



RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

SPRING 2019 • ISSUE 142

An Official Publication of the Healdsburg Museum & Historical Society

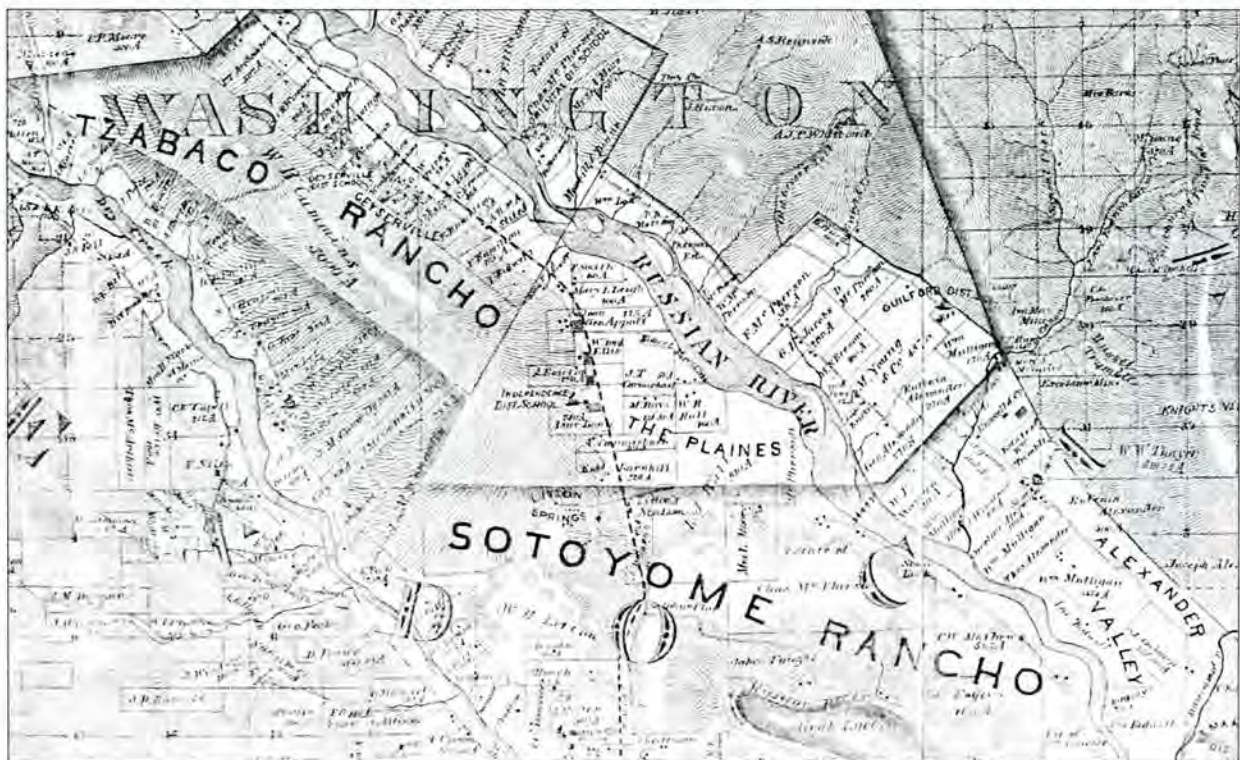
HEALDSBURG'S

PIONEERS

Part Two

Contents

- 4 **The Healdsburg Land Wars**
by Lauren Carriere
- 7 **Cyrus Alexander: Brief Sketch of the Life of One of Our Pioneer of Pioneers**
by Charles Alexander
reprinted from Russian River Flag, December 19, 1878
- 11 **Samuel Heald: The First Heald in Healdsburg**
by Pamela Vana-Paxhia
- 14 **Early Healdsburg Memories: Some Original Settlers of this City**
by W. A. Maxwell
reprinted from Healdsburg Tribune, Enterprise and Scimitar, March 26, 1908
- 17 **The Life and Times of Reverend Dr. Benjamin Blackman Bonham**
Contributions to Early Healdsburg
by Jane Bonham, great-great-great niece of Dr. Benjamin Blackman Bonham
- 23 **Cephus Perley Moore and Electa Odell Moore, Geyserville Pioneers**
by Ann Howard
- 28 **Meaning of the Word "Sotoyome"**
reprinted from Healdsburg Enterprise, August 1, 1908



Source: New Historical Atlas of Sonoma County, California, 1877

Rancho Sotoyome and Rancho Tzabaco as depicted in 1877

The Healdsburg Land Wars

by *Lauren Carriere*

Mexico was engaged in a war with the United States during the late 1840s. One result of this war was the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which included Mexican cession of California to the United States. The treaty specified that the lands granted by the Mexican government were to be recognized by the United States government. On the eve of the United States annexation of California, much of coastal California was privately owned through these land grants.

