

The Settlers Photographic Collection, 1894 - 1945 & The DuPont Photographic Collection, 1943 - 1945

***Bringing History to Life in South
Central Washington***

Prepared for the U.S. Department of Energy
Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management

Project Hanford Management Contractor for the
U.S. Department of Energy under Contract DE-AC06-96RL13200

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Richland, Washington

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Bringing History to Life in South Central Washington

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for Web Presentation
Saturday, July 18th, 10:30 a.m. to Noon

The Settlers Photographic Collection, 1894 - 1945
&
The DuPont Photographic Collection, 1943 - 1945
Bringing History to Life in South Central Washington State
www.hanford.gov/photogallery

(Image: Title Page)

Introduction

Washington is called the "Evergreen State" (Image: 69807-5cn.jpg Lake Tipsoo & Mt. Rainier) and it evokes images like this of lush forests, lakes and mountains. However, such images apply primarily to the half of the state west of the Cascade Mountains, where we are today. (Image: M 4-17-06-0135.jpg View of Badger & Candy Mountains from Clodfelter Road, HHH). Eastern Washington state is quite a different matter and I want to draw your attention to a portion of Eastern Washington that is the focus of my presentation to you this morning. (Image: 93090466-28cn) This image was taken on a part of the Department of Energy's Hanford Site, a 586-square mile government reservation, the second largest DOE facility in the nation (Image: 102581-18CN-4.jpg The Hanford Site). Here you can see where I am talking about, roughly 220 miles southeast of Seattle and about the same distance northeast of Portland.

(Image: D4868-neg 1944 stop sign.)

Hanford has been used for national defense work since 1943 (Image: D4867 Sign that reads: U.S. Government Property. No Trespassing). It was a principal site for the Manhattan Project but of course only a select few knew that (Image: "It's Atomic Bombs" article in "the Villager") until it was announced on the front page of the local paper on August 6th, 1945. Hanford had produced the fissionable material used in the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, and throughout the Cold War it produced plutonium for our weapons. (Image: 108667-1CN.jpg Hanford Site Capabilities). In its heyday the complex consisted of nine nuclear reactors and associated processing facilities. Today Hanford is engaged in the world's largest environmental cleanup project.

I do not plan to speak to you this morning about contemporary Hanford. Instead I want to tell you about an earlier time at this place, and what has been done recently to bring its history to life for the people living in its vicinity, many of whom have had their lives influenced in some manner by what transpired there in the first half of the 20th century.

(Image: The Settlers Collection, 1894 -1945)

The Settlers Photographic Collection, 1894-1945

Just over a year ago a collection of photographs we now call "The Settlers Collection" was made public. It consists of 192 images taken of civilian life in the decades before this land was acquired by the government. The images are arranged into three groupings: Agricultural and Ranching (Image: 79190-13 "Planting grass" 1911), People and Structures (Image: 87373-2 White Bluff's High School Class of 1936), and Transportation (Image: 79191-1cn "Sage Brush Annie" locomotive, 1913). Some images had dates on them, as you have just seen, but others (Image: 03080006-038df) like this one of sheep being driven through a community (we do not know which one) we cannot date precisely. (Image: 03080006-15df) Here is another of children in front of a brick schoolhouse that we know was constructed in 1895. We guess that the picture was taken soon thereafter because the brickwork looks fresh, but we do not know for sure. Nevertheless we consider this image to be, most probably, the oldest in "The Settlers Collection."

(Image: Sketch of the locale)

Two small communities developed on the semi-arid shrub-steppe plateau beside the mighty Columbia River: Hanford, seen here (Image: 65881-6) in 1910, and White Bluffs, seen here (Image: 03080006-020) from an airplane in 1920. The Columbia River was a lifeline to the early settlers (Image: 03080006-df W.R. Todd leaving Hanford, 1915). Hanford and White Bluffs were the northern terminus of boats plying the river out of Portland because just upstream was Priest Rapids, a jumble of whitewater not passable to steam boats. Homesteaders began settling here as early as the late 1860s to plant orchards of apples, cherries and pears, raise stock, and make a new life for themselves. They sank their roots deep, endured heat, cold (Image: 092263-10.jpg White Bluffs in Winter), floods (Image: 86746-8 Flood, Old Town White Bluffs, 1917), and managed to prosper (Image: 78113-5 Frank Hensley's Red Apple Ranch, 1913) in the way people opening up a new country have done for generations.

