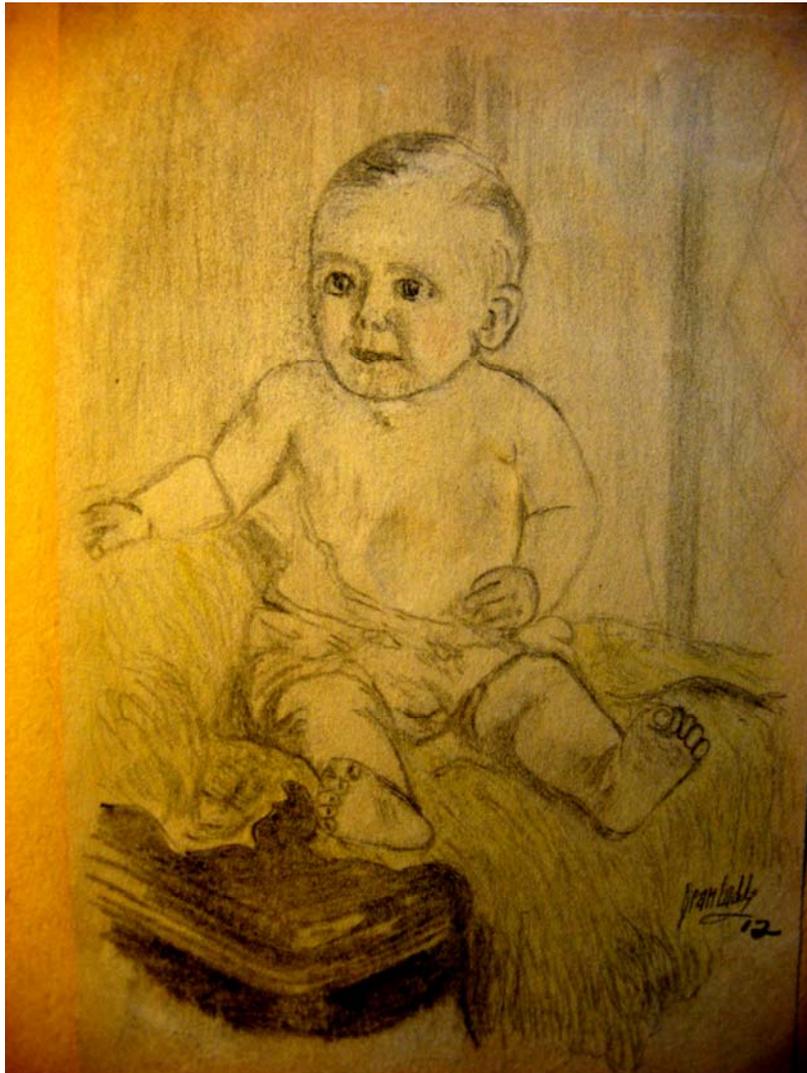


CHILDHOOD QUEST



By **Dean Ladd**, 2016

INTRODUCTION

The cover is a pencil drawing that I did when I was age twelve, from the earliest portrait of me as a baby. I drew many such sketches at that age--mostly about animals. and I continued being project oriented to the present with such writings as this.

Pondering my childhood, while writing this manuscript, I recalled some of my playmates such as: Donnie Baker, Don Diediker, Dale Eastburg, Richard (Buck) Francis and Kenneth Hill.

I also more fully realized how much my mother had guided our childhood in so many aspects In spite of the depression. She had influenced and prepared us and our neighbor playmates for adulthood. I am so grateful for having had such an understanding and wonderful mother. As stated on her headstone, "Her strength and dignity clothed her with beauty".

BIRTH

My birth was on Dec. 8, 1920 in the Spokane Deaconess Hospital, an early-Spokane brick building that still stands next to the I-90 freeway. In those days, childbirth normally required up to a weeks stay in the hospital. My mother also had a post-delivery complication which made my parents unhappy with the hospital staff and insisted on immediate release. Years later, in her eighties, she surprisingly discovered a broken needle remaining in her hip from that event. Consequently both George & Helen were born at home, with a midwife and a neighbor, Mrs. Richmond, assisting the family doctor.

MOTHER

My mother coped well with the depression by having a garden, grapes and fruit trees. We had two cows, chickens and rabbits. Mr. Payne, our next door neighbor, was an excellent carpenter and all-around craftsman who built our new garage that included a workshop and a cow stall.

Earliest memories based on mom's old photos—include with dad and also with mom as a baby—holding me in 1921

DAD

Dad worked as a bill collector for the Tull & Gibbs Furniture Company. Many customers purchased by making payments to a bill collector, such as my dad, who drove to each home rather than by mail or automatic bank withdrawals as is normal today.

I enjoyed driving with him on his collecting route and recall some astounding events. The event I most remember happened in the Dishman area of the valley while he was collecting from a black woman who was unhappy about something and swore at him to, "Get the hell out!" Dad had a temper too and, as if that wasn't enough, her dog then bit him.

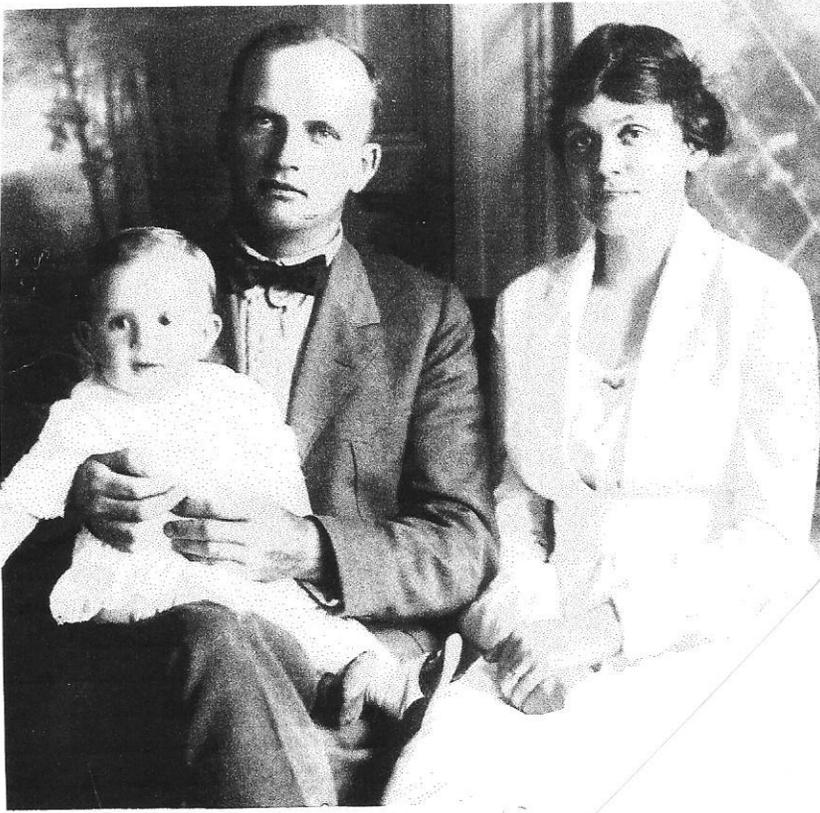
So he returned to the car for his .45 caliber pistol, that he carried for such protection, and killed the dog in her front yard! Consequently, he lost his pistol-carrying permit and instead carried a tire-changing iron to strike a menacing dog's nose. Usually just showing it to a dog was sufficient.

