everyone who slakes his thirst with its crystal cool, pure water.

Mr. Benson also lived in and through the evolution of the threshing machine. He saw its first beginnings as a horse tractioned and handfed thresher. Through blazing hot summer threshing fields for 52 years he aided in the harvest. And for 18 years he was an expert saw mill worker.

Laid to rest but last week, in the green of Fairview at Lindstrom, his remains lie in soil visible to the premises on which he spent his last years, the cozy summer resort, Dew Drop Inn, just across the highway from Chisago Lake High School. Up to the last he stood by his horse and buggy for transport to town, and did a little farming, with some cows and chickens to look after.

Throughout the interview, his eyes occasionally lighted with kindly humor. But he was a bit wistful as he told of the lumber wagon of the pioneer days. It functioned almost for everything – even for death – when it was brought forth to serve as a hearse. Yes, the coffins of

one's loved ones were built by hand through tears. Buggies, coming in later, then succeeded the lumber wagon as a hearse. "Easier over the ruts as we went to the burying ground," and he smiled wistfully, "and easier on the dead one."

But then the faraway look saddened his eyes – "Taking the loved one in the homemade coffin off the lumber wagon, and laying it in the earth, right in the midst of the forest. That, my son, was the pioneer day."

He was a charter member of the Chisago Lake Church at Center City and was one of the oldest charter members alive at the time of his death. He left that Church because of his deeply sincere conviction that fraternalistic membership outside the church was his inalienable right. He was always a deeply religious man.

In the beginning there was only the nearly impenetrable forest wilderness on Lake Chisago. Then came the Swedish colonizers. . . . Fredrick Nels Benson and his father, Matthias Bengtson will live in memory through their valiant work in the creation of a dwelling place for mankind in the beauty land of Lake Ki-Chi-Saga.

* * * * * * * *

AMANDA C. BENSON DIED SATURDAY

Services Held for Owner of Dew Drop Inn Resort
Yesterday Afternoon From Trinity Church Here

Amanda Christine (Gustafson) Benson, widow of the late Fredrick N. Benson, well-known pioneer resident and owner of the Dew Drop Inn resort on South Center Lake passed away on Saturday morning March 1st [1947] at her home at the advanced age of eighty-five years.

She was born in Voeckelsong, Sweden, May 24, 1861. She came to America at the age of eighteen years, and in 1882 was married to Mr. Benson. They lived at Shafer, Franconia, Taylors Falls and Center City. They came to live at their present place in 1915. Here Mrs. Benson lived a long and happy life with her family. She was a lover of the out-of-doors, having a garden and also enjoying to fish on the lake.

Baptized and confirmed in Sweden, Mrs. Benson was a life-long Lutheran. At the time of her death she was a member of Trinity Lutheran church, from where her final rites were conducted on Wednesday afternoon, Rev, M. A. Haker officiated and Mrs. Millard Grandstrand sang two songs, "Face to Face" and "Beautiful Isle." Mrs. Haker was at the organ.

Surviving are Miss Dora Benson at home; Mrs. J. P. Esvelt of Daisy, Washington; Vivian and Ferdinand of Lindstrom; George and Wallace of Minneapolis; 21 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren. The husband, four sons and one daughter preceded her in death. Six grandsons and sons-in-law served as pallbearers: Lloyd Benson, Eldon Kline, Norman Benson, Leon Benson, Glendon Lindblad, and Ted Lindblad. Burial was at Fairview.

Frederick Benson

Amanda Gustafson Benson

A four generation gathering. Frederick Benson and daughter Julia (with son Russell) standing. Matthias Bengtson with great grandchild Howard sitting.

Mattias Bengston and Karna (Nilsdotter) Bengston

*Gustaf and Johanna Akeson (maternal grandparents of Julia Benson).
Both were born in Smaland, Sweden, around 1830.*

Memoirs of Matthias Bengtson

as written by himself to his son, Alvin Benson, August 3, 1895.

Translated from the Swedish letter by Mrs. Lillian Porter.

* * * * * * * *

My paternal grandfather was a soldier, a cavalryman. That was so that Landowners on Estates could keep both horse and man in wartime as well as peacetime. His name was Nels Moder. He died at 50 years of age.

My father had two brothers, Tuve Hall and Mons Hall, and one sister, Nila. Tuve Hall had been a soldier a few years, and died at the age of 50 years. Mons died at the age of 55 years. Aunt Nila was living at the time I left for America in 1852 and was at that time about 50 years of age. My father Bengt was the eldest and lived long after the others, if memory serves me right. He reached the high age of 85. He was born in 1788 in Krusboda, Orkna-socken. Father often spoke at burials and had a fine singing voice, and was always very glad to sing.

My mother was born in Hogsma, Glimokra in 1785, and died at 65 years of age.

I am the youngest of the 6 children. I had two brothers and three sisters. Nils was born in 1810 and Per was born in 1821 and died at age 49. Sister Elsa was born in 1813 and died at age 73. Kierste was born in 1816 and died at age 23. Bengta was born in 1818 and was married to Lars Munson. They and their children perished in the ocean, when the ship on which they were passengers (on their way to America) struck a rocky cliff and sank near the coast of New Foundland in 1857.

I was born on January 18, 1826, in Krusboda Torp. My father was a carpenter by trade, and I helped him with anything I could do, which was not very much, as I was mostly a farmer and tilled the soil. I worked very hard until I was 21 years of age, when I went into army training at Gungby Hede. After that I began to do carpentry and cabinet work in the winters and building construction in the summers, until August, 1852, when I journeyed to America. I was then 26 years of age.

From the day I left my home in Sweden until the day I reached Knoxville, Illinois, was exactly six weeks. We were 21 days on the ocean in a sailboat. I stayed in Knoxville until February 1853, when I went to Moline, Illinois, where I stayed about two months, then journeyed by boat to St. Paul. There I met an American called Swede who had a contract for state road work on the east side of the Mississippi River. He spoke Swedish fluently.

In the fall of 1853 I came to this Swedish settlement, which was only three years old. During this winter I worked in a sawmill, and when spring came in 1854, I began to chop down the trees on the land picked by Little Lake. When fall came I went to work in the woods and was there until April, 1855.

After a few days Karna (Nilsdotter) came, who later became my wife on May 27, 1855. We became acquainted in Sweden and she traveled until she found me. I believe she was sent to find me.

My maternal grandfather was born in Tramboda and grandmother also was born in Tramboda. Grandfather Nil Björnsen was a landowner a few years in Edemor, which they sold and moved to Flygbade, where he had good work and prospered fairly well. He left his home to his sons Hakan and Nicklas, and died at 80 years of age. They left 7 children, namely Per, Hakan, Niclas, Mattis, Bengta, Maria, and Mother.

At the time we started to farm here we had a democratic government until 1861, when the Civil War broke out and times became very hard. A yard of calico cloth then sold for 50 cents. And everything else went up accordingly.

During that time it was not pleasant to be called father to a large family of children, but I was thankful to God who let me stay home from the war, but it cost me plenty.

As soon as the war was over times got better until everything went up so high that people were dissatisfied with conditions and wanted the best of everything. And now it will take more than 10 years to restore the land again. I was drafted into the army shortly before the end of the war and returned home from Fort Snelling in 1865. At that time you were born and from that time on you can keep the record.

[Four letters from Jan Pieter Esveldt to his cousin in The Netherlands]

Dartford, Sept. 1907

Dear Friend Sparnaaij and family,

It has been a long time since I have written to you, and my attention was drawn to this neglect when a few days ago I received a letter from Will Pannekoek and Maartje, in which among other things they wrote about your 25th wedding anniversary. Although too late I cannot refrain from wishing you both all the best at this occasion and expressing wholeheartedly my hope that you both may be spared for a long time yet, together with all your family. Though you also have experienced heavy afflictions in this life, at this occasion you had ample grounds to be thankful, when you realize that among our circle of friends, you are the only ones who have been allowed to experience living for and with each other for 25 years. How many changes since the time, which I can remember so well, when we all got married, and how many of our relatives and friends have passed away in the meantime. So many times I said to my beloved wife that, if we were to live till our youngest children would be old enough to be without us for some time, we would come over to the old homeland to visit and talk to one and all who would be still around, but alas this was not to be.

It has been almost one year since I lost my beloved wife by cause of death, and nobody, who has not experienced it himself, can understand the extent of such a loss. I am fortunate in a way that my daughter Maartje, although she had many proposals, still has not wanted to get married, and she is of such a good heart that all my younger children regard her almost as their mother. Nelly is married and already has a son about 2 years old. Piet, Jan and Gerard are all three big and strong men, much taller and heavier than I am, and also my other 2 girls and 2 boys who have been born here, are all strong and healthy. We have been here 15 years already and my boys are itching to see another part of the world, and therefore we decided to move as soon as we are able to sell our possessions here. First we thought about South America, but now we have decided to go to New Zealand maybe before this coming winter, and if we like it, to live there for a few years; they are islands in the Pacific not too far from Australia.

You will probably think it very strange to move again another 10,000 miles, but here one automatically becomes another sort of person, different from the one which was formed by the old Dutch customs; this is nothing strange here, so you will probably receive my next letter from over there.

I am now 51 years old and almost still as healthy and strong as always, but I am getting gray hairs and I note that the quality of my writing is deteriorating quite a bit. If my old teacher Kievits would be able to see this letter, he would certainly have marked it as "sloppy," but nowadays I am more able to handle a gun than the pen.

Of course I could regale you with a lot of news about this country, but in my opinion there is not much worthwhile to know, and therefore I will end this letter with the best wishes for you and your family and the best regards from us all, and in particular from your old friend,
J.P. Esveldt
[Four letters from Jan Pieter Esveldt to his cousin in The Netherlands]

Chewelah, Oct. 1914

Friend Sparnaaij,

Because I am no longer receiving any letters from Holland at all, I thought it would be in order to write to you once again, in the hope to hear something from the old homeland in return. Currently we are reading a lot about this terrible war, and although I am very glad that Holland has been left out of it so far at least, I am very curious to learn how you all are doing and what influence this war has on Holland. The general opinion over here is that before it is all over, the whole world will become involved, but I myself do hope that both Holland and America will stay out of it. It certainly does influence all kinds of affairs, even here. I just read in the newspaper that Antwerp has been taken by the Germans. General opinion here was that Germany would have to give up before long, but I would not be surprised at all if they would win in spite of all the resistance.

And how is everything with you all, and Leen's family, Dirk's children and your wife's family, Jan Cornelis, Rozel and Marie etc. etc. I am very anxious to learn something from them very soon. Hein, I would so much love to see you all once again. In my mind I can imagine a bit how you are looking now. You probably have no more businesses to attend to, and so then it will be sleeping in in the morning till 8 o'clock, then a little stroll, and then in the armchair reading the newspaper, wearing your spectacles; and of course you will have put on a bit of weight; the years provide that when you no longer work too much; and Jans opposite you at the table, busy with some needlework or such, just like a typical old couple; please write to me if I am very much mistaken in this. Well, for me things are completely different; I do not have the time to gain weight; we have a farm with horses and cattle etc. and always lots of work. You must know that what is called a farm over here is mostly bush, and it takes a lot of work before the land is ready for building and farming.

One has to saw down the trees or chop them down and root them out before you can plow and harvest, and when you realize that the trees mostly have a diameter of 2 to 4 feet and very often stand so close together that when looking up you cannot see the daylight, then you will understand how much work there has to be done; and afterwards we make the wood into firewood or planks.