Toward the end of California's Mexican period, the Mexican government became particularly interested in establishing settlements north of San Francisco to protect its territory from the Russians and the Americans. In addition to establishing missions in San Rafael and Sonoma, land was also given away in parcels referred to as Land Grants, or ranchos. Two of these land grants were Rancho Sotoyome and Rancho Tzabaco. Rancho Sotoyome was granted to Henry Delano Fitch in 1841 and 1846. Rancho Tzabaco was granted to José German Piña in 1843.

Mexican ranchos revolved around their primary economic good: cattle. In the late 1840s, Rancho Tzabaco land sold at an average of \$1.18 an acre while cattle could sell for as much as \$25.00 a head. Though land was not as valuable as cattle, the rancho owners obviously relied on their land to support their cattle operations.

Rancho Sotoyome

Henry Delano Fitch was the first person to receive a Mexican Land Grant in the present-day Healdsburg area. The Massachusetts-born sea captain established himself as a trader along the California Coast.

In 1826, Fitch met Josefa Carrillo in San Diego. Josefa was the San Diego-born daughter of Joaquin Carrillo and Doña María Ignacio del Candelaria López (Maria Carrillo).

Fitch was baptized Roman Catholic as Enrique Domingo Fitch, and became a Mexican citizen in 1829. This practice was common among Americans interested in obtaining Mexican land

grants. Just months after becoming a Mexican citizen, Fitch married Josefa. Though Fitch and Josefa were living in San Diego, Fitch petitioned for a Mexican land grant in Sonoma County. In 1841, he received an eight league Rancho Sotoyome. (A league is equivalent to about 4,428.4 acres.) In 1844, Fitch received another three leagues of land for Rancho Sotoyome.

While he was the legal owner of the land, Fitch did not live on Rancho Sotoyome. Instead, he hired Cyrus Alexander to scout out and manage his property north of San Francisco. Alexander managed Rancho Sotoyome for four years. In 1847, Fitch sold two leagues of the rancho to Alexander for \$1.00 in appreciation for his work.

Rancho Tzabaco

José German Piña was the second person to receive a Mexican land grant in the present-day Healdsburg area. Piña was born at Mission San Francisco to Maria Placida Villela and Alfarez Lázaro Piña (Lázaro Piña). Piña's father was the recipient of a land grant near the town of Sonoma, Rancho Agua Caliente.

Unlike the established Captain Fitch, Piña was just fourteen years old when he was granted Rancho Tzabaco in 1843. The Rancho was four square leagues (about 17,700 acres) in today's Dry Creek Valley and Geyserville area. Piña lived on the rancho for just four years, dying on June 17, 1847, at the age of 18. His brothers and sister inherited the land grant.

Early Settlers

Many of the early settlers in the area were attracted to the area for employment at William March and Samuel Heald's Mill, a sawmill and gristmill. The mill was originally the businesses venture of Fitch and March. Fitch was to provide the land, hardware, ox carts and finances, while March was to provide the expertise and procure the labor to build the mill. Fitch died before the mill was completed. March purchased 200 acres of land and the unfinished mill from the Fitch heirs. He subsequently went into business with Samuel Heald to complete the mill in 1850.

Much of the land that early residents settled was privately owned, as part of Rancho Sotoyome or Rancho Tzabaco. It is possible that many of these

early settlers were unaware that the land they established themselves on was not public but privately owned land.

Rancho owners took issue with squatters, particularly when the County began to charge property tax, as the rancho owners had to pay taxes on land that was occupied by the squatters. This led to conflict between the owners and the squatters.

The first phase of the Land Wars can be characterized by individual conflicts between the original land grant families and the people that settled on their land. One such incident occurred after a squatter family was kicked off Cyrus Alexander's land in 1856. In response, the family came back and burned down Alexander's barn, farm machinery and his entire crop of freshly-threshed grain.

One of the most violent events to take place was the murder of Antonio Piña, a brother of José German Piña. In 1853, a squatter living on Rancho Tzabaco land shot and killed him because Piña cattle had trampled his crops and fences.