TRICYCLE, SCOOTER, BICYCLE.

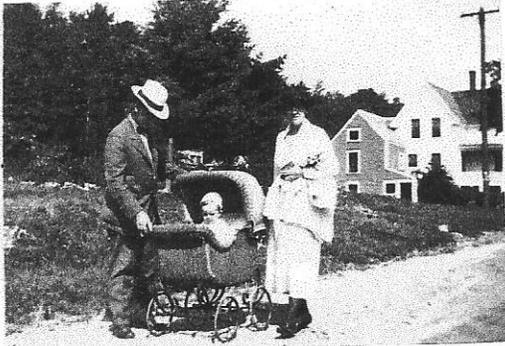
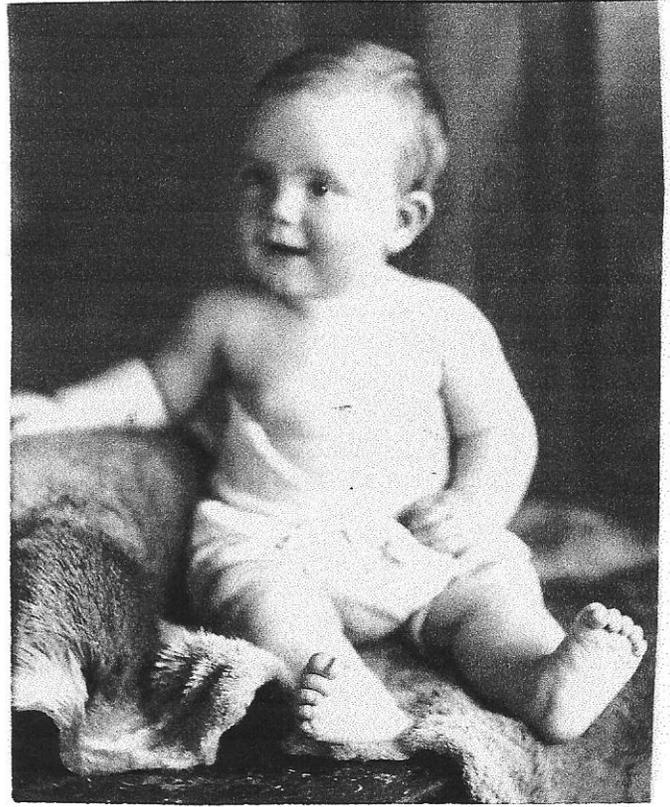
I carry a vivid memory of dad bringing home a tricycle, probably for Christmas just after I had turned three. How I enjoyed riding it! Then about a year later, I started riding a scooter and finally, mother bought me a used bicycle at a second hand store for \$10. which I rode two miles to high school for four years.

CORN STOCKS

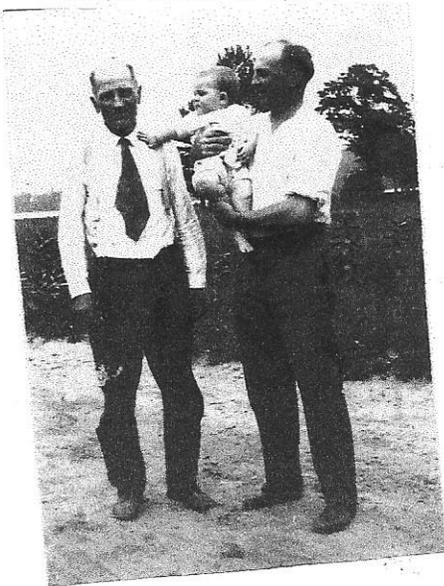
A few years later, mom was wondering what we were doing among the rows of corn and investigated. It would be interesting to know what went through her mind when she realized what was going on! A neighbor girl several years older than us, who was deaf and dumb, was enticing little George sexually with motions as her brother and I were wondering what she was doing.



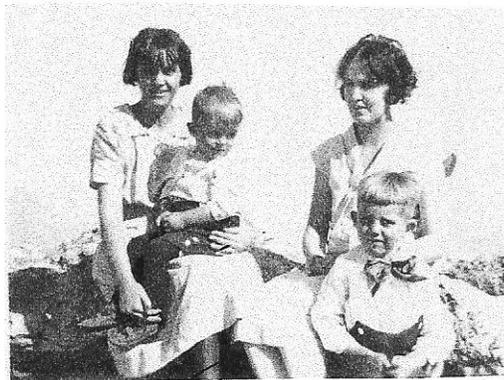
Aug. 19, 1921 .



Myron and Gertrude near the Ladd
Laconia home in 1921.



Myron with his father, George, and
Dean on his 2nd return visit in 1921.



on Mt. Spokane.



George and Dean.

BAD JUDGMENTS

Several years later, we were playing on top of the old barn located on the lot in back of our home, which we often did, and for some reason, we thought it would be fun to throw rocks at windows that had recently been installed in the old deserted house being prepared for renting!. When the owner asked our mother if she saw anyone doing this, we kept silent. Looking back, we often wondered why we did that and never admitted it!

The owner replaced them without knowing who had done the damage and rented the place to a low- income family with children.

One time those children started throwing things at us from their place and we responded, again foolishly, by throwing small apples off one of our apple trees. Then their mother invited us over for apple pie!

A third time we showed poor judgment was when Donnie, our younger playmate from across the street. had a birthday and his mother didn't invite us for some strange reason. So we called for him to come across the street where we waited with some hidden horse manure from the mailman's horse-driven cart and tossed it at his white shirt! Needless to say, his mother was furious and came rushing over to punish us if she could catch us. I climbed up the cherry tree where I was out of reach but Buck was visible in a rabbit hutch and got his face slapped.

NEW HAMPSHIRE TRIPS

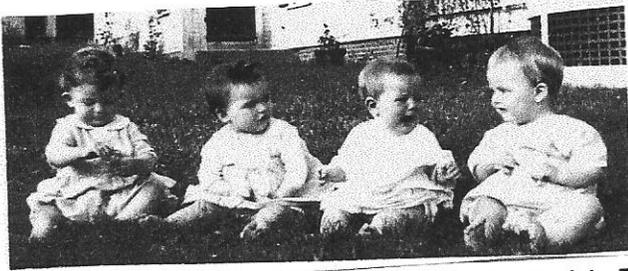
As a child, our family made two train trips to New Hampshire (when I was nearly one and again when I was nearly six) to visit dad's parents, sisters and my cousins. On our family's second train trip to New Hampshire, George was only two, running about and enjoying himself. One day he had been scolded by the conductor for using too many paper drinking cups at the water dispenser. So he ran toward our mother but in the process tripped and hit his head on a spittoon, common in those days for those chewing tobacco.

Both trips went through Northville, South Dakota to visit my mother's grand father, Civil War veteran Joseph Elsom. That connection involved riding in a freight train caboose and being picked up at the freight yard. Joseph was in the New York 8th Volunteer Cavalry and fought in 48 of the 54 engagements his regiment fought in, without being wounded. He was nearly captured at Harpers Ferry and near Petersburg.