My brother Gerard also had a farm, which I now own as well, since he passed away just a year ago; he never married so I was the only heir. And so we are living all together. Nellie is still my housekeeper, Maartje is married and has 3 children and my youngest 2 daughters Jans and Hendrina are both school teachers. My 2nd son Jan is married and has 2 children, and 3 of my sons are mostly at home, and all of us fortunately are very healthy. Please excuse me if I make some mistakes in my writing because I never speak any Dutch anymore and so writing it is a little bit difficult for me.

When you receive this letter please answer me soonest and I would also appreciate receiving a letter from your wife, because Hein you know that old love never rusts; but oh how long, long ago are those times, sometimes it seems to me it was in another world. Sometimes when I see

my children with all their friends, because our house is always an open house and very often full with girls and boys and always music and songs, then I can very well remember the olden days when we were all still together; it often does me a lot of good to remember those days, although sometimes I do feel so very lonely, especially when I realize that I am the only one left of all my and my wife's brothers and sisters. I sometimes wonder what the good Lord will have in store for me by letting me live this long, but it is His will not ours, and His ways are not our ways.

Heartfelt greetings from all of us,

your friend and cousin,
John P. Esveldt

[Four letters from Jan Pieter Esveldt to his cousin in The Netherlands]

Chewelah, Nov. 1916

Friend Sparnaaij and family,

It has been some time since we heard from each other, so I will start writing again in the hope that I may hear some news from you all. All of us fortunately are hale and healthy and our family at home is getting smaller and smaller; now I have only my 2 youngest sons at home and we manage in this way, the three of us, without a female housekeeper. This may seem strange to you, but over here this is nothing out of the ordinary because nearly all the menfolk are able to cook and roast almost as well as the women, with the exception of my person; I would not be able to boil water without burning it!! But the boys cook very well. My children sometimes are saying, Dad, you will have to get yourself another woman. But that has its difficulties because I have not yet met one which I would like to have for a wife, and maybe there would be no one who would have me. Anyway I have not tested my luck in this matter and I better put it out of my head to ever re-marry.

My eldest daughter who did the housekeeping after my wife died, is married again and my son Piet is also married and my two youngest daughters are both schoolmistresses, so that only leaves my 2 youngest sons at home. The eldest of the two is also starting talk about marrying, and the youngest will probably go to high school in the spring, so very soon I shall be all alone. This is not a pretty prospect, for sure, but that is the way the world turns; one has to take it like it comes. But now something else.

How are you coping over there with that terrible war going on; as I have read in the papers the side effects of the war are about the same in Holland as here in America; some people make millions, but the ordinary folks have to pay high prices for everything they need. So therefore I am very curious to learn something about the circumstances in Holland, and it would really please me very much to receive a long letter from you with news about all the friends and acquaintances.

Hoping that you will receive this letter in the best of health, I remain after passing on the best of regards from all of us,

your friend and cousin J.P.Esveldt

[Four letters from Jan Pieter Esveldt to his cousin in The Netherlands]

Chewelah, 5 July 1919

Friend Sparnaaij and family,

It has been so long since I wrote to you or heard from you; now that the big war is over I thought we should give our correspondence a fresh start, because I am very curious to learn how you are all doing and who is still in the land of the living; we are all getting older and in a short while will have to follow the way of all flesh.

Fortunately all of us have come through the difficult times of the war reasonably well, maybe better than in most countries; 2 of my sons were drafted, one in the army and the other in the navy, but both have survived very well and are back home again. My 3 eldest sons and all my 4 daughters are married and my 2 youngest sons are still at home, and I am now the grandfather of 8 boys and 1 girl. Since I cannot decide to get remarried, I live by myself together with my 2 youngest sons; sometimes one of my daughters comes for a short stay; at this moment one of my daughters is staying with me together with her family of 3 children.

At the time one of my youngest sons was being drafted, I was alone with only my youngest son, and we became so fed up staying at home, that from October till March we went traveling and visited all my children in Washington and Idaho and we stayed for three months on the Pacific coast; but my preference is staying in my home and living the free life in the mountains and forests.

When you receive this letter, please be so good as to write to me soonest, telling me how all of you are doing etc. etc.

Hoping that you and Jans will receive this letter in good health, I remain, with heartfelt greetings from us all,

your cousin and friend,

J.P.Esveldt

NARRATIVE THREE

Of a Third Generation of American Esvelts

by Russell M. Esvelt

Chapter 1: Formative Years — From Child to Man

The years of childhood, so the saying goes, are days and weeks of carefree, fun-filled existence, void of the worries or responsibilities that overtake one in adult life. One should look back on them as the happiest period of a lifetime. The older boys on the farm, Russell and Howard, did not, in later years, recall such an idyllic picture.

True, there were some pleasurable times of swimming in the pond, hunting ground squirrels with the single-shot .22 rifle, or tramping the hills with the neighbor Engstrom kids. Time was more taken up, however, with a daily quota of morning and evening chores – carrying water from the spring to the log cabin, splitting and carrying wood for the kitchen range and living room heater, feeding the pigs, calves and chickens, or bringing in the cows from pasture. By the age of ten, the twice-daily chore of milking cows was added. Summer weeks were filled with cultivating and hoeing endless rows for corn for the silo, tending the large family garden, shocking interminable wind-rows of hay plus hauling the hay for storage in the barn and hay-sheds. In the latter, it became Russell's task to drive the team and load (or distribute) the hay on the hay-rack as Dad and Howard pitched it up to him, and distribute the hay in the barn loft as it came off the wagon. Fall, winter and spring provided a time for cutting and storing a year's supply of firewood, building and repairing fences, or the seeming endless list of requirements to build and sustain a farm from its raw beginning to a productive operation.

The courage, resourcefulness, determination, vision and plain hard work of John and Julia Esvelt, little appreciated at the time, surely imparted to their boys a sound basis for later life that far exceeded in value any gifts of indulgence and ease that parents might bestow on their children. In later years, Russell was grateful to Dad for the lessons and example he unobtrusively provided in such characteristics as industry, thrift, dependability – and perhaps most of all, honesty and integrity. Dad was firm but not harsh, short on praise but long on appreciation. Mom displayed the love and affection they both felt for the boys.

School took up much time. It was a long walk to Daisy and its little three-room school – two miles each way. For young boys, it was a twenty-minute trot, except during the winter months with its untracked snow on the one-lane country road. But school studies were easy for Russell and he enjoyed it – especially the recess periods when the kids engaged in a variety of peer-oriented games. Sorry, no school equipment or supervision, but the experience of self-taught lessons of ingenuity and group self-discipline.

Russell had entered school on his sixth birthday while the family was still in Spokane. The next fall, after four months in the first grade, he was placed in the second grade with

children a year older than he. Normal progress followed at Daisy until mid-year of the fifth grade. There were two girls for classmates and one week in January they were both absent due to illness. The teacher had four grades in her room, fifth through eighth, so to conserve her time during that week, she put Russell in with the sixth grade class. On the return of the two girls, she just left him in the sixth grade class. He seemed to get along fine, although he later discovered he had completely missed that part of the arithmetic curriculum covering fractions. He gradually picked it up by observation and a bit of self-teaching.

At that time, the requirement for graduation from the eighth grade included passing a series of State-administered examinations covering all subject areas. The end of the following year, when Russell was in the seventh grade and Howard in the eighth, the teacher decided to let the seventh graders take the State exams just for practice. Much to everyone's surprise, three weeks later the post office delivered Russell's eighth grade diploma, and the little eleven-year-old boy was soon to enter high school.

A modified caste system existed among the kids in school. Those who lived in the little town of Daisy considered themselves the elite, and tended to look down on the "country" kids, with their work-stained overalls, muddy boots and shy manners. Many times during those years, Howard and Russell vowed that some day they would prove to be better than any of the others, an incentive that may have contributed to their determination and gave added satisfaction in later years as the youthful aspirations were realized.

The Esvelt family about 1924; Russell is seated on the left.

For a number of years the Daisy school operated a four-year high school, a marginal effort with a single teacher and enrolling less than 25 pupils. The nearest high schools were located at Hunters to the south, reached over 20 miles of a winding dirt road, and 18 miles to the north at Kettle Falls with a connecting gravel-surfaced road. Travel in 1924 was relatively primitive, and modern school buses yet undeveloped. In rural communities, most children dropped out of school by the eighth grade – their parents considered that level of education sufficient for their little world, and a 14-year-old was big enough to spend full time helping out on the farm or family business.

Due to lack of interest and community support, the high school program was abandoned, although the ninth and tenth grades were continued for two more years. Howard and Russell continued with a mere handful of the classmates but, by the following year, they were the only ones left in the high school program, as other pupils dropped out or families moved away. By the spring of 1926, Howard had reached the robust age of 15 years, and the expanding Esvelt farm desperately needed his help. When he dropped out of school, Russell was the lone

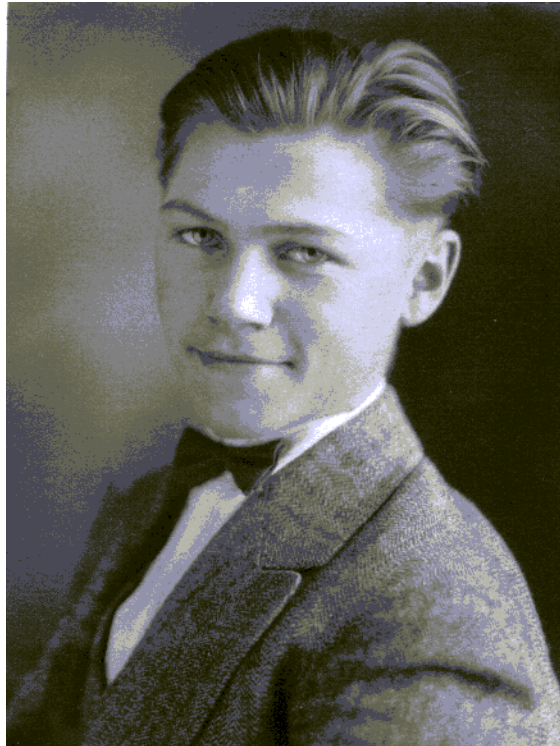
remaining student of Daisy High School. For the three remaining months of the school year, he had limited supervision and tutoring from the teacher, whose main task was conducting classes for the seventh and eighth grade pupils. The curriculum was sparse and disjointed, but he vaguely recalls geometry, some literature texts to pore over, a few books on ancient and medieval history, and the rudiments of surveying with the help of a transit provided by the teacher, along with instructions for its use.

Russell's mother was determined that her second son must continue his education and thus arrangements were made the next fall for room and board at Kettle Falls and attendance at its high school. By that time, Kettle Falls had opened a school bus route that terminated within five miles of the farm. Early each Monday morning, Howard would deliver Russell by horseback to board the bus for the ride to Kettle Falls. On Friday night, Russell made the return bus trip and walked the remaining five miles home, arriving well after dark. The following year, Kettle Falls extended its bus route all the way to Daisy, with a promise of at least ten pupils at that terminus, and so Daisy children once more had access to a high school education.