Rancho Sales and Transfers

Piña and Fitch died soon after obtaining their land grants. By the mid-1850s, both families had incurred mounting debt. American businesspeople leveraged the heirs' circumstances by pushing for the sale of the rancho lands.

Rancho Tzabaco Sales

In 1850 two of the six shares of Rancho Tzabaco land were sold off to help pay debts. Piña's brothers Francisco and Luis sold their shares of Tzabaco land in 1853 to Captain John Frisbie. The two shares totaled approximately 17,000 acres.

The Sotoyome Land Auctions

In 1856 three land auctions were held in which 40,000 acres of Rancho Sotoyome land were sold. Dr. Levi Frisbie, brother of Captain John B. Frisbie, and the John Bailhache family purchased a majority of the land. Frisbie ended up with about 29,000 acres from these land auctions.

Peculiarly, the squatters of this land did not buy land through the land auctions, even though prices and terms of repayment were reasonable, if not great. Local historian, Hannah Clayborn, suggests that this was because the squatters conspired with

Frisbie, pioneer John Bailhache and Josefa's lawyer E.O. Crosby to defraud the Fitch heirs of their land.

GUARDIAN'S SALE
OF A LARGE QUANTITY
OF RICH
FARMING LAND
SITUATED IN
Sonoma and Mendocino Counties
KNOWN AS THE
RANCHO "SOTOYOME,"
Containing Nine Leagues, or 40,000
Acres of Rich and Fertile Soil, and well watered, the
title of which will be confirmed by
TRACTS OF 160 ACRES EACH
to Purchasers will receive a PERFECT
TITLE, FREE FROM INCUMBRANCES,
it having been confirmed by the Board of U. S.
Land Commissioners and U. S. District Court.
Sale to take place at SANTA ROSA, County Seat
of Sonoma County, on
MONDAY, April 7, 1856,
Commencing at 2 1/2 o'clock, in the forenoon.

Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Rancho Sotoyome land sale notice

Squatters Unite

The second phase of the land wars began in 1858. This phase was characterized by the organized action of the squatters against the new landowners, particularly the Frisbies and the Bailhaches. The violence was likely retribution from the squatters for not being compensated for their role in the breakup of the rancho lands. Curiously, John Bailhache was married to Josephine Fitch, one of the Fitch heirs.

The owners of much of Rancho Tzabaco lands, Captain Frisbie and Jose Luco, had their land surveyed. The galvanizing event for this phase of the wars occurred on April 9, 1858. On that day, a group of about 65 armed, mounted and angry squatters approached Deputy Surveyor C.C. Tracy as he was surveying a particularly disputed part of Rancho Tzabaco. The crowd took Tracy's survey notes and demanded that the survey stop and that he leave town. After convincing Tracy to leave, the mob went to the center of Healdsburg to confront Dr. Frisbie. Frisbie sought shelter in a building and the mob was unable to reach him.

For the next six years, the squatters fought to defend their illegal homesteads on Rancho Tzabaco and Rancho Sotoyome, but the angry, and often armed, groups of squatters were no match for local law enforcement.

In 1862, a group of 60 armed squatters from a 160-acre piece of Rancho Sotoyome led by pioneer

Alexander Skaggs met the sheriff with a stern warning that they would be shot if they proceeded. The sheriff backed down.

From the late 1850s to early 1860s various battles took place between the squatters and the landowners. It was unclear how the issue would be resolved.

Luckily for all concerned, Colonel Lewis A. Norton, a Mexican-American War veteran and lawyer, had great success with easing the tensions and strife. Norton initially came to the Healdsburg area to fight the families that claimed to hold Mexican land grants. Though he initially believed the land grants to be fraudulent, he came to understand their legitimacy. He focused on helping the landowners eject squatters from their land. Initially notorious for using firepower and the threat of violence to encourage the squatters to leave, Norton eventually learned that offering squatters the chance to purchase their land at a fair price could be just as effective. In his autobiography, Norton said of his former squatter foes: *"I must say, in justification of these men, that the most of them, in my judgement, were honest in their convictions that the claimants either had no title to the lands, or if they had a title, it was fraudulent; and that many of them to-day are among our most respected and prominent citizens. Our old feuds are now looked upon as a feverish and disturbing dream, or treated as a subject of mirth, and as for myself, the most of the men who once wanted to see my throat cut are among my warmest friends."*

By the 1870s, the Healdsburg Land Wars were over.