POND THREAT

One day, while dad was fishing near an abandoned lumber camp pond, George slipped out of reach into the water while mom was watching us play near it. The pond's edge sloped sharply into the water, making it impossible for him to walk out. Fortunately, mom found a nearby piece of wood for him to grab and be pulled out.

MOM'S MISCARRIAGE



Cousins in Laconia, 1921. L to R--Virginia (Eunice's), Eleanor (Maud's), Dean and Richard (Agnes's). Dean is the last survivor.



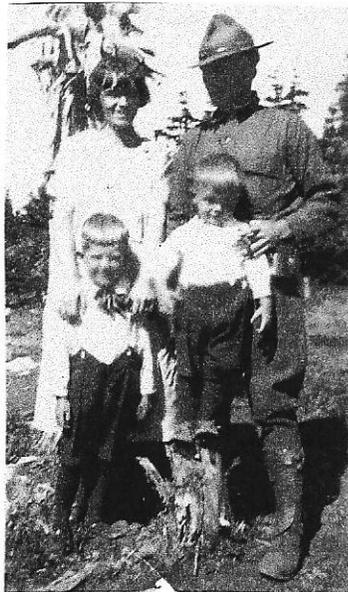
Virginia Eleanor Dean Richard



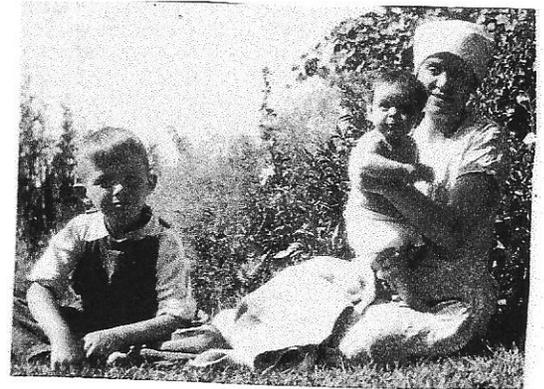
Dean on running board of \$50. auto dad bought on 1926 NH visit.



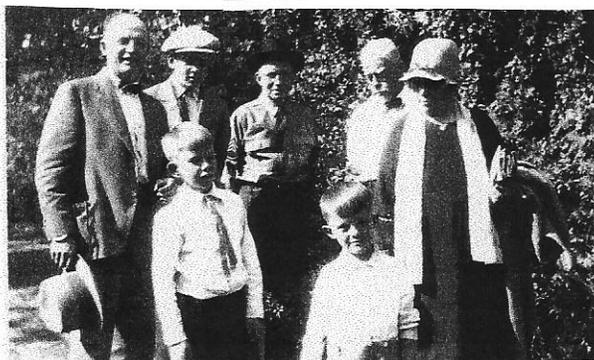
Dean and George after returning from NH trip in 1926.



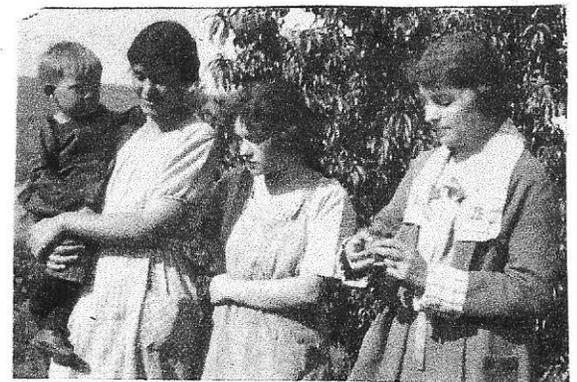
Dean and George.



Dean and George on Mt. Spokane.



Dean and George with dad, Burnard and grandparents.



Dean, Gertrude, Ruth and Floral.

Several years later mom had a miscarriage-- so we stayed with our grandparents at the Saltese ranch for about a week, without us realizing the reason, getting involved in ranch life chores.

At night, we ate and talked by lantern light and later in bed heard the sound of the wind blowing through the trees that we referred to as whispering pines.

GRADE SHOOL

I walked about five blocks to Bemiss Elementary school (1926-1934) It was a two story brick building that has long ago been replaced with a spread-out one - story structure.

I recall some of my teachers such as no-nonsense, Miss Schick and music teacher, Miss Ruby Graber. In those days, women teachers commonly had to remain single for employment.

In about the third grade, one of the boys, Lloyd Terise, who I went all through high school with, had been sent into the cloak room in back of the teacher's desk for doing something the strict teacher didn't like, By coincidence, his mother visited the class while he as there and they entered the classroom together! The surprised students laughed whereas the mother and teacher were naturally embarrassed.

I was very impressed when Civil War veterans, in their upper 80s, visited when I was in the third grade. In the eighth grade, I attended wood shop, where I built a hickory bow. Two events stand out: I passed out while sitting on a workbench and fell to the floor when Roy Williams told me to breath out as he squeezed my rib cage from behind. Another time, as we were standing close to our teacher while he demonstrated something, he stopped and asked,"Who made that smell?" There was snickering as we glanced at each other!

I played on the soccer team in the eighth grade and was a hall monitor to prevent running in the hall ways and on the stairs.

ELSOM RANCH

We visited the Elsom ranch many Sundays. On the way there in our Model T Ford, we usually drove several miles around the drained Saltese Lake bed, where dad shot many ground squirrels and cut off their tails.

Mom recalled, when she had first moved into the Lacey Street home, she was surprised to see squirrel tails pinned on the walls. She had remarked, "He had even nailed squirrel tails on the walls! Shooting ground squirrels with his .22 rifle was his favorite sport when driving around the Saltese Lake perimeter road with his young family, on the way for Sunday visits with my parents."

Things I most remember at the ranch were:

George and I had lots of fun playing in the barn that grand father Elsom had built. We mainly jumped in the hay and caught mice, which we took home in jars with punched breathing holes. I recall playing along the walls of the nearby sand pit, and swinging from a rope attached to a high branch on a pine tree, located near the ranch's entry road.

Recently, I walked up the western hill and gazed down over the ranch buildings, thinking back over those childhood days. Then I walked around the

buildings, that have been mostly remodeled, and marveled that granddad and his teenage son had hand-dug the 80 ft.-deep well near the house. I was interested in all the tools and implements, displayed by the new owners on the trees. That owner recently died and the ranch was sold to a developer who plans to level the site and build a housing development.

GATHERINGS AT UNCLE AND AUNT'S HOMES

We gathered at least four times up into the early 30's, usually for Christmas or Thanksgiving, at the homes of mom's brother and sister's (Russell and Ruth's) homes in Veradale. They lived only a few blocks north of where they had graduated from high school.

Uncle Rufus Ainsworth was a professional musician--playing a xylophone (It consisted of wooden bars that he struck with mallets), drums and several wind instruments. He later was a printer where I worked with him in 1938, primarily cleaning the printing presses and delivering his printing to customers with my bike until I started college.

HIDE AWAY

We greatly enjoyed a hide-away we dug in the ground on the adjacent vacant lot. It consisted of an entry trench about three feet deep that led to a dug-out room about seven feet in diameter. We covered it over with wood scrap pieces and dirt and spent many fun hours there by candle light.