The school bus was an ancient vehicle consisting of a Ford Model "T" truck chassis and motor over which was built a long box-like enclosed body. Wooden benches extended along each side of the body with two benches stretching down the center. Maximum speed was 25 m.p.h. and, by the time the contraption reached the school, it was carrying 45 youngsters of all shapes and sizes. For one whose home was a two-mile walk from the end of the bus route, it meant leaving home by 7:15 a.m. and a return about 5:30 p.m. Tacking on an hour or two of farm chores at each end of the day plus time for breakfast and supper, left little time for other than a night's sleep. Russell recalls a few occasions when he took schoolbooks home to study but the tight schedule aborted any attempt at homework and a study hall period each day had to suffice.

But a high school diploma was the outcome. This writer does not recommend such a path to that educational goal. Not only was the quality of the school program available to him during those four years at a low level, he was much too immature to reach his maximum potential. Opportunities for development in the non-academic areas of customary school activities are denied a youth who is three years behind his classmates in social and physical maturity. During his high school senior year, his peers in such pursuits as athletics and social affairs were found among freshmen, so he lost three years of growth in those areas. However, one must make the most of what is at hand and the high school diploma opened the way to a later step toward a higher goal.

Along the way, an insignificant incident took place with a minor effect on all other members of this branch of the family. Among immigrants from mainland Europe, it was not uncommon that the spelling of family names created difficulties in an English-language society. The letter "d" in the Esveldt name results in weird pronunciations and misspellings. When Russell entered Kettle Falls High School, he gave his surname as "Esvelt" to avoid such confusion in his new surroundings. Subsequently, his parents and brothers followed suit and, although legal action affirming the spelling change was never taken, it was established permanently for this line of the family. It is interesting to learn that in Holland itself variations in the family name have been noted from Esveldt to Esveld to Esvelt.



Russ Esvelt at the time of his high school graduation, 1918

What does a green country boy do after completion of high school at the age of fifteen? In Russell's case, there was no question — he became a full time worker on the family farm. Aside from the lack of any choice, his help was needed. It was accepted that Howard would probably be the son to remain home and ultimately share with his father the management and operation of the growing enterprise. Howard soon had his own car and was granted freedom to seek outside diversions for entertainment during spare periods of time. Russell assumed that some day he would strike out on his own — into an unknown future. So he became a full time farm boy and was rewarded with the necessities of food and lodging and a place in the family circle. Young brothers John and Fred were reaching the age to enter the little school at Daisy, soon to shrink to one room.

A year later, in July of 1929, Russell was becoming inpatient with what seemed a dead-end existence. One day he informed his father that he wanted to go on to college, to which the response was "Well, that's fine, son. Go ahead." The farm income was little more than enough to provide for the family needs plus a small investment toward an expanding and more profitable operation. However, his mother overheard the conversation so, taking Russell into the kitchen, she emptied and counted out the contents of a fruit jar totaling $20.00 in change, her personal "mad money." She pushed it over to her son saying, "Here, son, take this — it's all I have." A mother's love and sacrifice for a child can never be measured by a handful of change, but she can envision it as a seed which may grow and flourish to achieve the heights she has in mind for him. Thus was begun a new adventure, a crack in the veil of the future through which a bit of the panorama of dreams of a young lad may be glimpsed, beckoning

him to move on. The lonely hours of shocking row after row of windrowed hay or squeezing streams of milk from a cow's udder into a milk bucket provide ample time for dreams of the future. And without imaginative dreams there would be little incentive to tackle the unknown or to achieve aspirations born of these dreams.

There really wasn't much choice as to the college campus to which Russell's steps would be directed, even if he had had the benefit of help from a high school counselor. Such personnel did not exist at that time. About one hundred miles distant, not far from Spokane, was the small town of Cheney containing the equally small State Normal School. In this town lived Aunt Margie Christ, one of the family of Esveldts who emigrated from Holland in 1892. Although in ill health and a near invalid, she had divorced her autocratic husband and moved to Cheney with her three children. How they had survived in those days of no welfare handouts could well be the subject of another story. By this time, the oldest child, Lucille, had finished two years at the Normal School and was teaching in Seattle. Robert had made his way from high school to attend the University of Washington, completely self-supported. John was still at home at age fifteen, entering his high school senior year. He worked part-time at a local bakery, which provided their sole support.

In early September of 1929, Russell joined the Christ family. Since the opening of the fall term was still two weeks away, he immediately secured work from the head groundskeeper at the college, performing tasks well suited to a farm boy. The work was only temporary, but the income supplemented his meager store of funds. By the time school started, he secured a job at the bakery where John worked. John's hours were from five until eight in the morning when the day's baking was getting underway — bread, pastries, pies, cookies. Russell spent three afternoon hours cleaning up after the baking was completed and later filling orders and making deliveries of bakery goods to local families. The pay was $0.35 per hour, Saturday included, which covered living expenses.

The primary function of Cheney Normal was to prepare people to teach in the elementary grades. Two years of college work was required, but this was soon to be increased to three. A career in teaching was not in Russell's plans — he hoped to major in chemistry, and perhaps Cheney could provide two years of transfer credit to Washington State College, by which time the financial situation would, hopefully, improve. He selected chemistry, college algebra, biology, P.E. and geography of North America for starters. He found it all very interesting and made a mixture of friends at the college and among John's high school classmates. In fact, he soon began to feel quite worldly, especially during vacation periods when he returned to visit his acquaintances in Daisy.

At the end of winter quarter he found himself short of the necessary cash for tuition payment for the spring term and reluctantly dropped out of school. A local farmer needed help in his spring work and Russell found himself gainfully employed. It wasn't much — food and lodging plus one dollar a day, which in a few weeks would build into a modest nest-egg. However, about two weeks later he looked up from his plowing to see Howard approaching in his father's car.He had been sent to bring Russell home — if he wasn't in school he may as well be helping out on the home farm. He obediently complied and by the following day was in the fields at Daisy; except now there was no pay whatsoever.

However, by mid-summer the hay harvest had been completed so the two boys were permitted to go south to the wheat country for the annual harvest there. Separation of the wheat from straw was done in a stationary threshing machine. Each of the boys drove a "header box" pulled by a span of four horses, in which the grain was carried from the header or mowing machine in the fields to be unloaded into the threshing machine. The workday started at 5:00 a.m. and ended by 8:00 that evening; it was hot, dusty and hard work. Meals were eaten in the chuck-wagon, and the crew members had bed rolls in the nearest straw stock. The good part was the $3 per day, six days a week.

And so, by fall Russell was back in school. It became an intermittent thing, interspersed with times back on the farm and occasional forays to the wheat harvest or the apple harvest during the fall season near Wenatchee — about 120 boxes picked per day at 3 cents per box would accumulate enough cash to enter school the next term.

By 1931, the Great Depression was well underway. However, Russell came into good fortune by way of the only scholarship available at Cheney Normal. His grades in school had been good and he was awarded the grant for the ensuing year, a princely sum of $15.00. Unfortunately, both he and John Christ had lost their jobs at the bakery — business was poor and the baker's son was now old enough to take their place. John left to join his family in Seattle and enter the University but, by then, he and Russell had formed a close and life-long friendship. But Russell needed money for living expenses at Cheney and again he was lucky to get another job, this time at a grocery store, where he clerked, stocked shelves, drove delivery truck and was janitor. Hours were from one until six each afternoon and ten hours on Saturday. Pay was $5.00 per week, but plenty of the fellows on campus were envious of his situation.

He carried a full load of course work during the morning hours. He also decided to become involved in some of the school activities, so he joined the A Capella Choir, got a small part in the fall term college play and was given one of the leads in the annual operetta, Gilbert and Sullivan's "Trial by Jury." All of this left virtually no time for studying and the grade point average dropped — straight C's for the entire school year. An education, he felt, was more than academic credits, and it was well worth it to be a part of college life.

One more term was needed to complete the required eight quarters of college work for an elementary teaching certificate. The following spring, in 1933, he returned to Cheney for three months and was qualified for a teaching position. Five years after graduation from high school, four years following entrance into college, Russell had completed eight quarters of teacher training. Openings for new teachers were few and college records show that only twenty percent of the year's graduates found teaching positions. Among the lucky ones, he was offered a one-year contract to teach in a one-room rural school at Bruce Creek, some thirty miles north of the Daisy homestead. The annual salary was $810.00 and, more importantly, it offered a professional beginning. At twenty years of age, the erstwhile raw country lad had matured to complete self-sufficiency and manhood.

Early Years Growing Up on the Farm

By Fred L. Esvelt

My father was John Peter Esveldt, the son of Dutch immigrants. His parents, Jan Pieter and Hendrina (Munnik) Esveldt, moved from Uithoorn, Holland, to Spokane, Washington, in 1892 when my father was four years old. He grew up north of Spokane along the Little Spokane River near what is now called Dartford, and his fascinating life story is told elsewhere. My mother was Julia Amanda (Benson) Esveldt, originally from Minnesota, who met my father while applying for a school teaching job in Dartford. The name *Esveldt* is the original Dutch spelling, and is recorded as such on my birth certificate. The "d" in the name was dropped for convenience by one of my brothers, Russell, and the rest of the family followed this practice.

My parents purchased a small farm in 1920 and moved from Spokane to this farm near Daisy, Washington, a couple of miles from the Columbia River. I can't remember much about the two-room log cabin where I was born on September 19, 1923, but I lived there until I was two or three years old. After that we moved into the ranch house my father built. I do remember that water had to be hand-carried from a creek. I also remember the spring house which was down from the log cabin and across the creek where the barn was located. To get to the barn you went across a little swamp with a board path about two feet wide (that was a dangerous journey for a little kid of three!). The chicken pen and the chicken house were straight north of the log cabin. The old barn at that time had a silo and on one side of the barn they had stalls for about six cows and two horses. These draft horses were fearsome, big things for a little guy such as myself. We only milked about eight cows at that time. We sold some cream and got about 14 cents a pound butterfat for cream and so we probably got around 20 or 25 dollars a month. And then we had the skim milk which we put into barrels to sell to neighbors for their hogs at 50 cents a barrel. That was our total, steady income. Dad and Howard used to go to the town of Davenport in the early fall to work in the wheat harvest in order to make some extra money, leaving Mom at home to care for the other children, along with doing all the farm chores.

As a child, when I was too little to help with the milking, I'd have to stay in the house by myself. I was scared to death of the dark, so I'd lay on the floor next to the kitchen stove. Imagining it was a place of safety, I would stay there until the rest of the family got back and then I could breath easier.

A typical day on the ranch would go like this: Dad and Howard and Russ (and later Johnny and I) would get up at 4:30 in the morning. First you'd get the hay down from the loft and throw it down in the manger before you'd turn the cows in to start milking. My main memories were after Dad built the reservoir, the generator, and water wheel, when we had a vacuum pump for the milking machines. Before that it was hand milking only, and I can barely remember that because I only had one cow to milk. With the machines it would take between an hour and an hour and 15 minutes to milk our 32 cows. We'd carry the milk up next to the house. Before we had the milk house, we'd take it to the basement of the house where we turned the separator to make cream. That was basically our only income. After we finished milking came breakfast.

Depending on the season, we'd start hauling or cutting hay in the summer or in the fall build fences. In the winter it was cutting wood. Because everything was frozen we could go along with an ax and pop off huge limbs. We'd saw them up and haul the logs in, then cut them into blocks 12 to 14 inches long. Then we'd chop those up into wood to haul into the house. We'd also have to chop wood Into kitchen sticks for the kitchen stove. There was never a time with nothing to do. It was all in sequence.