Sources:

The California Journal of Politics & Policy, *The War of Words: A Confederate Rhetoric in the Healdsburg Squatter War*, 2015.

Clayborn, Hannah, *A Promised Land: Grantees, Squatters, and Speculators in the Healdsburg Land Wars*, Master's Thesis, 1990.

Healdsburg Enterprise: June 22, 1918.

Norton, Col. L. A., *Life and Adventures of Col. L. A. Norton*, 1887.

Russian River Recorder: January, 1981; Summer, 2007.

San Diego Historical Society Quarterly: Spring, 1973.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Cyrus Alexander, c.1848

Cyrus Alexander: Brief Sketch of the Life of One of Our Pioneer of Pioneers

by Charles Alexander

reprinted from Russian River Flag, December 19, 1878

As early at the Fall of 1859, our first visit to the Alexander ranch, nine miles northeast of Healdsburg, was made. We were received at the gate by Cyrus himself; with a smile he welcomed us, and the warm twinkle in his gray eyes showed the good-humored hospitable disposition he possessed. Our horse was taken from us and put away to the choicest hay and grain. At the same time we were surrounded by Mrs. Alexander, William and such little ones as were at home, and shown into the comfortable adobe residence, a building cool in Summer and warm in Winter, two stories high with the usual Spanish style of porch surrounding it. Before leaving, we had been piloted through the various adobe outbuildings stored with wines, fruits, etc., and through orchards and vineyards, treated to everything nice and finally left, laden with a huge basket of assorted golden fruits. As the country was then very wild, this brief glimpse of civilization, formed a lasting impression. Though Uncle Cyrus, and one or two more of the then groups have gone, the homestead still remains the abode of the family, and is still proverbial for its hospitality. Margareta and Joseph are both married but live on handsome estates adjoining. His brother John Alexander and family lived nearby on a fine ranch, but have since removed to the States. His nephew Charles and family also lived a few miles southward, and after farming, and fruit and stock-raising successfully for many years, sold to his son Lawrence last Summer. Charles now resides in this city. To him we are indebted for the following record.

—Leslie A. Jordan, Editor, Russian River Flag

Cyrus, the ninth child of David Alexander, was born May 16, 1805, in Pennsylvania, and when six years old he was taken with his father's family to settle in St. Clair County, Illinois, eighteen miles east of St. Louis, in 1810. A manuscript history of his life, so diversified and full of wild romantic enterprises, has been prepared for publication by his nephew, Mr. Charles Alexander, of Healdsburg, Sonoma County, California. From this work, yet unpublished, we derive the following brief account: When Cyrus was passing his early youth, his parents indulged him with exemption from the severer toils of frontier life on account of his delicate health. Yet from one of his older brothers he learned to tan leather and to make shoes, and from another brother to gear and run a mill. The reading and stories of border life inflamed his natural love of adventure, and he determined to seek a fortune out of the ordinary path of pursuit. In 1827, being twenty-three years old, he invested his all in ox teams and mining implements, and after a toilsome journey of four hundred miles, commenced in the lead mines of Galena, on Feather river, then recently discovered. But the rigor of the climate and other obstacles rendered his mining unsuccessful. Selling his mining stock, he invested all in an outfit for trapping and for trading, and spent four years traversing the then-wild and almost unknown regions of the Rocky Mountains, from the Yellowstone river to the Gulf of California. The fortunes and misfortunes, the hardships, dangers, and adventures of those years cannot be recounted here. During these years he had neither seen nor heard of a relative, nor did he until many years afterwards when two nephews from Illinois met him in company with Fremont, defending the fort of Sonoma in California, during the Mexican war.

At the end of four years trapping and trading, in 1837 he found himself at San Diego, on the Pacific, in Lower California, destitute of everything but scanty clothing and his indomitable purpose and perseverance. After hiring himself at twelve dollars per month for some time, he procured an outfit that enabled him to engage successfully and profitably in killing sea lions and sea-otters on the Guadalupe Islands. When this business become less remunerative, he engaged with Captain H. D. Fitch, who had a ship, and traded between Lower