NATATORIUM AMUSEMENT PARK

I recall how much we enjoyed the many fun rides there such as on the Jack Rabbit, the Airplane and the Dodgem that were promoted each year by the Spokesman Review paper through the *Tillicums* participation project.

ATTIC

About 1929, dad received a WW I veteran's bonus that he used to raise our roof and add two bedrooms due to the birth of Helen. We had previously climbed steep steps to sleep in the attic while we listened to our crystal set radio. Dad saved his many *American Rifleman* magazines there.

Early one morning we were awakened by a gunshot in the living room below us. We knew that dad had been sitting there in case someone tried to again steal our milk that was delivered to our front porch. Our first reaction was that dad had shot someone in the leg but were relieved to find there was no stealer and he had only embarrassingly misfired into the floor.

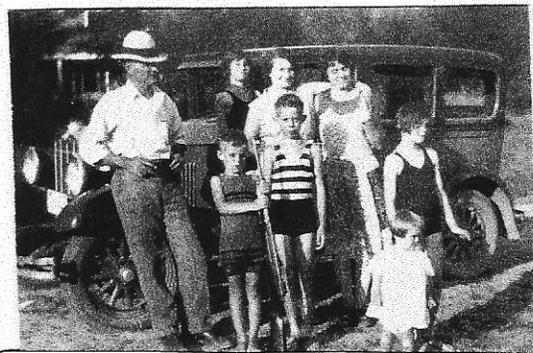
TENT

While that construction was in progress that summer we slept on beds in a tent about 10 by 12 ft. size, that was located near our back door. After a few months it caught fire and rapidly burned down before we could connect a hose.

Talking about a hose--George often recalled the night when dad came into the tent, asking where Dean was. George replied that he didn't know, while I was actually hiding under his bed! The reason was, dad had earlier chased me,



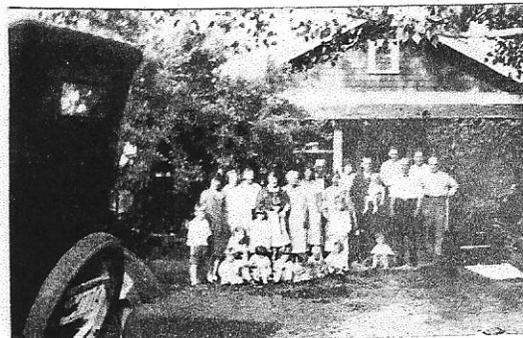
Glacier Park, 1931.



Ladd family with the Hix family at Hauser Lake, 1931. In front of 1929 Durant.



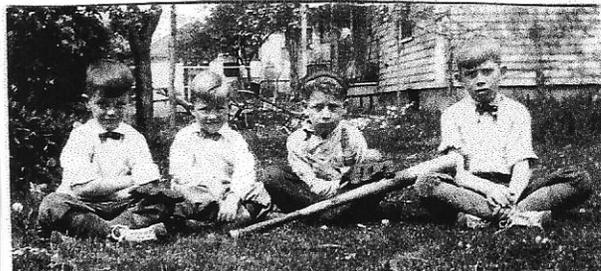
Lacey St before roof raised.



Expanded Elsom family gathering at Russell's.



About 1937--Roof being raised. Dean and George slept in the tent during construction.