Even though Dad didn't finish school beyond the eighth grade, he knew how to do a great many things. Everyone had to improvise a lot to make things do, since no one had extra money to hire a repairman or other person. For instance, when he built the house with the kitchen stove, he made a hot water tank that came off the kitchen stove. He ran pipes from the bottom of the tank up into the stove and had pipes next to the firebox in the stove and then out of there to the top of the tank. So when you built a fire to heat the water, the heated water would go up to the top of the tank and push out the cold water, to be heated up, and so on. That was the way we kept hot water since we didn't have electricity.

Or again, when we butchered a pig my dad knew how to improvise. Back when I was a little kid, before we specialized in just cows, we had pigs. Dad would build a vat three feet wide and three feet deep and about five feet long. He'd put it on rocks, fill it with water and build a fire under it to heat the water until it was scalding hot. Then you'd kill the pig and tie a rope to his head and feet, and slide him back and forth in the scalding water. Next you'd take a scraper and just scrape all the hair off the pig, which came off just like shaving your face. We also had a smoke house to smoke a lot of the bacon.

For two winters we kept sheep for another farmer because we had more feed. Also, Mom had chickens. We unsuccessfully tried raising ducks and geese. When I was really little we started with Jersey cows and then we went to Guernseys because they gave more milk, and then the Holsteins gave even more milk with less butterfat. When we sold cream it was shipped to a creamery in Addy. Later on when we sold milk it was picked up at the farm by an Arden Farms milk truck and transported to Spokane. At that time we were milking about thirty-two cows.

Brothers Fred and Johnny (about 1926)

When I was growing up, we had a mousing cat that hung around the barn and drank milk out of a little sardine can. Occasionally there was an old Tom cat roving around and pretty soon the cat would have kittens. Johnny and I enjoyed playing with them in the loft of the barn when they were kittens. But when they became grown, up, cat-like creatures, they would mysteriously disappear. Later we found out that Dad or Howard would get rid of them and that the only animals allowed were those that served a purpose.

We had an outhouse, but fortunately we didn't have to use it during the middle of the night because we had a

little potty bucket by the bed. Howard and Russ, being ten years older, had Johnny and me so scared of the dark we would have never gone out at night, anyway. They used to set Johnny and me up so that we'd be afraid of almost everything. We often were asked to go down to the cellar to get a canof meat or pears for Mom, but we hated it with a passion because of all the things Howard and Russ had convinced us were lurking down there. One time Howard was trapping coyotes and decided to take one of his dead prey and prop it up in the road where we'd be coming home from school, about dusk. When Johnny and I came around the corner, and saw the coyote, we went into hysterics. Mom had a hard time forgiving Howard for that one.

On the farm, accidents were rare, but unavoidable. The first wagon we owned had fairly high wheels, and one time Dad tipped it over and broke a couple ribs. He tried to stay on top of it and it flung him out. Another time, Howard got his hand caught in the pulley ropes while lifting hay up into the barn. It was fortunate he was wearing gloves but he still was pulled right up to the top until it locked up. Because of this, Howard lost part of 2 fingers. Oddly enough, even with all the equipment, we never had any serious accidents.

In 1933, when I was about nine years old, our family went Chicago. Mom bought Johnny and me a new pair of cords and a polo shirt. Proudly trying on the clothes with new tennis shoes, we could hardly wait for the trip back East. From Spokane, we made the long trip in a Greyhound bus that we even slept on. The most memorable part happened out in the wilds of Wyoming. I had to go to the bathroom desperately, so Mom asked the bus driver if he'd stop. He did, and pretended to go out and check the tires while I went to the bathroom outside the bus. I remember being really embarrassed. We went right through Chicago to Dearborn, Michigan, where one of Dad's brothers, Virgil, lived and worked with the Ford Motor Company. Dad picked up a new 1933 Ford V-8 which we drove back to Washington. I don't remember too much about the fair. Since we didn't have any money to stay in hotels, we slept in the car going home, Mom in the back sitting up and Dad, Johnny and I in the front.

It was during this trip that our family also visited my mother's parents, Frederick and Amanda Benson, in Center City, Minnesota. My grandfather was the son of Swedish immigrants, Matthias and Karna Bengston, who had been settlers in the wilderness near what later became Center City. Grandfather grew up living not too far from the wigwams of friendly Chippewas and later married my grandmother, Amanda Gustafson, who was born in Sweden. His primary occupation was that of a well driller, but he and grandmother also operated the Dew Drop Inn on Lake Chisago.

Brothers Russell, Howard, Johnny and Fred (about 1930)

We were part of a family, but not emotionally, really. My Dad didn't show any emotion: in fact, I never saw any emotion between my Dad and Mom. Never. They just didn't display affection. Dad and Mom were both really old European in their habits, although we knew they

were both there for us. I didn't really appreciate it until I went in the service. I don't think Mom and Dad went to my high school Baccalaureate or graduation or my college graduation. The first one they ever went to was when I got my Doctorate. They never saw any football or basketball games I played in high school. They couldn't leave the farm, because they always had to be there for milking, morning and evening on Sundays which was our leisure day. They weren't religious as far as regular church goers but they did go early on. They were God-fearing people. Occasionally on Sunday we'd go across the ferry to visit Uncle Mont and Mae. For Thanksgiving my Uncle Fred from Chewelah would come over but those were the only two relatives we usually saw. Our social life was at zero.

In retrospect, I never appreciated how hard my mother worked until she was gone. She did all the housework (cleaning, cooking, and washing), some of the milking, fed the chickens, had a large garden and flowers and did all of the canning of vegetables as well as fruit from our little orchard around the corner of the house. There was no refrigeration, so she had to immediately cook and can all the meat after we butchered. I have since wondered how on earth she managed to do it all by herself. Dad was a typical Dutchman. We kids never helped Mom out, but because we were boys we only helped Dad by stacking wood and doing the other chores around the farm. I recall that when I was in grade school, my mother had all of her teeth pulled—without the benefit of Novocain or other pain-killer. She was still bleeding a little when she picked Johnny and I up after grade school. Nowadays if you get your teeth pulled, they fit you immediately with false teeth. At that time, you had to wait until your mouth was all healed up. There are so many things about my Mom I didn't appreciate until I got out of the service.

Even though we didn't have much money on the farm, there was always plenty to eat. We grew a lot of vegetables as well as having an orchard, and Mom did all the canning. There was no refrigeration or electric lights, so in the fall alter we'd butchered a pig and a steer, Mom would cook and can it. Anything that needed to be preserved had to be canned.

Mom was a good cook. She tended to overcook everything because that was how Dad liked it. I didn't know what a "medium done" steak was. First, we didn't have steak, but if we did she cooked them very well done. You get used to it when you're kids. Store-bought bread was a luxury. We got eggs from the chickens. A good Sunday company dinner would be a chicken and potatoes and home made ice cream.

In the winter, the pond would freeze to about 10 or 12 inches thick. When it was thick enough, we'd take a crosscut saw and saw through the ice in long rows to get blocks about 18 inches square. We had a little 12 by 12 foot square ice house with sawdust in it and we would stack all the ice in there with sawdust, which was a good insulator, up the sides and covering the ice. The ice would literally last all summer, no matter how hot it was. When we wanted to make ice cream, we'd go out and shave off some pieces of ice, and then cover the sawdust back up. The ice cream freezer was all hand-cranked and it made really rich ice cream.

Once a month we'd take our shopping list and go to Colville to get groceries, and once a year we took the big trip to Spokane. We would leave at 4:00 in the morning and returned at 9:00 that evening. Winter travel was especially difficult, and back in the 20's and early 30's we did not wander far from the ranch. The main problem was the first hill going up from Daisy. At

that time the old dirt road was located on the south side of the gulch (opposite its present location) and as such did not get much sun to dry the road out. The results were horrible—mud in the spring and fall and snow in the winter—to the extent that cars did not attempt to go up the hill, even with chains. So to go to Colville the family had to hitch the team of horses to the sled, go to Daisy, put the team in the school barn, fill the car's radiator with water (there was no anti-freeze then), and proceed on to town. Also, the car did not have a heater so we used blankets to try to keep warm which were always dusty from the dirt and graveled roads. Coming home was the opposite routine. Needless to say, our trips to any place were of great necessity.

Since Mom did all the baking and churned all the butter, the only things you bought at the store were the staples like sugar and salt. One thing I hated was the oatmeal. If there was anything I disliked more, it was cornmeal. I'd mess around with it until it was like a jelly paddy in the bottom of my bowl, and then I'd still have to eat it with tears coming down my face and gagging. It was almost unheard of to have store-bought bread or cornflakes. It was the greatest thing in the world when Uncle Fred came over to visit us from Chewelah because he'd always have some candy for us—a real treat.

My Uncle Fred Esveldt from Chewelah liked to pull tricks on us kids. A classic one was the time when Johnny and I were visiting him in Chewelah and he told us that there was a brand new jackknife in the box with the sawdust. We hurried downstairs and pawed through that box until we discovered that it was the cat's litter box! He thought that was hilarious, but Mom would have liked to kill him! It was a pretty good joke, and he was a real prankster. Being in a small town like Uncle Fred's, everyone knew everybody else. There was a large board in town that you could write on to advertise something for sale. Once Fred wrote a friend's name up there and advertised that he had hogs for sale for the unbelievable price of $2.50 each. The man got quite a few phone calls and people coming out to his place before he figured out what was going on.

Johnny and I made our own fun when we were kids. For example, we would go under the cedar trees in back of the house and build cities and farms and then water down the soil to make it harder for paved roads. We'd cut out little cars in the wood shop. Cows were marbles and we'd build fences with sticks. There was water coming down the flume from the top of the hill and we would put a little pipe in it to redirect the water, making a river. We'd play that way on Sundays for hours. Most of the toys that Johnny and I had we made ourselves or Dad made for us. For instance, we'd get a cross stick (like a t-square) and then we'd find any type of wheel rim about 8-10" in diameter, then run along pushing it. Sometimes we would cut balls out of the big pine bark. We had old cheap tennis rackets and we'd bang the ball back and forth or see who could hit it up the roof the most limes without missing it. We built stilts to walk on, and sometimes Johnny and I used to have our own little track meets when we were in grade school. I was smaller, but a little faster than Johnny so it was always pretty even.

When I was in fifth or sixth grade we got milking machines. Dad built a large concrete reservoir on the hill above the house and made a water wheel in the pipe below, near the house, with a generator for producing electricity, as well as a compressor pump for the milking machines. Since we were milking about 32 cows a day, it made a big difference. This also brought electric lighting into our house, an improvement over the kerosene lamps. Originally the

current was DC and with each light turned on the other lights dimmed.

I learned to swim in the circular concrete reservoir up on the hill above the house. Howard and Russ would force me into the tank and hold onto my hair as I paddled about furiously. The water was about six feet deep and around 46 degrees, so you just kind of skimmed the top of it! They would let me sink a little, and that's how I learned to swim. Pretty effective! We used to go up there after work to cool off. You'd dive in and it was ice cold, so one only "swam" from one side to the other, quickly.