(Image: 98030086-3cn Public Proclamation #18, July 14, 1943)

Once a decision was made in early 1943 by the directors of the Manhattan Project to use this arid and isolated land for their purposes, the eviction of the estimated 1,500 people living in the area rapidly followed. Buildings were bulldozed to make way for new purposes and orchards demolished (Image: Surveyors constructing a ditch - from a Spokane newspaper). But some things were left to deteriorate over the decades, and a few structures still exist, like the remains of Hanford High School seen here (Image: HHS-40). (Image: 991000062-4) The most recent

image in “The Settlers Collection” is this view of the main street of White Bluffs, taken in 1945, by then boarded up and abandoned.

(Image: The DuPont Collection, 1943 - 1945)

The DuPont Photographic Collection, 1943-1945

My focus in this presentation is on “The Settlers Collection,” but to understand it I need to tell you just a bit about another collection we call “The DuPont Collection.”

Soon after the Hanford Site was chosen in 1943, a new organization called The Hanford Engineer Works was created by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. They began bringing into the area men and women, resources and material to construct a highly secret military/industrial complex for winning the war. (Image: D7993) A cadre of photographers, lead by this man, Robley Johnson, took pictures of everything they could think of, both mission critical, like reactors and processing facilities under construction (Image: D7278 Piping in a Processing Cell), and social, like employee’s interests and activities (Image: D1660 Woman with Cat in Site-provided Trailer, 1944). The contractor selected to implement this was the DuPont De Nemours Company (Image: 6417-neg. Sign reading: A DuPont Production), a large chemical and engineering firm, because it had both the expertise needed to do the job, and a strong philosophy for doing things as safely as allowed by the thinking of the time and the requirements of wartime production.

We have identified 8,703 negatives covering the period from May 1943 to February 1945 when DuPont completed its contractual obligations. We were processing “The DuPont Collection” negatives when we were asked to stop doing that in order to create “The Settlers Collection.” Soon after completing our work on “The Settlers Collection” last September, funding constraints suspended the remaining work on “The DuPont Collection.” We estimate that we had processed ~40% of the DuPont negatives. I am sure many of you have experienced the same “stop and go” phenomenon with your own projects, and, perhaps like you, we remain optimistic that eventually we will complete this project.

(Image: Reaching Out to the Public, 2008 & Beyond)

Reaching Out to the Public, 2008 and Beyond

The public “launch” of “The Settlers Collection” last summer involved an announcement to all Hanford Site personnel about it and an invitation to visit the display (Image: LMIT Display 1) prepared by our Media Services group, shown here, and first set up in the lobby of the Federal Building in downtown Richland, WA. DOE administers Hanford and the site cleanup from the Federal Building. Accompanying the display is this brochure (Image: Handout: Settlers Exhibit 1894-1945) that tells about the collection. I have provided these for you today. Also as a part of the “launch” an article was published in our local newspaper, “The Tri-City Herald” (a copy of this is also available for you to take today). In addition there was a 15 minute feature and interview on a local radio station. Finally, as part of “getting the word out” the fact that an

interactive web site was available was repeatedly stressed. You will find its address on the brochure. I hope you will access the collection and enjoy looking at it.

(Image: Mid-Columbia Library - rear view)

The staff at the Mid-Columbia Library in Kennewick, WA. were very helpful to schedule and host a lecture about the collection. Here is another view of our display, as seen from the back, when it was set up in the library before the lecture. The library staff subsequently provided the venue and hosted a reunion on a Sunday afternoon that attracted ~45 direct descendants of the settlers, their friends or relatives. Although it has not happened yet, we hope that one day the display and brochures can be placed in the lobbies of some of our senior centers and long-term-care facilities where we are sure they will generate interest and possibly help us to fill in more information about the lives of the first settlers.

(Image: "Vacate for Army" newspaper article)

When, with no advanced warning, Government agents descended with their eviction notices on the inhabitants of White Bluffs and Hanford, there was shock, disbelief, anger and resentment. Most people took what payment the Government men gave them, accepting this course, as they were told, in the name of doing their patriotic duty to help the war effort. Others left but fought the evictions in the courts for years. The Government, of course, always won. (Image: 8501963-1cn.jpg Winter View across the Site to Rattlesnake Mountain) To this day the descendants of some of these people wait for the opportunity to get "their" land back and to go out on tours like this one (Image: 52860022.jpg), when they are offered, to see what is left and to tell their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren what it was like "back then."

(Image: 8-7-84-004.jpg)

These are the people who, as I have said, we think are particularly interested in "The Settlers Collection," and these are the folks we want to reach because of the stories they can tell us about what life was like according to their family's historical recollection, before that recollection is gone forever.