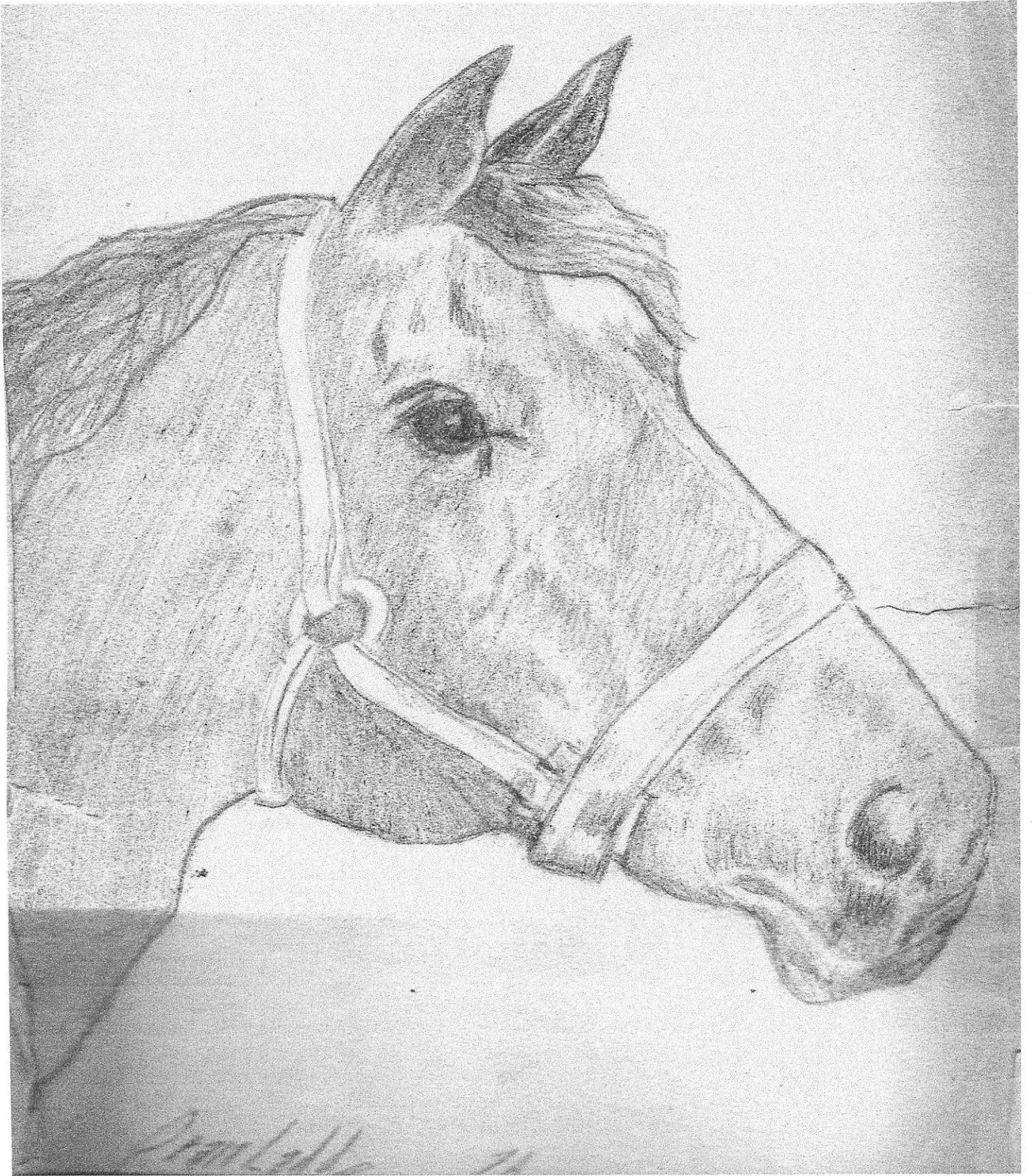
George, Donnie, Buck, Dean

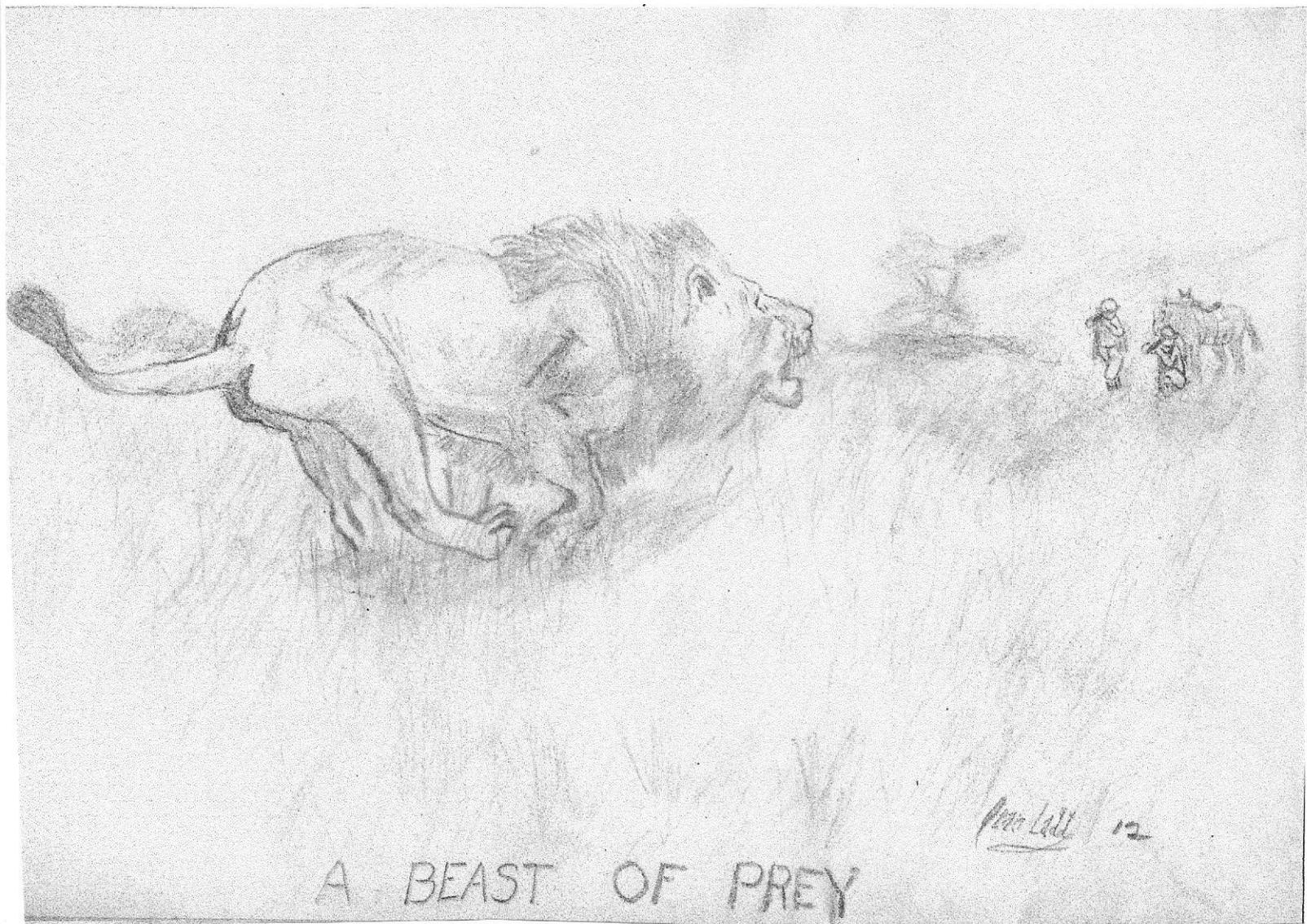


Helen

About 1937--LtoR Kenneth Hill, Helen, Verna Lou, George, Wesley Warren, Donnie Baker, and Dean on Daisy.