California and Boston in hides, tallow, etc. Captain Fitch had married a Mexican wife as a prerequisite to holding large grants of California lands which he had stocked with great herds of various cattle, the hides and tallow of which were the chief articles of the Boston trade. In this cattle business with Captain Fitch, Cyrus Alexander remained until the Captain, perceiving and appreciating his honesty, energy and other good qualities, proposed a partnership on wild lands to be explored and acquired. As Cyrus was not qualified by marriage to obtain the grant of land from the Mexican government, this was obtained by Fitch after Cyrus had explored and selected. After traveling hundreds of miles and crossing San Francisco Bay, he located and surveyed eleven leagues of excellent land on the Russian River, in the region where the flourishing town of Healdsburg now stands. Fitch stocked this "Sotoyome Grant" with cattle of various kinds from the South, and Alexander took charge of the whole in 1840, making improvements, and receiving, at the end of four years, three leagues of the land, one-half the increase of the stock and something for improvements. Before the division of the land he had built an adobe house with the aid of Indians, whom he conciliated by kind treatment, and whose confidence he gained by faithfully fulfilling all his promises. They aided him in building, in herding his cattle and would carry bags of seashells thirty-five miles from the coast when Mr. Alexander wanted them to burn into lime for the first tannery which was ever started north of San Francisco. He rewarded their labor by his superior skill as a hunter, in killing large game for them with his rifle.

The nearest town was the old Catholic Mission of Sonoma, distant thirty-five miles. After dividing land in 1844 and dissolving partnership with Captain Fitch, he built the first house in those regions of kiln-burned brick made of adobe, splitting redwood timber into boards and shingles and using grooves and other contrivances for nails. Having now for the first time a habitation that he could call his own, he was married, in 1844, to Miss Ruphena Lucero by Captain Sutter, then acting as Alcalde (Justice of the Peace) for the Mexican Government. His wife had come to California from New Mexico with her brother-in-law, Mr. Gordon. She was a true woman, and admirably adapted to all

the requirements of frontier life. Large additions were now made to his former improvements. To cattle be added farming and fruit growing; and the first grist-mill in Northern California was added to the tannery. The earth brought forth her hundred-fold, and all his business prospered. His wheat was abundant and of remarkable size and weight; and though his mill was of the most primitive construction—stones and all being of his own manufacture—yet his flour was "super fine," and his bread the best in the land.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Cyrus Alexander's residence as depicted in 1877 Sonoma County Atlas

Now a new trouble arose. In 1847 the Roman Catholic priest of Santa Clara pronounced his marriage null and void, and required Mrs. Alexander to go home (one hundred miles) and remain there until lawfully married. Some other neighbors received similar orders. Mr. Alexander expressed his indignation in language such as he never needed on any other occasions. But, under a tyrannical government in the hands of avaricious priests, and surrounded by superstitious people, he felt that there was no alternative but to comply. After much trouble about a wedding outfit and a long journey to Santa Clara with his wife, they submitted to the farce of re-marriage, at a total expense of three hundred dollars. The next year (1848) came the revolution that placed Mr. Alexander proudly and joyfully under the protection of the "Stars and Stripes"; then followed the great gold discovery at Captain Sutter's saw-mill, the gold fever, and the flood of population from the "States."

Now Mr. Alexander was prepared to reap a full reward of incredible hardships and labors. The productions of his large estate sold to miners at fabulous prices; lambs \$16 per head, calves for more, large fine white hogs at \$50 each, two tons of onions for \$1,200(!), etc. His fortune became very considerable. His social family and abundant fruits attracted many visitors to "Alexander Valley," where parties, after regaling themselves, would often indulge in the pleasures of the dance; but no liquor or disorderly conduct was allowed.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Cyrus Alexander adobe home

After leaving Illinois, he never saw a Bible until a copy was brought to him by the wife of his nephew, Charles Alexander, in 1850. The instruction he had received from his pious Presbyterian parents had regulated his conduct in all the temptations of the wild modes of life which he lived, so that he maintained his integrity in a remarkable degree of sobriety, and honesty, and outward morality, though destitute of saving grace. Immediately on the arrival of the Bible, he became a constant and interested reader, until its truths became a lamp to his feet and a light to his path. The first preacher was the Bev. A. S. Bateman, who came in 1852. Mr. Alexander opened his house for preaching, and furnished land and money for erecting a church. He also erected a school-house and hired a teacher. When the Methodists were unable to pay for their church building, he bought it at a liberal price and donated it to the Presbyterian Church, of which he had become a member, giving

the minister a farm to induce him to settle in Healdsburg. When the town failed to run its academy successfully, Mr. Alexander purchased the property and deeded it also to the Presbyterian church of Healdsburg. The institution now bears the name of the "Alexander Academy," as a monument to his memory as a friend and patron of sound learning and true religion in a new and growing country.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Cyrus Alexander

After a most active and eventful life as founder of new settlements and institutions in California, Cyrus Alexander died of paralysis, December 27, 1872, aged sixty-eight years, and was buried beside six of his children in the family graveyard in Alexander Valley, Sonoma County California. His widow still (1875) survives, and his third son, Joseph, is successfully managing the business of the estate.