Dad built a dam across the creek that flowed through our property, and we also used to swim in it. Most of the fields were across from this creek that ran through the middle of the cleared land. One fall Dad caught some Eastern Brook trout on the spawning beds up at Twin Lakes. He spawned out a bunch of the eggs and put them in wire mesh frays in the water tank next to the milk house. He hatched out the fingerlings and then dumped them into the pond and they grew up into nice-sized trout. We'd be haying during the summer, and there were grasshoppers everywhere. We'd ride back to the barn alter loading up the wagon and we'd be sitting on top of the hay, catching grasshoppers to throw into the pond, and the fish would just boil up after them. Some of the trout got down the creek. With a string, hook, and pole, I used to sneak up on my belly as a kid to get close to the creek which was only a couple of feet wide. You could catch fish all the way down through the fields.

When my Dad fished, it was strictly meat-fishing. But Dad made a sport out of it, too, because he loved to fool the game warden on his trips to Twin Lakes. He'd go fishing three different ways. I used to hate it as an 11 or 12 year old boy because I was just a flunky. He would have a seine net about 60 feet long and 6 feet high that floated on the top and had weights on the bottom. We'd go up two or three weeks before the fish would start coming up to the beds where they would spawn and clean up any sticks or brush from the sandy bottom. Then when the fish started to spawn, we'd go up to the north part of the lake, where Dad had hidden a boat in the brush. We would have to row all the way across the North Lake, through the canal, and all the way across the south lake to the part where the spawning beds were. So as not to alert any game warden, Dad used to put butter on the oar locks so that they wouldn't squeak. We'd go up in the evening with our bedding and sleep until about 3:00 in the morning. Then we'd get up just before daylight and tie ropes onto brush in the bank. I'd row straight out until I hit the end of the rope, and then I'd turn and row parallel to the shore. Dad would feed out the net and when I got to the end, I'd turn and row straight into the shore, and then I'd get out and start pulling in my end of the rope. You could feel the fish hitting the seine.

John Sr. with catch of rainbow trout from Twin Lakes, near Inchelium, WA. Several 8-9 lbs.

In a good pull, you'd get a couple of gunny sacks full of Eastern Brook that weighed two or three pounds apiece. It was hard work. After making two or three pulls with the seine, we'd get enough fish, so we'd bundle up and row back across the lake, hide the boat, carry the fish to the car, and go home. Although my Uncle got caught once, we never did. There was a cable ferry at the time and it was always exciting when you made it back that far, because there was no turning around and no game warden could stop you.

Another method of fishing was called triple hook. The fish would come in on the beds and you would cast out and reel in with the triple hook. You would snag them on their backs and could get one on almost every cast. The third way we'd fish was in the creek that came into the north Lake. Dad would have a long pole with an inch and a half gaff hook to catch the rainbow trout. Then you could reach in and jerk them out of the water. I'd have so many that I would be staggering along, following Dad, with all of them in a sack. At first when I tried to hook them, I'd feel like a spastic, because the reflection on the water threw me off. When we got them all home, Mom would cook them and can them.

Dad loved the out-of-doors. There were two main camping trips he took us on that I remember. When I was about nine years old, he took Johnny and me to Glacier National Park. (Mitz and I took Craig and Wade up there when they were about that age, too). A few years later we went over to the Olympic Peninsula and from Solduc Hot Springs near Port Angeles; we hiked in across Bogachiel Peak and down near the Hoh River Basin, and back up again across all the switchbacks. At that time you would hardly see anyone else, since it was still really wilderness. We camped at a little lake part way down from Bogachiel Lake. When you got up in the morning, there would be ice on the edge of the lake, as well as elk grazing around the edge of the water.

I was in the sixth grade when Dad bought me and Johnny a beautiful Montgomery Ward Hawthorn bicycle. We'd go screaming down the old, hilly road from the ranch to get to school, but we had to push the bike all the way up the first hill on the way home—nearly a mile. Typically, Johnny would pedal and I would ride on the handle bars (I think that's why Johnny developed such huge legs!). After awhile we broke one of the pedals and didn't have any money to get it repaired, so we rode that bike to school with one pedal. Johnny would kick the good pedal around, and then kick it again. Looking back, I don't know why we rode it because it was probably ten times as much work as walking. But it was sure fun whistling down the hills in the morning! It would have taken little effort for Dad or Howard to take the crank off and get it welded and put back on, but they never did. We still rode that bike with one pedal until I was half way through high school.

We didn't have any money. When I say we didn't have any money, I mean, we didn't have any money, period! Being poor was sometimes humiliating. We had two pairs of overalls—one for school and one for work. One day I got all the way to school before I noticed my pants were caked with splashed milk. Unfortunately, it was noticeably odoriferous and I had to sit all day long in school. Here again, people today can't realize how financially poor everyone was during those days of the Great Depression. It was bearable because practically everyone else was in the same boat. This situation continued through my first few years of college. You might want to take a girl downtown for a Coke, but you didn't even have a dime, and you couldn't borrow one,

either. Not even a dime! When Russ was in college, he resented coming back to the farm to work in the summer for no pay, but then, we had never gotten paid and the rest of us never expected it.

When I was in seventh or eighth grade, we'd ride bicycles the two miles down to Daisy and across the river flat to go swimming in the Columbia River (this was before Grand Coulee dam was constructed, so the river was much narrower). On the way back, I'd stop with the rest of the guys at the combination post office, store, and service station and the other kids would get pop for a nickel. I didn't have any money, so I started charging it. I had a guilty conscience because I knew that sooner or later I'd have to start paying for it, but as a kid you don't tend to look down the road too much. But the end of the summer came and Mr. Mutterer told me he had to have the money—$2.65. I can still remember! This was beyond all reach for me, so he told my Dad, who paid for it and never said a word. Dad had a way of *not* saying anything which was ten times worse than saying something. It was absolute agony!

Since we were so poor, we didn't get much in the way of presents for Christmas. One year Dad made some rubber band cannons; he took a stick, rounded it off, drilled a hole through it, and then took a wooden plunger and put rubber bands on the back. You'd pull the rubber bands out and put a wooden arrow in it like a sling shot. One year I got a wind-up fire engine. When it hit the wall, it would release a ladder that would go up the wall. Johnny got a wind-up Jeep with a trailer, but the spring broke the first night we played with it. For our Christmas decorating, we'd go up the hill and find a good fir tree, cut it down, and bring it back to the house and decorate it. We strung popcorn and had little clip-on candle holders that held real candles. Then on Christmas Eve we'd gather in the dining room and light the candles. There would be some snap and crackle as some of the needles caught on fire. You had to be there—you couldn't leave the room for fear of the house catching on fire. We kids never gave Mom and Dad any gifts while we were growing up, because we simply never had any money.

It was two miles to school (as I've often joked—up hill both ways, in two feet of snow!). Most of the time we walked to school and back, but in the winters when the snow was deep, Johnny and would often ride one of the horses. Horses were stabled in a barn next to the school. As soon as school was over we'd climb onto the horse, and when Johnny released the tether the animal would bolt for the door. We had to duck since the doorway was fairly low, and the horse would continue a good deal of the way up the hill from Daisy at a dead run, anxious to get home to his oats. I remember as a five year old I used to hang on to Johnny for dear life, riding behind him bareback with my legs splayed apart across the horse's broad back (it was a large, part draft horse). Several years later we rode another horse, Old Rex, to school and back. Rex's annoying game was to occasionally try and buck us off on the way home, at the corner a mile up from Daisy. If he succeeded, he would take off for home at a gallop; if we hung on, he settled down and plodded the rest of the way.

Sometimes Dad or Howard would be in town with the team of horses for supplies, and Johnny and I would be able to ride home in the sled. On one such occasion we were complaining of how wet and cold our feet were. This did not prove to be smart, since Dad ordered us out of the sled and we were told to hang onto the back of the sled and run the rest of the way home, to warm up our feet.

During our usual walks home, we made our way up the first hill and then went down the long lane until we hit Malley's on one side. They had a mean bull in their pasture that used to frighten us, so we would try to sneak along the road and keep out of sight. If he saw us coming he would run toward us, snorting and bellowing, as we ran along the other side of the fence. We had everything but a heart attack. Finally, Howard had enough of our misery and decided to deal with the situation. One day he hid in the brush next to the neighbor's fence a short time before he knew Johnny and I would appear up the road. Sure enough, as we approached, the bull came galloping over and trotted along the fence in a threatening manner as we took off running. Howard rose up from his hiding place as the bull came alongside him and, with both hands, smashed a huge rock down on the bull's head, behind its left ear. The surprised bull dropped to its knees, then rolled over on its side with its legs twitching. Howard feared that he might have killed it, but the bull soon recovered. After that incident, however, it left us alone.

We had a big spring on our place, and even back then water was a premium. We used the spring for irrigation as well as drinking water and we had the reservoir and ponds and everything else. During most of the spring and late summer the water would sink underground before it got down to the Columbia River. Mr. Malley took Dad to court, claiming the water rights. If we had lost that case, we would have had to dredge out the creek just to be sure the water got all the way to their place. That conflict went on for five or six years. Dad eventually won, but the Malley's didn't like Dad and neither did the Frasier's at the end of the lane.

Once when Johnny and I were going to school we found a gate across the end of our road which went between the Malleys and the Frasiers. Apparently our ornery neighbor was just going to knock down everything and block off our road. So that night, of course, we went home and told Dad. Howard at that time was about twenty years old and very hotheaded—always ready to take anybody on. So the next morning, Howard and Dad saddled up a couple of horses, and with Johnny and I on the back, we rode down to the gate. We tied ropes on the gate and pulled it down. Old Frasier came running out, cussing up a storm yelling, "My gate!" Howard and Dad allowed as how they were ready to fight, too. Frasier hollered back to his wife to fetch his gun! We two little kids were scared, to put it mildly. I think if he had come out with a gun, Howard would have killed him.

Howard was always looking to fight someone, it seemed, and although he almost got me into trouble on a number of occasions, this was the last we heard from Mr. Frasier. He pulled out all the fence posts in the middle of the road. Even after I got out of the Service, a relative of theirs lived up the hill. We used to come down from the Upper Place—some land we owned a couple of miles away from the main farm. The road was pretty well abandoned, but one day Howard and I were stopped while coming down from there. A guy came out and said we couldn't use the road anymore. As you can imagine, Howard got pretty angry and I was just back from the war, so I was pretty much of a hotdog, too. I wanted to take the guy on, but we bluffed our way through. (Then there was the last fight I ever got into, shortly before Mitz and I married. At a State Line Gardens dance we attended, someone asked Mitz for a dance, and she didn't want to dance with him. He got a little nasty about the whole thing, so I took exception to it. I thought I was going to choke him, but my friends pulled me off. Mitz was *my* gal, so no one had better mess around with her!)

But back to my childhood. One time the folks were going somewhere and they wanted Johnny and me to get out of school early in order to go with them, but we were afraid to ask the teacher. So we climbed out the window of the school when she was out of the room and ran all the way home, just like she was chasing us.

In grade school we went to a one-room school where the teacher lived in another room off the school. Once I was swinging out on the playground with a bigger boy and I was having trouble staying on. When I asked him to slow down, of course, he only went higher until we'd bounce and drop a little bit. Predictably, I finally fell off, and was knocked unconscious. I woke up in the teacher's quarters on the couch. Since there was no telephone, Johnny ran all the way home. My folks came and got me in their Model A, and I was still dazed. Whenever I got knocked out, I'd throw up. This time, everybody wondered if I had sustained internal injuries.