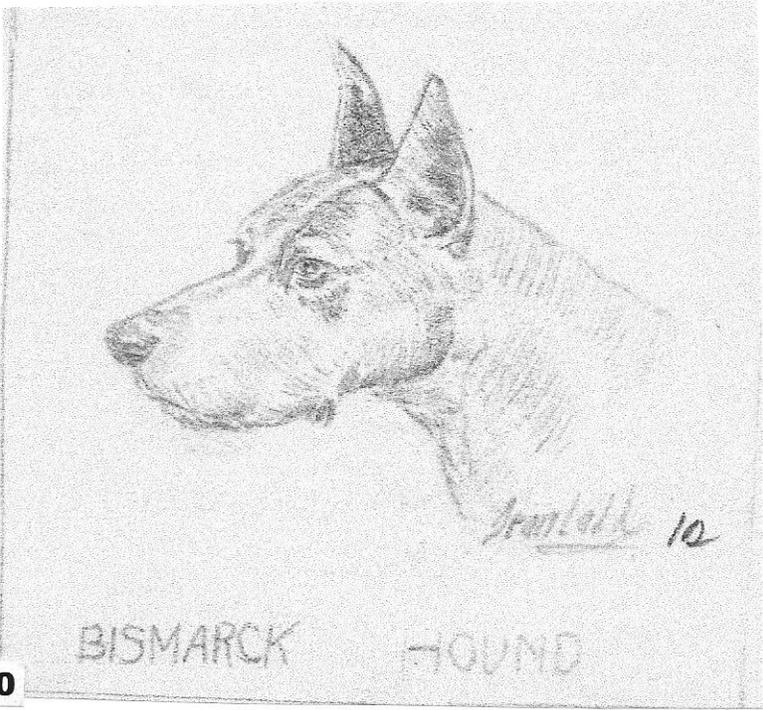


A BEAST OF PREY

Frank Ladd 12

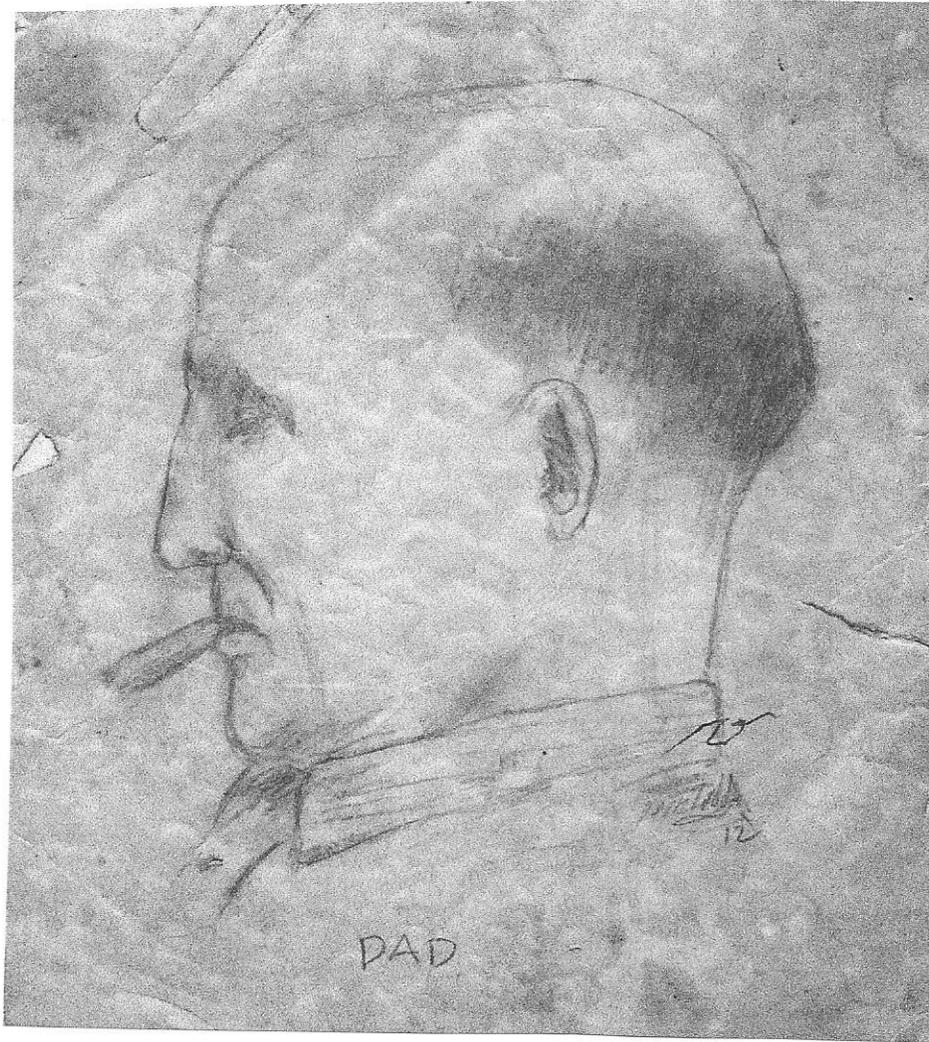


Frank Ladd 12



BISMARCK HOUND

Frank Ladd 10



snapping a hose at me through the garden after I had made some smart remark that made him mad. He told me that I made him tired, to which I had replied "Why don't you go to bed then?"

MANY HOME IMPROVEMENTS

About that time, we had dad's old friend, Nort Graham, dig-out the small existing basement as far as possible by leaving several feet as a retaining wall. It was all done by hand, with the dirt being moved out by wheel barrow through an opening on the west side to dump somewhere that required leveling off.

Then a central heating system was installed with a trap door. that extended into the north-side driveway for coal delivery and storage. Later, the furnace was changed to natural gas.

Also, when natural gas became available, we replaced our wood burning kitchen stove to a gas range and installed a gas-fired water heater. About that time, we also added a breakfast nook and replaced our ice chest with a refrigerator. What a change of convenience!

Graham built other things such as grape arbors near the south side of the house and a tall swing with about 12 inch diameter poles. We spent many hours swinging and even jumping onto a swinging trapeze from a platform.

Trees had been planted when we were much younger, such as an Italian prune and several varieties of apples and cherries. The original grape arbor and most of the Concord grapes were there before my memory.

Most of these improvements were probably made possible by the veterans WW I bonus. Also, about that time mom decided to invest in a duplex apartment which I recall helping paint and paste wall paper.

DOG KILLED OUR RABBIT

A dog broke into one of our rabbit cages and killed one. Dad tracked the dog's snow tracks to its home about eight blocks away and shot the dog there. The owner, who happened to be the father of one of our playmates, in turn tracked dad's footsteps back to our home and they worked out a settlement whereby dad paid for a new dog.

PIANO

George and I took piano lessons in our home from Nels Olson. At one recital, George and I played a duet, *Moonlight on the Water*. I lost interest after performing poorly in the next recital while George continued on and entertained people through-out his life. Looking back, I have felt sorry for not continuing and not fully appreciating how it was a disappointment for my mother. who wanted us to reach our full potential.

HIGH SCHOOL

I rode my bike about two miles to Rogers High School, starting in 1935 and graduated in February, 1939 but stayed another semester after graduation to complete my foreign language requirement (Latin was my poor selection) for college. I also took another art class since I liked to draw pencil sketches of

animals, especially from Teddy Roosevelt's book, *African Game Trails*. I was in the school Art club and on the rifle team that dad coached. We shot postal matches at the National Guard armory.

BIKES TO FELT'S FIELD AND BERRY PICKING

In the mid-thirties, whenever we saw a new military plane fly over the city to land about five miles away at Felts Field, we would quickly ride our bikes there to look them over. We especially recalled the squadron of Boeing pursuit fighters and the squadron with ski landing gear that landed on the ice at Newman Lake.

We made many trips to make money picking strawberries and string beans in the vicinity of Argonne Road.

BOXING, MILITARY DRILL AND SHOOTING

Dad would occasionally show us how to box, do close order drill, similar to what he had done in the National Guard and shoot a rifle. This all became very practical during our soon-to-be time in the service.

We pulled and marked targets at the Spokane Rifle Club firing range throughout the year. On cold winter days, we warmed our cold hands by a fire burning in a 55 gal. barrel while the shooters shot from positions in the warm club building,

TOUCH FOOTBALL AND BASKETBALL ON BACK LOTS

We had a large empty field in the back of our house where we played touch football and basketball with, up to ten, neighbor boys. We had so much fun with our own sports that we came home right after school, rather than participate in school sports.

One day as we were playing, we watched with amusement as the boyfriend of a young woman was showing off his car by driving in circles and ran into the power pole.

One day a couple of mischievous Italian boys took away our football, so dad shortly strapped on his pistol holster, drove to their home and immediately recovered it!

DRIVES INTO THE COUNTRY

On week ends, we often drove to the many nearby outdoor recreation areas north of Spokane--usually to lakes and streams where we sometimes camped overnight. Dad was able to do this, even during the depression, because he could use the company-provided car and possibly even got reimbursed for gas as a travel expense. So he kept a diary that recorded mileage, as well as where he went and even how many fish were caught, huckleberries picked, etc. I have all of those detailed diaries.

One time we were driving up a main highway hill about ten miles north of town when a car with several unruly youth passed us and then slowed down again several times. This enraged dad, so he lowered the Model T windshield and threatened to shoot his pistol at the youth's tires before mom finally persuaded

him against it. Fortunately, the youth sped off when they saw what he was about to do!

Another time, dad took George and me deer hunting near Sacheen Lake, where we had to climb a steep hill back up to the car. Dad slipped and fell backward down the steep slope and was fortunately stopped by a bush. He was weakened but not injured and we helped him climb the rest of the way. We were too young to drive, so he decided to just rest a while before driving home.

About once a year, we went on longer trips such as to Glacier National Park and to Long Beach on the lower Washington coast.

During the winter, we attended various churches where dad most liked the singing and where he sometimes even directed the choirs. He particularly enjoyed listening to rousing black singing.

SWIMMING

We usually swam at the secluded north end of Houser Lake. One time, we were joined there and perhaps at other places by the family of Mr Hix, who perhaps dad had known in the National Guard. His wife occasionally sang duets with dad and their two girls were about my age.

We also often rode our bikes to swim in the Spokane River just below the up-river dam near the Felts Field airport and also just down-stream from the Green Street bridge. We ignored the fact that the water was contaminated by the discharge from the paper plant several miles up-river.

