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Slipper's Soliloquies

Duke's Hill



By Fred Slipper

Two weeks ago I asked in my column "Where did Duke's Hill gets its name?" I have found out.

I imagine many of the old timers here have heard the story many times, but there are a number of newcomers and maybe some of the younger people don't know story. Sam Whitacre told me the Courier had a feature on the origin of the name about 25 years ago, but I have been unable to find it among our files.

The first answer I got to my question was from Howard Browne. Howard told me about the Duke from Bavaria, and said the story was well covered in Ray Jordan's book, "Ray's Writin's." Howard loaned me the book, and it is really interesting. As a youngster Ray had personal contact with the legendary Duke, so knows the story first hand. It seems the Duke got in trouble in the royal court in Bavaria, and his uncle, the ruler of Bavaria, banished him from the country. As was the custom in such a case, the Duke became a remittance man, and received a healthy monthly income from the "old country." The mystery was how he ended up in the vicinity of Sedro-Woolley. As Ray recalls, everything the Duke had was first class-new house, finest silverware, wonderful wardrobe, best team of horses in the area, etc., etc. His only problem was the only nourishment he preferred was liquid, and he drank himself to death. Ray's story goes on to tell the Duke died in the local hospital, only 33 years old, and was buried in the local cemetery.

I was curious about the burial part, and my next information came from Sam Whitacre. Sam is a past editor of the Courier and had seen copies of the article that had been done 25 years ago. He said he knew where the Duke was buried and took me to the cemetery. There we found the Duke's head stone. The moss has covered part of it, but we could see the inscription, "Friederich George," and the dates, Oct. 3, 1874, Feb. 5, 1907. It is said that when the Duke died the Bavarian government furnished the head stone. Also either



while he was in the hospital with his fatal illness, or shortly after he died, his beautiful home burned and all of his valuable possessions either burned or were looted before the house burned.

So quite a bit of the story is a mystery - how did the Duke arrive in our community, why did he decide life wasn't worth living and drank himself to death, who burned the house???

But I did get my question answered, and now know how "Duke's Hill" got its name.