Source: findagrave.com

Cyrus Alexander gravestone

The record of his family is as follows: Cyrus Alexander, born May 15, 1805; died December 27, 1872. Ruphena Lucero, his wife, born May, 1830. Children: 1. William, born September 1, 1845; died at sea, August 16, 1867. 2. Margarita Alexander, born February 8, 1847. 3. Ellen Alexander, born August 12, 1848; died June 28, 1856. 4. Jane Alexander, born July 2, 1850; died May 10, 1852. 5. Henry Alexander, born July 1, 1852; died July 15, 1869. 6. Joseph Alexander, born August 12, 1854. 7. Albert Alexander, born August 15, 1856; died March, 12, 1858. 8. Caroline Alexander, born March 17, 1860. 9. Thomas Alexander, born March 3, 1864. 10. George C. Alexander, born January 4, 1869. 1. William Alexander was sent to the Sandwich Islands for recovery of health and died at sea; unmarried. 2. Margarita Alexander married William Mulligan, July 30, 1868. Children: 1. Margret Cecillia, born 1872; 2. Leo Vincent, January 2, 1873; 3. Genevra Mulligan, born January 15, 1875. 6. Joseph Alexander married Katie Turner, October 1874. No children. 8. 9. 10. Caroline, Thomas, and George C. are unmarried, 1875.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Millstone from March and Heald sawmill donated to the Museum by the Perry and Barbara Beeson family, 2014.

Samuel Heald: The First Heald in Healdsburg

by Pamela Vana-Paxhia

Establishment of a grist mill was crucial to early settlers. Before they could make bread, they had to make flour grinding it from the grain they grew on their land. In order to grind it, they needed easy access to a reliable grist mill. Millwright Samuel Heald, older brother of Healdsburg founder Harmon Heald, was in this way critically responsible for this region's development with the establishment of the first mill.

Samuel Heald was the second of eight children and the eldest son of the Quaker family of George and Elizabeth Tatlow Heald.

At the age of 38, George married Elizabeth Tatlow, the daughter of a Revolutionary army officer.

In 1817, after the birth of their first child, Mary Ann, the young family moved from Delaware to the "wilderness" of Ohio. There, they had all the experiences of first settlers "out west." It was also where they expanded their family to include seven

more children: Samuel, William, Sarah Elizabeth, Harmon, Thomas, Jacob and George.

In 1829, George returned to Delaware to claim a small legacy from his father's estate. On the return trip home, while in the Alleghany Mountains, he was murdered for his money.

Elizabeth, under great hardship, was left to bring up her large family as best she could. Samuel later wrote of his mother, "My mother was a brave woman and managed to rear the family very respectably considering the circumstances."

Moving to Missouri

On September 7, 1840, Samuel married Sarah Matilda Cobb in Lafayette County, Missouri. He was 22; she was 18.

Sarah gave birth to their daughter Mary Elizabeth on March 7, 1841. Tragically, both mother and child died the following day.

In 1844 after many years of struggle in Ohio, Samuel's mother Elizabeth followed Samuel's lead, sold her home and moved the family, with the exception of Mary Ann, then married, to Missouri. There she purchased a farm. Settled on the Snei Creek in Jackson County, the family again lived the pioneer life all together in a log cabin.

By this time, Samuel had become a millwright and, in addition to farming, he and his brother Thomas operated a saw and grist mill.

Gold Fever Hits

In the 1840s fantastic accounts of the gold discoveries in California filtered back to Missouri. Many settlers were enticed to attempt the trip to California. The Heald family was not immune to the temptation. As Thomas later wrote, "We took the gold fever."

Two of Samuel's younger brothers, Harmon and Thomas, set out to make the long, treacherous journey. They got together an outfit consisting of three or four yoke of oxen, a wagon and two saddle horses. Leaving in early May 1849 and, according to a pre-arranged plan, they joined five more travelers.

Samuel did his best to deter the group.