RIFLE SHOOTING

We used sling shots and air rifles to shoot birds, eating our cherries. Dad had won many competition marksman medals, including the prestigious gold Distinguished Marksman Medal when he competed in the Camp Perry National Matches in 1929,

Often, while we were driving in the country, dad would stop at a good place to shoot at a target, placed about 50 yards away and happily watch us shooting one of his 22 caliber rifles.

MAKING MONEY

Mom was always encouraging us to make our own money, instead of getting an allotment. So we delivered milk from our two dairy cows to about 10 neighbors for about 5 cents a quart. Daisy, our Holstein cow, sometimes broke loose and left hoof marks across neighbor's lawns.

We also sold grapes from our many vines. We tried raising mushrooms in our basement but they grew poorly.

I sold the Saturday Evening Post and other magazines to neighbors for less than a year.

BEAT UP

As I was riding my bike across the railroad tracks, near where we sledged down the hill in winter, I was stopped by two threatening boys, who at times had played football with us. One, a husky black several years older than me and the

other a younger Italian, accused me of being among other boys who had yelled out “raciest” remarks as several black girls walked by. I recall that event but not with that connotation. The girls probably told their family about it from a different perspective though and caused this backlash anger. So the boys grabbed me and kept punching me in the face as they expressed their anger. Saying “We won’t stop until we’re pooped.”

As a consequence, my upper left lip was cut and required stitches. My mother charged my assailants with assault and they were taken into custody until the nice black parents came to our home to apologize and asked for release of the charges. My mother was moved by the parent’s action--she removed the charges and there were no further confrontations.

FISHING

We usually fished along upper Ruby Creek in the beaver-dam pools. Further down in the deep-cut valley, we crawled over and under fallen logs and through tangled growth resulting from a forest fire. Our dog, Tip, enjoyed watching us and at times even jumped into the water for fish! One time as we were removing our catches from our fishing baskets, I was surprised that my fish were smaller than George’s. Then, after some snickering, I realized that he had replaced his with mine! Fishing was quite an adventure.

We also camped-out there with a campfire in the frosty fall during deer-hunting season. Dad usually included a rifle-shooting match on these trips.

WINTER SPORTS

Back then, winters were much more severe than now. The snow got deeper and then there was a warming cycle caused by a warm wind, referred to as a Chinook, coming up the Columbia River from the Pacific, which caused flooding. ...One winter, a large area across the street from our house flooded and froze, creating a great ice skating pond. We didn’t realize the damage that would result to that neighbor’s house though when we tried to channel more water into the pond! That was another time of poor judgment. We later also skated at the old Liberty Park pond and at Hangman Creek.

We started skiing on barrel staves then experimented making longer ones, with an up-turned front attachment, before buying ones with the then-used non-release bindings. We skied most of the time on the steep slope among large boulders below the railroad embankment along Illinois Avenue. I fell against one of the boulders, damaging my left shoulder. Another time we were sliding on a corrugated galvanized sheet as a toboggan and I cut the ligament in my left hand’s little finger as I grabbed the edge of the sheet.

We skied on Mt. Spokane when there was only a rope tow, for which we made our own slotted wood grabbers. One time, we cross-country skied in a blinding snow storm on up to the stone building at the top.

In 1937, we camped overnight on Mt. Spokane at Linder’s Ridge during the winter under a lean-to canvas shelter, facing down to a campfire while it snowed nearly a foot of snow. This was during the time that the Finns were fighting off the Russian invasion

MODEL AIRPLANES

I was constantly dreaming-up and working on some project that usually led to getting my neighborhood playmates involved and seeking guidance from neighbor craftsmen.

We spent several years in our basement, building model airplanes from kits along with Buck Francis, a neighbor boy who later retired as a major, flying in the Air force. George later trained as an Army Air Cadet, before being transferred to the combat engineers. I later spent most of my career in the aerospace industry.

We started with smaller rubber-band powered models and progressed to gas engine powered ones with wing spans up to six ft. We flew the gas models in the open field east of Hillyard, now the Esmeralda Golf Course. Indian teepees were located at a spring near there part of the year.

Then we flew them, with many watching, in the open area north of town near what became the Magnesium plant. My plane straddled the high voltage transmission line there and caused a short that burned off the line insulation between two support towers! After that, we continued to fly our planes, with dozens of others, before thousands of onlookers where Geiger Airport is now located.

HANG GLIDER

Our last big project in 1936 was building and flying a 20 ft wing span hang glider, using plans in the *Popular Mechanics* magazine for a 1911 *Chanute* configuration biplane that was basically a big kite. It was similar to that used by the Wright brothers. The *Spokane Chronicle* evening news paper covered half of its front page with a photo of us holding the glider as if ready to fly.

Our next door neighbor, craftsman Clarence Payne, showed us how to accomplish all the details. He was an elderly expert workman who guided us on the project which cost only \$15.00.

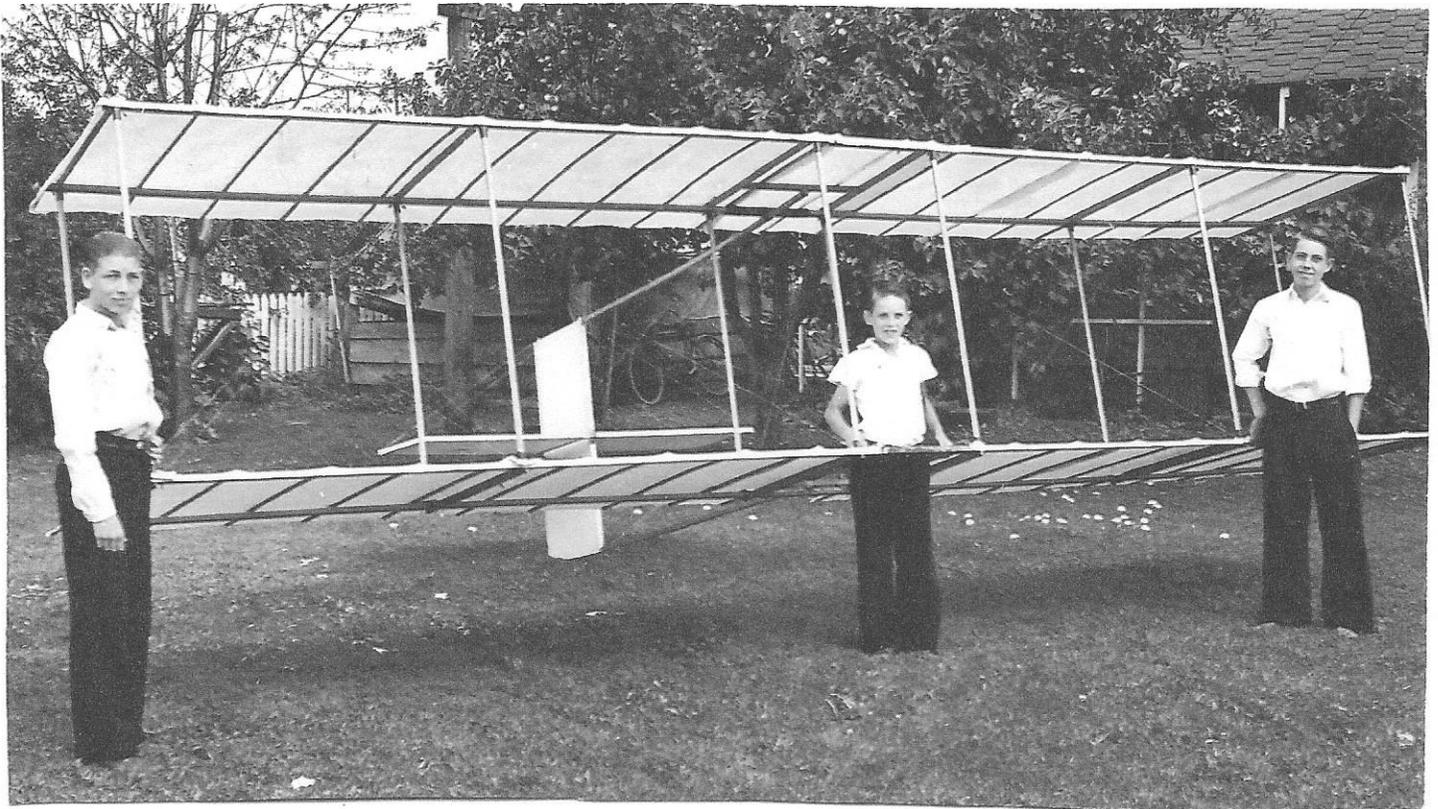
We enjoyed watching him work on his various projects while listening to his many made-up stories. I recall him constructing a sluice box to recover gold dust and building a specially equipped trailer for the quest. He also worked on his old Franklin car which even had an aluminum body. He demonstrated how he was able to solder aluminum.