So, you may ask, how did we accomplish this?

(Image: Bringing History to Life in South Central Washington State)

Bringing History to Life in South Central Washington State

As is often the case, it was the conjunction of talent and money that enabled us to bring history to life. (Image: Photo of Dan sorting negatives) We have an employee, one of our Lockheed Martin photographers, Dan Ostergaard, seen here, who is very well informed about local history and who has, for years and mostly as an avocation, collected the images that now make up a sizeable portion of "The Settlers Collection." We had until recently a DOE Records Officer who is a fourth generation That's-My-Land-And-I-Want-It-Back-Thank-You-Very-Much advocate.

Both are aware that year-by-year the historical memory is fading, and that, as is often said, 'time was of the essence'.

(Image: IDMS logo)

Enter into this situation High Technology in the form of a powerful Integrated Document Management System that began to be used on site in 2002, a customized version of the Open Text Corporation's Live Link® product. Hanford is now going electronic, big time, and this tool is the means by which it is being done. IDMS is fully certified (DOD 5015.2 [Electronic Recordkeeping System Compliance Testing Certification] and DOE 4001-2000 [Design Criteria Standard for Electronic Records Management Software Applications]) and integrates, as this image suggests, workflow, document control, and records management with highly sophisticated search and retrieval capabilities. We have scanned and loaded "The Settlers Collection," image by image, into IDMS. (Image: IDMS screen #1). Here you see the screen showing the three categories of images we have: Agricultural & Ranching, People & Structures, and Transportation. (Image: IDMS screen #3) Clicking on Agricultural & Ranching gets one to all twenty-one of the images in that category, with their associated metadata as seen here.

(Image: 09040013-126 Aerial View looking west above 200E)

This image gives you a sense of the size of the Hanford Site's production areas (only some of which are to be seen here). As mentioned, we are the largest environmental cleanup site in the world. Ultimately DOE intends to return a large portion of it to the public domain and all record material documenting what went on here will be conveyed to the National Archives (NARA). We wanted to be sure that when the time comes to hand over the various photographic collections that the images and their identifying metadata are the best we can deliver.

(Image: Negative sleeve marked "Declassified" and signed - D4622)

Beginning in early 2000 a team of specialists was formed to declassify the negatives we now associate with "The DuPont Collection." (Image: D3286 B Reactor under Construction 1944) Previously all had been classified as "Secret," as can be seen on the lower left of this image of the B Reactor being constructed in early 1944. As part of this declassification project the images were scanned using the equipment then available, and were quickly indexed, often by the classifiers' guestimates that we now know to be sometimes inaccurate. (Image: P1553-neg. 221T). At the time, haste seemed to be the objective and the quality control that was applied to some of the images produced by this scanning effort was not very good, as you can see in this example.

What you are looking at, but admittedly not very well, is what is known as "T Plant." It was the first operational separations facility designed to remove plutonium from the uranium "slugs" that had been irradiated in our "B Reactor," the first of seven reactors built. "B Reactor," by the way, is now being refurbished to be preserved as a national historic site, and although the job is not yet done, tours are being given there throughout the summer. "T Plant" started operation in late 1944 (this image was taken earlier that year) and continues to exist, being used for various other functions, to this day.

That was a little digression. My point is that when the declassification process took place, the scanning was not very good. (Image: P1553 221T, enhanced) Today we have much greater scanning resolution and the work we did last year emphasized a higher degree of attention to the scanning process with the result that we have achieved much better images, as illustrated here using the same negative I previously showed you. The earlier effort was intent on volume and that team might scan ~100 images a day. Our effort was intent on quality, and we scanned ~70 images a day, each carefully QC-ed for resolution, black and white contrast, etc. Dan Ostergaard, the photo specialist and overall guru on this project, used a newly purchased Epson Perfection V750 Pro Flatbed Scanner® and the most current version of Adobe Photoshop® software to correct the scans. The negatives were pre-scanned and partially corrected and cropped. The final scan was made and corrected by Dan, again using Photoshop®.

The scans in their new and final form are 30 MB (Mega bite) TIFF files that are stored in IDMS as 2 MB JPGS with their associated metadata. TIFF, the abbreviation for Tagged Image File Format, an Adobe product, is not a compressed image, so there is no loss of image to compromise the quality. It can be opened by various image and document management systems and I am told that it has become the Gold Standard in the industry.