For two days Samuel accompanied his brothers with the purpose to dissuade them. Failing in this, he bade them farewell and rode off toward home. But, on his way back, he met another neighbor setting out on the trip and by him was persuaded to turn again and make the trip with the rest to California. So, without returning to say goodbye to the other members of the family, and without a change of raiment, he turned his horse's head westward and soon was one of the party.

In September their long, difficult journey was over. They had reached Sacramento. They were in the land of gold.

Unfortunately, like many of their fellow travelers, both Samuel and Harmon had become seriously ill during the trip. Samuel, suffering from the effects of typhoid fever, and Harmon, badly

afflicted with scurvy, were unable to work the mines with brother Thomas.

Their wagon and oxen were sold off and Samuel planned to stay the winter in Napa recovering from his illness. When it became known that Samuel was an experienced millwright, William J. March of Healdsburg offered to hire him to build a mill on what is now Felta Creek. Samuel worked by the day, putting in 108½ days at \$8 per day. The mill was built both for grinding grain and sawing lumber. It was put into operation in September 1850.

Harmon, having spent the winter in Sonoma trying to regain his health, made his way back to Thomas. Unfortunately, Thomas had very little luck prospecting, so the two brothers decided to sell out and return to Sacramento.

Arriving in Sacramento in September 1850, Harmon and Thomas found that the town had grown tremendously during the previous year, but it seemed to them that half of the businesses were gambling halls. After taking in the sights for a few days, they left for Sonoma, then the only town in Sonoma County.

There Harmon and Thomas discovered that Samuel had moved to the Russian River to build March's Mill. The three brothers soon reunited and began living together in a cabin near the mill. It was probably at this time that Samuel borrowed some money from his brothers and bought an interest in the mill, since the mill soon became known as Heald and March's Mill.

Returning to Missouri

On January 1, 1851, Samuel left for Missouri to bring the remainder of the family to California. This time the trip was made by way of Panama. A devoted diarist, Samuel detailed his journey which included stops in San Diego, Mazatlán, Acapulco, Havana and New Orleans. He also had the good fortune to travel one leg of the trip with Jenny Lind, one of the most highly regarded singers of the 19th century, known as the "Swedish Nightingale," and her troupe.

Upon arriving at the family home in Missouri, Samuel found that there was much to do in getting the family ready for the long journey across the plains. The 180-acre farm had to be sold along with most of the family's livestock, farming equipment and household belongings.

Finally, the property was disposed of and an immigrant train of 27 wagons was made up for the journey. Samuel acted as their leader. The party had its "Indian experiences," which were common at the time, but Samuel used discretion both in avoiding and in dealing with the Indians. As a result of his careful planning and execution, the trip was regarded as comparably uneventful and incurred only one fatality.

After the arrival of Samuel with the balance of the family in the autumn of 1851, the entire family lived in the vicinity of the mill. Their reunion was short lived. By the end of 1852, four of Samuel's brothers, Jacob, Thomas, Harmon and George, had each moved on to establish their own homes in other parts of the county. Ultimately, Samuel was left alone at the mill.

Returning to Missouri Again

After working the mill for the next three years, Samuel decided it was time to find another wife. On February 16, 1854, he left for Missouri again, this time by the Nicaragua route.

On arriving in Missouri, he repaired to the home of Mr. Cobb, his father-in-law. Of him he asked for a second daughter. Mr. Cobb was willing to accede to Mr. Heald's wishes but his wife was loath to give her consent. She thought of the loss of her former daughter, of the long distance by which she was now about to be separated from the second one, and besides that the one whom Mr. Heald had now come to claim was of tender years, almost too young to marry. But Mr. Heald was in earnest and pressed his suit until it was crowned with success.

On June 22, 1854, Samuel married Martha Clinton Cobb, a younger sister of his first wife. She was 15 years his junior.

The newlyweds embarked on an extended honeymoon. Their stops included Lexington and St. Louis, Missouri; Louisville, Kentucky; Cincinnati and Cadiz, Ohio; Wheeling, West Virginia; Pittsburg, Harrisburg and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Baltimore, Maryland; Washington, D.C.; New York City, Niagara Falls and Rochester, New York; Springfield, Boston and Lowell, Massachusetts; and New Haven, Connecticut. The couple returned to New York City where they took a steamer by way of Panama back to California.