One good teacher I had for grade school was Rhoda Deaton. For discipline, she'd call you up front and put you over her lap and paddle you. I don't think it hurt as much as the total fear you had of it. Then in the eighth grade I got a man for a teacher.

One of my pleasant memories as a kid growing up was hunting ground squirrels. Dad taught Johnny how to operate a single-shot, .22 rifle and, in turn, Johnny let me go along with him and eventually learn how to shoot the rifle and hunt squirrels. We were given a nickel for every squirrel shot when we brought in the tail, and ten cents for every ground hog, mainly because of the problems that we had with the squirrels on the farm digging holes, making mounds in the fields, and so forth. We used to go up from the house to the top of the hill, day after day, to try to get "Old Whitetail", the name that we applied to a groundhog that we took about three years to finally kill. He would seemingly sense when we sneaked up over hill and bellied our way along the ground to get within shooting range, because he would always run under an old log cabin that was on top of the hill, and that would be it for the day. In addition, we used to run into quite a few rattlesnakes, particularly in the hayfields. But over the years, due to the sickle mowing of the alfalfa, they were eventually reduced down to a bare minimum.

During my ninth grade year I contracted scarlet fever and then later was down with a relapse, so I was still only 80 pounds when I started my sophomore year in high school. I remember once, about this lime, having a nose bleed from noon until evening, so the folks decided to take me to the doctor. They wrapped me up in blankets and we took the horse team down to Daisy where we always left the car during bad weather because, as I mentioned earlier, it had a hard time getting up the slick, packed clay roads. Chains didn't really work, especially when it turned to mud. We didn't have antifreeze then, so we left the radiator drained to keep it from freezing. We had to get warm water to pour into it, and that was quite a procedure. I can still remember the doctor shoving up little pieces of gauze in my nose, and then my folks had to leave me at a kind of nursing home for several days since I was pretty sick. The best part of that experience was that they gave me a little pea shooter that actually shot dried peas out of the barrel.

Because I was so little from the scarlet fever, I sometimes got picked on by a bully named Bob Cranston. He used to pound on my shoulder when I was on the bus until it was black and

blue. All I could do was put up with it. Finally, one of the seniors from Daisy got tired of his bullying me and invited the boy to meet him behind the bus, and proceeded to knock him flat. End of problem.

When I was in eighth grade we had a county track meet and I entered the under 80 pound group. I won blue ribbons in broad jump, high jump and pole vaulting. The best vaulting poles I had when I was a kid were ones we made out of small sapling trees. Since I was light, I had the advantage because I'd be competing against the fifth and sixth graders. Of course that all ended when I went to high school because then I was the little runt. My brothers and I were all late developers.

Although it was normally pretty late when we got in from milking the cows, sometimes in the evenings we would read. Of course, during the early years we didn't have any electricity, so we'd crowd around the kerosene lamp at the dining room table. We had a kerosene lamp in the kitchen and a bigger one in the living room. We were usually in bed by 9:00 p.m. Although that might sound early, there wasn't anything to do, plus you'd be pretty tired after a long day. We had a radio which ran off a 6 volt battery, although we didn't use it too much because we wanted to save the battery, which had to be taken someplace else to be charged up when it ran low. We had certain radio programs we listened to, mostly news and select programs such as The Inner Sanctum. The Inner Sanctum was a scary show and gave chills right up your spine, although with all the technology today, they would probably seem pretty simple.

By the time I was in high school we had electricity so I listened to a radio upstairs in my bedroom. I liked the big bands and could pick up New Orleans, Salt Lake City and Chicago. My favorites were the "sweeter" bands such as Guy Lombardo and Chuck Foster. I made up my mind then that I was going to see some of those bands one day. Later, when I was in the Service and back in Chicago, I had a chance to go to the Empire Room at the Palmer House to hear Gruff Williams. Then I went to the Aragon Ballroom in North Chicago. There was a big dance floor and balconies all around, and the ceiling was a dome with lights in it. When you first got there at 9:00, you would see clouds in the sky, and finally some stars would appear and the moon would come up. At 1:00 when they'd sign off and the moon would just be going down. Eddie Howard was the band leader there. My brother Russ stopped by to see me in Chicago on his way home for leave, and we went to the Black Hawk Restaurant and saw Del Courtney, one of my all-time favorite bands.

High school was a real experience for me, because I had turned twelve years old at the time and so I started high school before my thirteenth birthday. When beginning high school, we used to walk across the ridges to the highway that led up to Rice and on to Kettle Falls. So it was about a mile from the house to the highway where we waited for the bus, and then 20 more miles on the bus to Kettle Falls. Our day would begin about 7:15 in the morning when we started out and end about 5:00 in the evening when we finally returned home. This was a day to day affair. Johnny and I rode in the bus driver's car when we went to high school since we were beyond the end of the bus route. The buses at that time just had

Fred as a senior in high school (1939)

long, full-length benches running along each side for seating. The rules were that the girls were to be on one side and the boys on the other. No one messed around, because if you got kicked off the bus you had to hoof it all the way home by yourself. Discipline was such that you just didn't challenge anybody.

Sports activities, of course, were an additional problem for us who lived way out in the far reaches from the high school. As an example, with football, basketball, and baseball, all of the practices were done during the last period of the school day in order for the students who participated to be able to shower, dress, and ride the bus home. But games were a different situation. For football or basketball games, the coach would sometimes have to drive those of us on the team down river to our respective bus stops. Basketball became a real problem, because sometimes the games lasted long enough and were far enough away that by the time we got dumped off at the highway to start the walk home it was pitch dark and we had to literally feel our way across the ridges to find the path that led home. In addition, with basketball it became a situation of shooting instead of fast breaks, because the gym courts weren't always as long as they are now and sometimes the ceilings were low enough that you had to shoot a flat shot. To show you what a totally different game it was, at five foot seven inches I was a forward on the team when I was a senior!

One thing that embarrassed me when I started high school was that I had to wear high-top shoes. No one wore high-tops—all the cool guys had Oxfords. Actually, high school wasn't a pleasant experience for me because of my small size. Once, I played the part of a little Dutch boy in an opera in high school where I had to memorize some dance steps and a few songs. This was *not* one of my favorite high school memories. I played football when I was a senior, even though I weighed only 125 pounds. The school didn't have enough boys to field a team unless everyone turned out. The highpoint of the year was the senior sneak to Salt Lake City. We made it to Boise the first day, and that was the first place I'd ever seen that had a restaurant where the food went by on a conveyer belt and you just picked up what you wanted. We ended up at a big ballroom dance hall one night. There was only thirteen of us seniors, so there was no discipline problem. Plus, our chaperone was the school superintendent, Jasper Moore, who put the fear of God in all of us.

Once I got into trouble in high school and had to stay after school. I got a ride for about 10 miles but the rest of the 10 miles I dog-trotted home, because I knew I was going to get in trouble with Dad. I got home alter dark, about 8:00. Dad suggested I go out and pile wood for awhile. I don't know how long I piled wood—I supposed Dad was going to have me do it all night. But eventually he came out and told me to go to bed. No harsh words were spoken, but he got the message across.

Johnny and Russ were both gone by the time I was a junior in high school, so it was Howard and Dad and I who worked the farm. One day the folks and Howard were gone and they both thought the other was going to be home for milking. I got home from school and nobody was there, so I got the hay down and turned the cows in. Then I cleaned all their udders and got the milk machines going, alter which I had to empty all the buckets and take them to the house. No one got home until 8:30 that evening. I had to really hustle to milk all of those 32 cows by myself, but it wasn't a question of choice. You just did it.

Yet, even though we worked hard, you had to add some levity in once in a while. Once when Mitz was down visiting, she was watching me in the barn and I told her to run to the house and tell Mom I needed a sky hook. Mom ran to the tool shed and looked everywhere and then called back asking what was a "sky hook." Well, there is no such thing, but it was a fun joke.

Howard always used to work to try and break a record—to push himself and me to do the most amount of work in the least amount of time, which was an enthusiasm I didn't always share. He'd throw a load of hay through the top of the barn and I was supposed to spread it out on the barn floor. In the summer it used to get unmercifully hot and the chaff would get all down my shirt and itch.

We had a healthy fear of snakes. Johnny and I used to see snake tracks across the dusty road and we'd be almost afraid to cross the track. The timber rattlesnakes around our farm could get about as big around as your arm. We'd hit them while mowing the fields, so over the years the population went down, but back then we'd kill 20 to 25 a year in the hay fields. The bull snakes were big too, and scared you just as much until you figured out what they were (they looked similar to the rattlesnakes). One of the funniest incidents I recall was when Howard and I had gone out to the fields alter milking to get another load of hay and kind of clean it up. We were loading up the wagon, and after we got it so high someone had to jump into the wagon and spread it out so that it wouldn't topple over. That person would stomp it down so that we could get more hay on and, of course, Howard always wanted to get the biggest load he could. So I got up into the wagon to help him and then glanced down. Howard didn't realize that he was standing on a big bull snake. He was raking and looking up to talk to me and didn't even see it. While I tried to act detached, he finally saw it, and by this time the snake was already wrapped itself around him, slapping him all over. He yelled and started running, thinking he was being bit to death.

Another time Russ brought some guys home from Cheney to help with haying. It was stacked pretty high so one guy was holding it in place with his pitch fork, until he realized that there was a snake wrapped around the handle. He abandoned ship pretty fast!

When I was a junior and senior in high school I liked to go pheasant hunting on the weekends. I had a bolt-action 20 gauge shot gun and a dog that was half collie and half Australian sheepdog. Scottie was a good bird dog, but he wouldn't hold. If he got on the trail of something, he'd just run and I'd have to run behind him to try and keep up. I had a regular routine when I hunted, starting with going up in the hills to get ruffled grouse, and then looking for blue grouse even further up, and then making a circle toward Rice looking for Chinese pheasants before

Fred with dog Scottie at the ranch (about 1938)

returning back home five or six hours later. One time I was back in the hills looking for blue grouse. There was a watering trough that still had water dribbling into it, and I had stopped for a rest. I had two grouse that I had shot hooked onto my belt. When I laid down on my belly to put my mouth under the pipe to get some fresh water, Scottie began whining and barking. I thought he must be kind of tired but then I heard a buzz, and when I looked around behind me, there was a large rattlesnake coiled up and ready to strike. He appeared to be looking at the grouse. I yelled at Scottie to "get him" and he got so excited that he distracted the snake and I was able to jump up and blast the snake with the shotgun. When I finally got home, Mom said that I looked as white as a sheet.

Howard quit school alter the ninth grade to work on the ranch. One of the funny things I remember about Howard happened when I was 12 years old. He had a '36 Chevrolet and wanted to go see Clara, who was teaching in Spokane. For some reason he had me go with him. I slept on the couch and it never occurred to me at the time that Howard slept with Clara. But they had been secretly married, because at that time you couldn't teach if you were married, so not even my family knew.

When I was sixteen years old I left home to start college and didn't spend much time at home after that, except summers. Howard went to Grange dances around the area, and I went to some of those when I was a senior in high school. The problem was that I didn't have access to a car, so I'd be walking home pretty late at night. I would have never thought to ask Dad for the use of the car, though I didn't have a license. I didn't drive Dad's car until I was out of the navy.