(Image: Indexing Elements)

We first consulted with the archival staff at NARA to determine what fields we would associate with the negatives. Seven indexing elements (or fields) were selected. They are on the screen, as you can see:

(Image: Original DuPont 5x7 negative envelope of D474)

Document Number - this is the same as the negative number established by our Photography Department. Notice the document number D474 stamped on this 5x7 negative envelope as seen here on the upper right hand corner. These images were collected over time and consequently the code structure varies, but the codes represent the only connection to provenance that we have: there were no diaries, logs or indices to which we could link the images, and we did not wish to disturb this provenance by creating a new coding scheme. We used the codes already in place.

(Image: 87875-3.jpg).

Document Date - this was added when it was known. As I have said, many of the 192 images in "The Settlers Collection" were not adequately dated, and sometimes could only be dated by deduction or corroboration with other information we had (buildings present or absent, styles of dress, etc.). Here, for example, is an image, again among the earliest in the collection, of the extended Craig family, who were prominent in the White Bluffs area as orchardists and settlers. We do not have a specific date for this, but based on their attire we think the image captures an event, maybe taken after Sunday supper, in about 1903. Since our IDMS

software requires a full date, we decided to use January 1st when no specific date could be determined, even though, as is the case here, the photograph was obviously not taken in January.

(Image: D160)

The photographers working under Robley Johnson generally used a marker to document their images. Here, for example, is a smoke dispersion generator mounted on a truck being used in a wind drift test. Here in the foreground is a marker showing both the date of the exposure and the document number D160.

(Image: D145)

Here, from several miles away, the same testing for wind drift, and again the marker with the date and document number D145.

(Image: 03080006-030)

Title - for each the title begins with the negative (e.g. document) number followed by two spaces followed by a brief description. The choice of words was intended to put the operative words first, as here, for example: White Bluffs Grade School Students & Teacher.

Following the descriptive text, a year date, only, was provided after a comma. When no year date could be ascertained, then n.d. (i.e. no date) was assigned to the image.

(Image: 76783.2c1)

Description - any additional information that we had, and sometimes we had it and sometimes not, was placed here. For example, we might have acquired from a source, known or unknown, the names of people in a picture. If we had it, we included it. If not, we sometimes were able to deduce it. Here, for example, is "Irvy Wright with his Hay Sled, 1922." Dan had attended some of the reunions, had done interviews, had visited the places where things were or had been, and had read extensively in whatever literature he could find, published or not. Much of the descriptive language derived from his research.

(Image: 108667-1CN.jpg Hanford Site Capabilities)

Area - this is a category that is important to the Hanford Site. As I said at the beginning of this presentation, the Hanford footprint is 586 square miles. That's a lot of territory. The identification of "areas" only began with the coming of the Army Corp of Engineers in 1943, so this category is not important for "The Settlers Collection." However, it is for "The DuPont Collection," and will be for other

collections still to be created. We thought it best to have this a part of the metadata indexing protocol from the outset.

(Image: Historical Photo Gallery)

Keywords - the photographer and indexer created a list to enable people who access the web site to go right to subjects of particular interest to them as you can see here to the left of this image.

Box Number - it is estimated that there are ~2.5 million negatives from the early 1940s to the present, and we know that as we progress with this project, where the images are located in the inactive records storage system will be a critical piece of information. So a box number was added to the list of indexing fields.

(Image: Conclusion)

Conclusion

(Image: 16856-1acn copy. Sunset over B Reactor)

There was a real sense of accomplishment experienced in producing "The Settlers Collection." The endeavor is meaningful to members of our community, and for capturing the past in digital form. The assembly of the various elements by which the collection might be showcased, the display for those who might not have computer access or knowledge, the web site for those who do is an important accomplishment. Furthermore, the work is not done. The display and presentations can go on whenever and wherever there are venues. The web site is expandable, so that as we learn more about the early residents we can incorporate that knowledge into it.

The fact that we had previously begun work on "The DuPont Collection" gave us some experience in the required steps. When the direction was given to set the first aside and refocus on "The Settlers Collection" we, Dan Ostergaard and I, were able to do that quickly. The reverse is also true: now that we have "The Settlers Collection" 'under our belt', so to speak, we can focus once again on the roughly 60% of "The DuPont Collection" yet to be completed as funding is available. We hope that will happen soon.

(Image: HCC 37 Sunset over the shrub steppe.jpg).

All in all, the creation of "The Settlers Collection" has been a positive experience, and I am pleased to have been able to share it with you this morning. Thank you very much!

(Image: End Page)

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