

Great Grandad and the Christmas Seal

I often talk about the thoughts, or dreams of having a pause button for moments in time. One that when looking back at great memories and times, I would have pushed that button, just to enjoy that small moment just a little longer.

Thinking back to memories while looking through old family photos with my Mother, it also spurs a child-like wish for a time travel button also. One that would give me the ability to go back in time, to meet ones that had passed before I was born. Just to have a few minutes to meet the ones behind the faded black and white photos.

One for sure would be to meet my Great Grandad "Henry Martin Freyer". Looking through just a few brief moments in time, captured by the then, blurry technology, etched into my mind. Even though I never had any time spent with him, I still place memories in my bank of what I imagine he was like, and the times he lived in. Carved into my thoughts by the treasured time captured images. Just small simple moments printed out in black and white give such an amazing window into family, where we came from, and who we are.



Great Grandma holding the Christmas Seal poster, along with "Dick and Dime" and Great Grandad

Great Grandad was born in 1884. Married Great Grandma "Emma Jane Johnson", she was born in 1894. I would love a window in time to see them as they grew, and what brought them together. But I am thankful for the small pieces of time that I can look into.

Great Grandad was known all over for his oxen over the years, two different teams over the years named "Dick and Dime". This team was used for all the work on the farm, as well as making appearances in parades, from Clearfield, State College, and even New York in 1954 when he took the oxen down "New York's Fifth Avenue in the rain", as he had the only oxen in Clearfield County, and two of the only ones in Pennsylvania.

Stories of Grandad using Dick and Dime while working on the farm. From pulling logs, plows, and tending to the Maple Sugar Shack. And as mentioned in the progress article, during the severe winter of 1944-45, the snow was too deep for horses or tractors. But the

Grandad led team of Oxen could get through delivering fuel and food to the snowbound Kerrmoor families. In a 1947 clipping, it ends by saying "It has been pointed out that the oxen hauling a load of Christmas trees on the seal pictorially depicts the importance of cooperation"



Great Grandad with Dick and Dime at one of the news article mentioned parades.

A photograph was taken of Grandad and his team of oxen, joined together by his hand carved "Yoke". Articles state this photograph was sent all over to Pennsylvania newspapers as being the official state photo. It was also given to the PA Governor "James H. Duff" and other state notables. In 1947 Grandad and his oxen "Dick and Dime" were selected to be the image for that year's "Christmas Seal".



I found a few pages of Grandad's seals a few years ago on ebay and purchased a few pages for my family.



My framed "Full Sheet" display of the 1947 Christmas Seal

I now also have copies of the original pictures that were referenced in the news articles of Grandad's Awesome Oxen story. A story of events leading him, Dick, and Dime to be chosen to represent cooperation, gentleness, and small town values throughout Pennsylvania, and across the world in this small "Christmas Seal".



Eleven year old Aunt Elsie and eight year old Aunt Gloria holding a poster of the Christmas seal. Wearing their "babushkas" because it was windy at the farm Aunt Elsie told the Progress reporter. Dick and Dime were 14 yrs old when this photo was taken.

Such a small moment in time, printed off on a tiny glue backed piece of paper, yet a cosmic stamp of time. I am so thankful for handed down pictures, and historical found news articles of these events and the ones that created, and lived them.

I hope you all enjoy this small glimpse back in time.



OPINION

Clearfield County man part Christmas Seals history

In 1917, 40 years after the start of a Christmas tradition, a Clearfield County man and his team of men received recognition by being featured on that year's Christmas Seal.

Henry Fryer of Kermansaw had the only known team in Clearfield County and 1917 of the few teams in Pennsylvania when the record was made to photograph them in a pasture similar to the picture on the seal.

The official state photograph was made and copies were sent to all newspapers in the east, northwest and west to Pennsylvania Gov. James H. Duff and other state officials.

W.O. Menden, the Clearfield County farm agent, gave a photograph the man for the official seal.

In a Nov. 21, 1917, article in The Progress, it was stated that efforts to find the team in Pennsylvania began in early October. The state publicity chairman contacted Tuberculosis Society officials in each of the 57 counties asking them to attempt to locate a team to help preserve the state seal of the seal.

At the time the photograph was taken, Dick, the lead ox, and Dime, one black and one brown, were 14 years old and weighed a total of 3,300 pounds. They were driven with a single line.

The team were the only power on the 40-acre farm and worked every day with no load overnight too heavy for them including the 40-pound sled carried in the usual manner along their "wells," the article says.

The men were used for plowing, planting, harvesting and, in the winter, on a logging operation near the farm.

Training for the men began when they were 6 weeks old. The first harness they were trained with was a split-toothed harness, the oxen were 40 penny hals.

Another event the men and Mr Fryer took part in was a parade down New York's Fifth Avenue in the rain.

He participated in the Clearfield County Agricultural parade, the State Farm Show, a parade in State College in 1915 and a Livestock Show. This is just a few of their activities.

A newspaper article mentioned that during the severe winter of 1916-17 the snow was too deep for

horses or tractors, but the team could get through to deliver fuel and feed to snowbound Kermansaw families.

The story of Christmas Seals began in 1871, according to the American Lung Association. That year a young Henry Zerkow Livingston Truman was diagnosed as having tuberculosis. He re-evaluated all his plans and decided to spend his life in the serenity of a cottage in the mountains of New York.