Russ was a good "A" student, even in college. Then Johnny came along and he was an even better student. I'd be out on the farm working and he'd be reading. So when I came along, they expected me to be the same as these two older brothers of mine. However, I didn't produce like they did. Probably the best thing that happened to me was going into the Service since I was pretty immature. When I came out, I only had two quarters of college to go, but it was a time of adjusting back to civilian life, so I didn't apply myself much then. I imagine I graduated with about a C+ average. When I got married I settled down and went to summer school and got my Masters degree. Then I transferred to WSU to be in the Doctoral program. The Dean called me in and he made a big deal that my undergraduate grades weren't very good. I told him very candidly that this was the period right before and after the war and grades were the least of my concerns. I told him to look at my Master's Degree, and he ultimately let me in the program, probably because of Russ. Also, Russ's wife was his secretary. My graduation for my Doctorate was the first graduation that my Mom and Dad attended for any of their sons.

It should be noted, somewhere during these memories, that I lived through some dramatic changes in the lifestyle of farming. The Great Depression of the 1930's had a direct influence on my family, not the least of which was "making do" with what we had since my dad was not able to improve and expand the farm because of our meager income. So, I had the experience of using a team of horses when mowing hay, raking hay into windrows with a dump rake, turning a cream separator by hand, reading by kerosene lamps, pulling logs out of a cedar swamp with a team of horses, sawing down trees with Howard using a cross-cut saw—all activities which slowly were taken over by machinery. Indeed, they were experiences which perhaps will never again be duplicated.

TRANSCRIPT OF A PRESENTATION TO

THE RIVILLA HISTORICAL MEETING

By Pete Esvelt

January 23, 1989

Most of the following is based on the recollections of my late grandfather, John P. Esveldt II, who at the age of four immigrated with his family to Spokane Falls from Holland in 1892.

Tired of "big city life" (Spokane's population then was about 25,000), the family moved north to a small community on the Little Spokane River in 1894. At that time, the settlement had no name, post office, or school. Much of the valley was owned by Herb and Lafayette Dart, who had purchased it from an Indian around 1880. The settlement was on the main road from Spokane to the vast north country. There was no bridge at the time, the road forded the river at approximately the site of the current bridge. My great grandfather, John P. Esveldt I, built a home and blacksmith shop on the east side of the main road about fifty yards north of the river. In 1900 he bought two lots from "Fett" Dart and built a larger house, shop and general store on the west side of what is now Dartford Drive. That building was finally torn down in 1959 to make way for Stoneman's Rivilla development.

My grandfather didn't mention the population of the community or businesses other than a small general store and their blacksmith shop. It was sizable enough, though, that the neighbors formed a school district and hired a teacher in 1895. For three years the school term was three months long. In the fourth year, a permanent nine-month term was established. The school house was a small abandoned frame building on top of the steep bluff to the south of the valley. Schooling was rudimentary -- primarily the "three R's." Learning extended to about the sixth grade level -- the limit of the teacher's knowledge and education. Around 1900 attendance averaged about forty-five pupils.

An unfortunate necessity of any community is a cemetery. Dartford's cemetery came into being in 1896 with the death of my great-great-grandmother. Herb Dart donated the necessary land and she became its first occupant.

In 1897 the settlement was named Dartford, after the Dart Family and the river crossing. Dartford was by then a substantial community. A post office was

established in the general store (twice a week mail delivery), a saw and planer mill was built on the south side of the river, a large livery stable was located north of the river, a three-story flour mill was built on the north bank of the river, and there was a combination bunkhouse and briquet factory on the north bank. Lumber yards took up the remaining available space.

The Dartford grist and lumber mills provided food, building products and entertainment to many folks. A friend of mine told me that his grandmother remembers traveling with her family from their home in the nine-mile area to Dartford to have their grain ground into flour. The mills were built around a pond that formed behind a twelve-foot high log dam that was built to the east of the current bridge, about where the swimming hole is now. During the salmon runs fish would jump over that dam, about a fourteen-foot leap. Indians and whites would spear the fish in mid-air. In the winter the millpond froze over and people came from miles around to ice-skate on it.

I don't know when the river was first bridged, but in 1896 there was a wood structure ("One of the former bridges"), that also served as a popular trysting place for young couples. There are still concrete abutments of an earlier structure directly to the west of the bridge. The one we use now was constructed in 1925. This coincides with a date inscribed in the original concrete surfacing of Dartford Drive, farther to the east. (Unfortunately, that inscription is now covered by an asphalt overlay.)

Prior to that, the main road north from Spokane followed Mill Road to the top of the hill, where it veered northly and followed the hillside down past Darts' houses to the bridge.

The Little Spokane River, including our neighborhood, was an ancestral Indian fishing ground. Until 1899, when they moved to the Coeur d'Alene reservation, Indians were accepted neighbors of the Dartford settlers. These Indians were members of the Middle Band of the Spokane Sen-ho-ma-naish Tribe led by Chief Paul. Of Catholic faith, they would not move to the Spokane reservation with the Protestant Upper and Lower Bands. Instead, they remained at their ancestral haunts, sinking deeper into poverty as the white man took over the country. Finally they were moved with the Coeur d' Alenes to near Plummer, Idaho.

Fishing was their livelihood and there were several villages up and down the river. The villages consisted of teepees, varying in number according to

the season. During the salmon runs each village contained eight to twelve teepees. The Indians' principal method of catching fish was by traps made of red willow. However, they were also adept at spearing salmon. During runs, they built pole platforms that extended about ten feet out into the river. A brave would stand on the platform with his barbed, bone-tipped spear; waiting for a likely fish to swim by. Each spear pole was attached to a tightly braided horsehair cord that was used to retrieve the pole and speared fish. My grandfather recalls that when a brave made a successful throw, he would let out a terrific "whoop" which was echoed in turn by Indians up and down the river.

The Indians and Dartford whites apparently got along quite well. In fact, my grandfather believed that Indians were far more reliable than many whites. His father sold them steel gaff hooks and allowed them free use of his blacksmith shop and tools to make fishing gear. In May the steelhead runs would taper off and suckers would take over the river. Grandpa and his boyhood buddies would catch suckers and swap them with the Indians for steelhead. The common rate of exchange was forty-eight suckers for one steelhead. The Indians would pulverize the dried suckers, bones and all, and form them into patties for eating.

Following are a couple more Indian stories, quoted from my grandfather's memoirs:

"They all liked Mother because she was kind to them. Occasionally, when a buck and his squaw and possibly a papoose or two, whom she knew, were passing through on a trip, she would invite them in to dinner. Invariably they were humble and polite and always crossed themselves before eating."

There were numerous other incidents. One, as an example, I will briefly describe. One morning a soft knock sounded on the kitchen door. Mother opened it, only to face an apparition -- a young squaw with torn clothes, hair disheveled, with face and breasts cut, bruised and bleeding. Mother was holding the door open with one hand. The young squaw said nothing, but glided under her arm, sped swiftly and silently (the Indians all wore moccasins) through the kitchen, the front room, and into the bedroom and dived under the bed. Mother said nothing because she understood Indians. She didn't have long to wait.

Soon another knock on the kitchen door. Upon opening it, there stood a young buck, a bloody knife with about a two-foot blade in his hand (the kind

used by the Indians for cutting red willows used in making fish traps). She quickly saw that he'd had too much firewater. It wasn't necessary for him to go through all his sign language -- Mom knew what he was after. He insisted on coming into the house, but Mom stood her ground and kept saying, "Squaw no here, squaw no here." We kids were quite interested in the proceedings. Eventually he turned and disappeared over the ridge toward the village to the northeast. The young squaw stayed under the bed all day until dark. Then, just as quietly, she slipped out, ran swiftly under cover of darkness to the barn, a distance of about two hundred yards, and burrowed under the hay. In the morning, she was gone. We never saw her again.

Much of the Indians' legacy remains with us today. Minihdoka Trail, along the hillside south of the river, is one example. While the historical accuracy of the name "Minihdoka" is questionable, much of the road's route follows an ancient Indian trail. During the spring seasons, when floodwater covered much of the valley, nomadic Indian bands used the route to avoid the quagmire. Contemporary Esvelts returned to this area in 1963, buiding a house on Minihdoka Trail. That house's front yard was originally a grassy meadow, bordered by springs and creeks, that had apparently served as an Indian campsite. We found numerous pieces of chipped obsidian and flint-apparently disgarded irregulars from arrowhead manufacture. We also unearthed a granite grinding mortar. John Stoneman collected hundreds of arrowheads and several mortars during excavation for Rivilla homes. I also recall that during excavation for one Rivilla home, a neighborhood dog came home with a human skull. Local historical agencies refused to accept it, but the skull was eventually identified as Indian remains.

Back to the Indians' livelihood: Fish. The Little Spokane was one of the major salmon spawning streams on the Columbia River system. Blocked by the Spokane River's falls, fish came up the Little Spokane to lay their eggs. From early February into May were the Steelhead and Rainbow Trout runs. Suckers took over in May and June, literally blackening the riverbottom with their numbers. Chinook Salmon came in August and September, followed by Whitefish through October, and Silversides until the end of December. The spectacular fish runs ended in 1906 when the Washington Water Power Co. built the Long Lake Dam.

White settlers were also involved with fish. Around 1900 a man named Will

Hulbert dammed the creek in the canyon above the cemetery and established a private trout and salmon hatchery. At about the same time, the state operated a salmon and trout hatchery on the islands across the river from what is now Rivilla. My grandfather worked and lived at the state hatchery in 1909 and 1910 and said: "The hatchery building was large and well-equipped, the buildings all painted white, the grounds neat and well kept, bordered on the south by fish-rearing ponds for the full length of the island,on the north by the river, on the west by a branch of the river, all that part of the island in front of the hatchery in lawn bordered with flowers, and a rock-bordered fountain playing the center. It made a pretty picture.

At the turn of the century Dartford was still more-or-less a frontier community. The surrounding country was mostly open and unfenced, consisting of farms that were either homesteaded or purchased from the railroad for 50¢ an acre. What is now Dartford Drive was the main road north to the Colville country. Covered wagons full of homesteading families heading north were a common sight in our valley.

Social life around here consisted of parties,box socials and dances. Children occupied their time by working their family's enterprises, fishing, hunting, trapping, swimming, boxing, skating and so forth.

Unfortunately, my grandfather didn't write about many other settlers in this area. He did tell me that Ernie Ziegler, of the Ziggy's Home Centers clan, was one of his boyhood buddies. The Zieglers ran a hostelry where the Moen home is now and, during prohibition, operated an illegal still. The moonshine was stored in a tank buried under the garage floor. Booze runners would drive into the garage and the liquor was surreptitiously pumped into their vehicles. Another distillery was allegedly run near the top of the Hazaard Road hill by the late father of my friend Bill Burchett(of Burchett Studios). His father also bootlegged liquor from Canada, and distributed it from his farm. Also, Commellini's was reputedly a prohibition-era speakeasy.

Another early neighbor was Francis Cook, a well-known Spokane pioneer. He reportedly established the region's first newspaper and started Spokane's streetcar system. His earlier business ventures failed and he moved north to where Wandermere now is. There he constructed a sawmill and built a huge icehouse that supplied much of Spokane with block ice.