We played a trick on him one time by placing a realistic-looking pile of dog dung on the floor and remarking, "Look what Tip did!" So he grabbed a dust pan and sprinkled some sawdust on it. Then, one of us picked it up by hand. He at first had a disgusted look which shortly turned into a smile!

We constructed our glider out of spruce, covered it with muslin cloth and trussed it with piano wire that we tightened with turn-buckles. The project was a wonderful hands-on learning experience, working with tools and being creative.

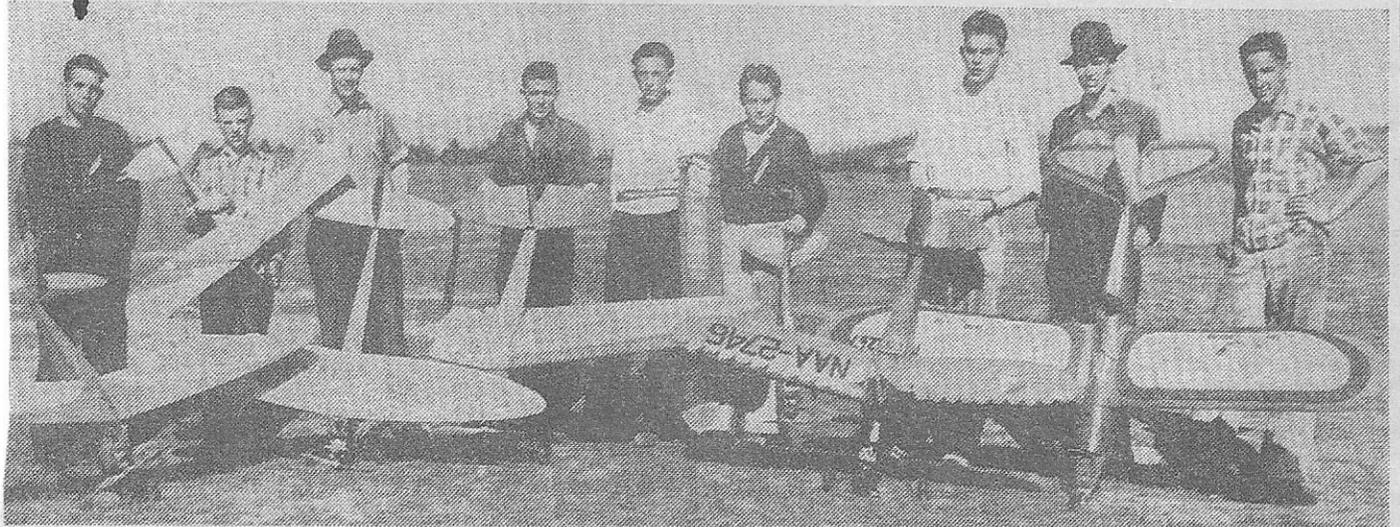
Flying it could have been a risky adventure but luckily no one got hurt because we normally just ran with it into the wind with ropes attached to the wing tips with one our lightest boys hanging in it no higher than about six feet off the ground.

One windy day though, we decided to try free flight and carried it about four blocks down Lacey Street to the railroad tracks, where we also skied.



1936--Dean, George and Buck Frances with 20 ft. hang glider they built and flew.

Proud Owners of Model Airplanes View Their Prize Ships



These nine model airplane experts took top honors in the contest which was a feature of dedication ceremonies Sunday afternoon at the new airport of the Spokane Model Airplane club. A crowd estimated at 5000 swarmed over the new airfield, on the

Pend Oreille highway about five miles north of the city. Left to right, Dean Ladd, S. E. Edwards, Ritzville; Sam Edwards, Ritzville; Frank Bergman, Clyde Doordorff, Jack Lyall, Jack Chapman, Hazen Phillips and Bob Savage.

I excitedly attempted the first flight but dropped off several seconds after becoming airborne because a cross wind tilted the glider out of control. It then righted itself and continued to glide on without me on down to the riverside road about 100 yards away. The second attempt was successful.

That was my final project before starting college with aspiration to become an engineer, working on more exciting projects.

MOTORCYCLE

When I was 17, I bought a large mid-20s Harley Davidson motorcycle for \$35.00. Wheel pants and a strange looking instrument panel had been installed but the kick starter didn't work. So we had to push it to start and I soon learned a lot about riding hazards and engine repair principles!

STARTED COLLEGE

During my first time away from home at age 18, in July 1939, I went to a two-week Marine Corps Reserve encampment at San Diego, CA with about 300 members from the Spokane-based Organized Reserve Battalion. We spent the first week at the Camp Mathews rifle range, near the popular seaside city of La Jolla.

That fall, I started studying Mechanical Engineering at Washington State College (later university) in Pullman and boarded with the family of my aunt Floral and uncle Jay. Since ROTC was a requirement, I wore my uniform to the morning classes after ROTC sessions. I had no idea then that this ROTC training would become a factor in my becoming a 2nd Lt two years later. Several of my friends also joined us there--It was a wonderful time of family life with great food.

WW II MARINE CORPS SERVICE

Then this time of my life came to an end, when I was called to Marine active duty the next year on November 4, 1940. I served most of the next five years in the Second Marine Division, training and leading other young Marines before and during WW II in extensive Pacific islands combat. During the last seven months, I was a company commander, training officer candidates at Quantico, VA. I remained active in the reserve for a total of thirty years and retired as a Lt Col.

After the war, I returned to Washington State at age 25 to resume getting my BS degree in Mechanical Engineering and then working in that profession for the next 32 years, involving aerospace projects.

My childhood aspirations were realized and my mother received great satisfaction. She certainly deserved it after going through so much worry about my survival during WW II.