The surroundings were conducive to long hours of rest and the young man's health began to improve. He became convinced that TB could be cured with proper food, rest, good breathing, fresh air and lots of sunshine.

In 1884, now fully recovered, he opened the first TB sanatorium in the United States, in modest one-room red cottages on the shore of Saranac Lake, N.Y. There was room for just 100 patients at a time, but it quickly became world famous as one patient after another recovered.

Other facilities opened throughout the world but funds were needed to provide adequate housing and care.

The first Christmas Seal, bearing a picture of the Queen and the Danish word for Merry Christmas was issued in 1894 and sold in post offices throughout Denmark. More than a million were sold the first year at a half penny each.

The project began when a postal clerk was concerned about the lack of care available for many children with TB. He outlined in the weeks before Christmas the post office Denmark issued a special Christmas seal for letters and postcards when the holiday spirit was high, it would bring in the needed money for sick children.

The idea was brought to the United States after there was a great success in sales in Denmark. The first seal design was a red cross centered in a half-circle of holly above the words "Merry Christmas." Permission was given by the national Red Cross to use its symbol.

Today, Christmas Seals bear the American Lung Association and other lung-related issues. TB is still one of the most serious major infectious diseases in the world.



Sketches In Tune
by Jane Elling

90 Years of Christmas Seals

1917 marks 90 years of research and breakthroughs that have made The American Lung Association the leader in the fight to conquer lung disease.



This holiday season, your contribution to The American Lung Association's Christmas Seal Campaign allows us to continue our fight to prevent, protect the environment, help those suffering from asthma, and continue our battle against all lung disease.

For more information, please call today

1-800-LUNG-USA

1917 (top) marks since the Christmas Seal first appeared in the United States and was dedicated to raising funds to fight tuberculosis; in 1997, this notice marked the 90 years, in 10-year increments, of the seal; in the lower left corner is the seal showing a Clearfield County man and his team of oxen.

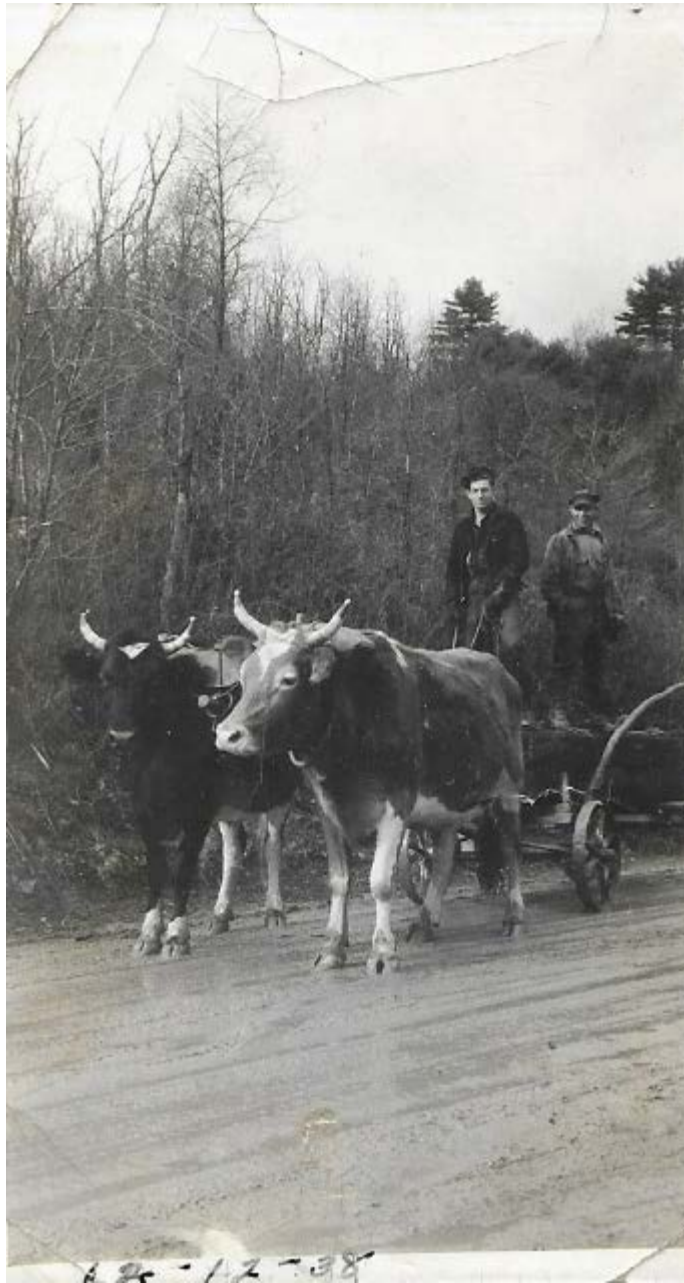
"The Progress" news article "90 years of Christmas Seals" December 19th 2008



Great Grandad with his grandkids.

This picture is the "Original Pair" Dick and Dime
My Mother and Uncles (Karen, Earl, a friend, and Bill)





Even a picture of my Grandfather (Wayne Freyer), and Brother-in-law (Great Uncle Oakley) driving the team.

“Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.”

HENRY FORD