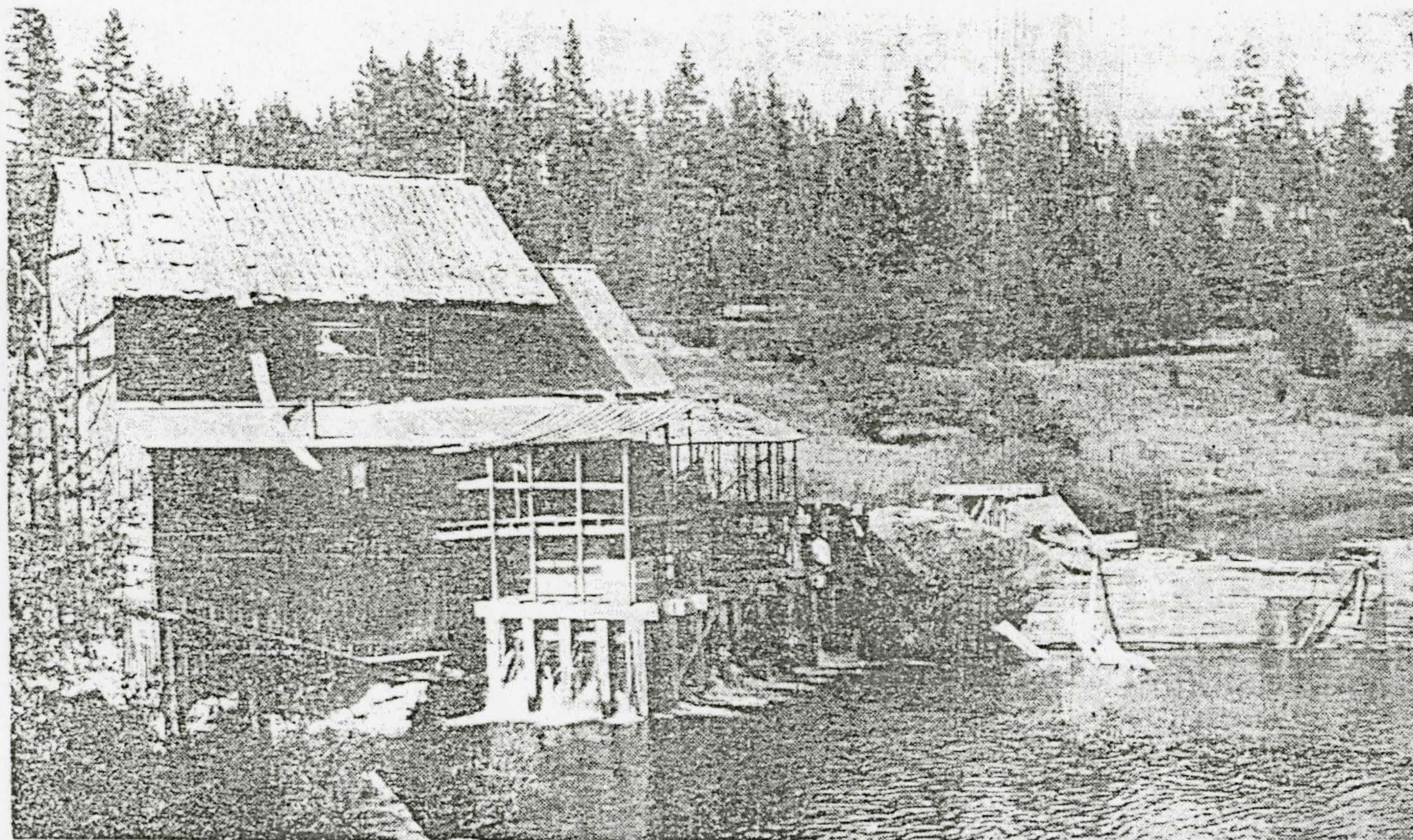
My grandfather was the last of the early Esvelts to leave Dartford. He had married the community's schoolmarm and, in 1910, they headed north to homestead a ranch near the Columbia River town of Daisy (about 30 miles south of Kettle Falls). Contemporary Esvelts returned to the valley in 1963 when my father built the Minihdoka Trail home. Dad died in 1973 and mom sold that large house. Fortunately, she was able to purchase the "spud cellar" house from John Stoneman and remain in this beautiful valley with her good friends and neighbors.

Pete Esvelt
November, 1988

Note: This narrative is only one family's account of the Dartford story. John Stoneman's contribution to the historical meeting and development of our valley was invaluable. Still, much of the story remains untold. We didn't seek input from the Dart family, which leaves a huge gap in this history. Also, I'm sure that many people at the gathering could add stories and information to what was presented. I now ask any and all to come forward with any stories and information. We can publish and distribute them as addendums to this initial effort.

mc

Old-Time Flour Mill Yields to Progress



Progress has caught up with one of the first flour mills of the Spokane area. It is the old Dart mill along the Little Spokane river at Dartford, which is now being razed to make way for improvements at the health center of the Kiwanis club north of the city, near Wandermere. The club has acquired additional acreage and needs the old mill site for its program of expansion.

The old flour mill dates back to 1883, nearly six decades. It was originally built by L. S. Dart and his brother, Herbert W. Dart. Both brothers as early as 1879 had been employed in the old Frederick Post flour mill in Spokane Falls, the first flour mill of the pioneer village, which had been originally located at Rathdrum, Idaho.

In 1883 they decided to build their own mill on the Little Spokane, where a community was built up, carrying their name —Dartford. Some of the original machinery and mill wheels remained in the building long after the plant ceased grinding wheat into flour. The property has always remained in possession of the Dart family until it was sold to the Kiwanis club.

At one time it served as a chicken dinner roadside spot. In later years it was condemned as unsafe for human use. Its weather-beaten, run-down condition made it somewhat of an eyesore of late.

Originally its sightly location made it a favorite subject for amateur photographers and artists and it has been perpetuated on many a negative and canvas. A frame structure, it has stood on the north river bank just above the concrete highway bridge. A cribwork dam once stood in the river near the mill to back up the water for power to turn the millstones. The dam long ago yielded to the pressure of a spring flood and only a waterfall over the rocks remains there today.

With the unsightly structure out of the way, the Kiwanis club has plans for developing a parklike area along the river connecting with the older part of the health center grounds, with their permanent buildings and modern swimming pool completed last summer. Water for the pool has been piped in from the artificial lake at Wandermere. The picture was made in 1926, when part of the dam, right, remained.

SPOKANE AS HE SAW IT IN 1879

L. S. Dart, Pioneer Flour Mill Man, Chats of Thrills of Early Days.

L. S. Dart, W1229 Dalton, who walked into Spokane from Walla Walla, September 21, 1879, celebrates his 90th birthday anniversary today informally.

Yesterday he recalled with surprising clarity events of his life which began in Wisconsin when Millard Fillmore was 13th President of the United States. It was still a decade before the Civil war; his own state was but 3 years old and California had just been admitted to the Union.

Mr. Dart remembers his pioneering forefathers who had settled in his native state and then moved with him to Minnesota, which was not to join the Union until he was 7. Settled in a new frontier home, the Dart family, which had also given its name to Dartford, Wis., found itself with other settlers in the midst of the Sioux war.

With other youngsters and women of the families he was returned to Wisconsin, the men staying to care for crops and stock. In the spring the families were reunited in Minnesota.

Came to Spokane in '79.

In '79 Mr. Dart traveled to Omaha, Neb., where he boarded the already famed Union Pacific for San Francisco, en route to join his brother, Herbert W. Dart, who had settled in Spokane and was working for Frederick Post, who had established a flour mill at Spokane Falls, as the village of 200 or 300 persons was then known.

By boat Mr. Dart went to Portland and made his way to Walla Walla by boat and narrow-gauge railway, where he took to his feet for the three-day hike to Spokane Falls.

Mr. Dart said yesterday, as he looked over fishing tackle for next week's jaunt to Fishtrap lake on the porch of M[illegible] Ethel Williams, where he make[illegible] home, that he had no visions of such progress as Spokane has made.

He Knew Spokane as Town of 200

Ninety years old today, L. S. Dart, W1229 Dalton, will look back to September 21, 1879, when as a young man of 28 years he walked into Spokane from Walla Walla. Here he looks over tackle for the weekly fishing trips he makes to Fishtrap lake. Sixteen round trips driving an automobile to California, the last in 1939, are also among diversions of the pionee[illegible]l operator, real estate and building owner.

He went immediately to work with his brother at the Post mill and has been working ever since. While not actively engaged now in business, he still owns business and residential property and part of the family holdings at Dartford on the Little Spokane still belong to him.

Started Own Mill in '83.

Mr. Dart and his brother left the Post employ in 1883 to establish the Dartford mill. Another brother, George O. Dart, 72, whom he calls the baby brother, still lives there with a son, Harold, who in the advance of progress has opened a service station. Mr. Dart recalled yesterday that some of the original machinery and mill wheels are still in place at Dartford.

There was a later interval in Mr. Dart's career spent at Dartford when he branched into the sawmill trade and furnished timbers for some of the heavy construction in Spokane. One of these structures is his own, now the plant of the National Lead company on North Howard.

In 1889 the two Dart brothers had been engaged by Mr. Post to construct a cable-power flour mill at Post Falls, where he was already in the sawmill business.

Mr. Dart recalled that on Monday morning, August 5, 1889, millwrights who had gone to Spokane Falls for the week-end returned to tell that Spokane had burned the previous evening and the town was still in flaming ruins.

Recalls Prominent Pioneers.

The early history of Spokane flows in descriptive and informative manner in Mr. Dart's conversation. He remembers the establishment of many of Spokane's present commercial and industrial enterprises, how such pioneers as Glover, Cannon, Browne, the Cowleys, Jenkins, Muzzey and his own intimates, the Prescotts, contributed to this growth of the village of '79 to the metropolis of today.

Mr. Dart, born August 17, 1851, in Greenlake county, Wisconsin, said that he had vivid recollections of the Civil war, for he was 14 before that conflict ended. He can remember that his grandfather related to him his experience in the war of 1812.

It was the intention of his family that he be a schoolteacher and he was graduated from the Minnesota normal school at Mankato, but after two years as a teacher he answered the call of opportunity to grow up with the west.

About his first impressions of Spokane Falls, Mr. Dart recalls the glamour of the two early hotels, the California house and the Spokane. He remembers when Jesuits purchased land on the north side of the river to establish Gonzaga university.

Used Skiff to Cross River.

Crossing the river in those days was another experience. It was in a skiff, R. W. Forest, who later ran the city's first ferry and kept a grocery store, being the navigator. He was the first mayor of the city. The fare was 25 cents. The owner of the ferry was David Lehman.

But to get a horse and wagon or other vehicles to the north side of town was another matter. It was necessary to travel to the vicinity of Spokane Bridge, cross the river on a toll bridge, operated by M. M. Cowley, a partner in the Cowley store of the Spokane valley, and return along the north bank, all together a journey of 35 miles. The toll was $1.50, another item of interest.

Early residents soon tired of this, Mr. Dart said, and by subscription raised funds to build the first bridge in the city, a structure built in two stages, touching the island in the river at Howard street.

Traded With Indians.

Much of Mr. Dart's early trading, especially at the Post Falls mill, was with the Indians, and he likes to speak the Chinook trading tongue as a mental stimulant.

He has sold his former holdings on Orchard Prairie, Mr. Dart said, but still retains the family home at S2527 Grand. Mrs. Dart, his second wife for 46 years, died last November and he has resided with Mrs. Williams since.

The Orchard Prairie farm, which he paid $4 an acre for, brought him $240 an acre a few years ago, and he could have bought it for $2 if he could have afforded to pay cash, Mr. Dart said.