Beyond Sonoma County and Back Again

After their return to California, Samuel's work carried him beyond the boundaries of Sonoma County. The Heald and March flour mill was sold to Felta Miller. In 1852 Samuel moved to Santa Clara. He also built the first flour mill in Napa, where he lived for 13 years. From there he went to San Jose and later built a flour mill in Lake County. By 1870 the family was living in San Francisco.

Samuel did not return to Sonoma County again until he was stricken with tuberculosis. He spent his final days at the Cloverdale home of his sister Sarah. He passed away at her home on August 1, 1874, at the age of 56.

Martha survived for a number of years until June 5, 1888.

Together Samuel and Martha had two children, a son Thomas Cobb and a daughter Sarah Matilda. Thomas spent most of his life in railroad activities. He lived in Humboldt County and never married. Sarah became a schoolteacher in Sonoma County until she married N.J. Saviers, a train dispatcher at Sacramento. Some time after their marriage they returned to Sonoma County and purchased property north of Cloverdale. There were no children from this marriage and, consequently, no descendants of Samuel Heald beyond this first generation.

Sources:

ancestry.com

Daily Alta California: August 9, 1874.

findagrave.com

Healdsburg Tribune, Enterprise and Scimitar:

March 15, 1933; July 22, 1954; October 14, 1954;

October 28, 1954; April 30, 1964.

Sacramento Daily Union: August 8, 1874.

Sonoma Democrat: August 8, 1874.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

West side of West Street (Healdsburg Avenue) looking from the Plaza, Joseph Downing photo, 1873.

Early Healdsburg Memories: Some Original Settlers of This City

by W. A. Maxwell

reprinted from Healdsburg Tribune, Enterprise and Scimitar, March 26, 1908

A recent visit of two days at Healdsburg has revived in me memories of that beautiful little city as it was in its earliest history. Persons, incidents and things that lingered in a fading memory were restored and made bright again, much as an old and neglected picture is renewed by the brush of the retouching artist. Half a century has wrought many changes. I found new faces and objects everywhere, and yet many old landmarks remain, and a goodly number of old-timers were there to greet me.

I first saw Healdsburg in the fall of 1857, after a four-months' trip "across the plains" with my father's family. The first town plat was just then laid out by Heald, and a few small houses of redwood boards, standing on end, covered with shakes, were scattered about among the trees and

bushes. The entire population was about one hundred. Two stores—Sondheimer & Engel, at the corner where the Bank of Healdsburg now is [northeast corner of Healdsburg Avenue and Plaza Street] and Mitchell & Hooper, about where Sam Meyer's store is [west side of Healdsburg Avenue, north of Plaza Street]; a livery stable, by Page & Francis, at the present Cummings stand [south of the southeast corner of Healdsburg Avenue and North Street]; two hotels—Dickinson & Allen, at the Cnopius corner [northwest corner of North Street and Healdsburg Avenue] and Heald & Rainey, the original Sotoyome House, where the present hotel of that name stands [west side of Healdsburg Avenue, north of Plaza Street] and a few shops—blacksmith, butcher, barber, and so forth—all within the block

from the Plaza to North Street, constituted the principal business part of the town. North of the slough [Foss Creek] Felix Mulgrew had his home and blacksmith shop; Henry Dudley had his dwelling and tan yard, and there was a livery stable with the sign "Caballariza" on it.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
Sotoyome House, 1868

As I walked over the "slough" on the present fine cement sidewalk, I recalled the time when it was often, in the winter season, a raging torrent, and all the winter a nearly impassable mudhole until the extension of West Street [Healdsburg Avenue] across and the construction of the "fill" and the wooden footbridge that served the purpose for many years.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
L.A. Norton's office on the corner of Plaza and Center Streets, c. 1867

L. A. Norton was the first lawyer to locate in the promising young village; and had his office at the corner [northeast corner of Center and Matheson Streets] where he remained during his long residence there. Dr. B.B. Bonham was the first physician, with J.J. Piper a close second, followed soon by Ormsby, Rupe and Coustolle.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
The west side of West Street (Healdsburg Avenue) between Matheson and North Streets. Center building is Mulligan Hardware. Part of old Union Hotel. Hertel Building on left. c.1864

R. Hertel and David Bloom each opened small dry goods stores on West Street, within a few months. Peterson & Tucker soon after, and then came James E. Fenno with a watch and jewelry store. "Uncle" Billy Thurgood had the first saloon, and Jim Forrester opened another that same fall.

A prominent figure of that time was Clark Foss, the original driver to the Geysers, and who afterward became world-famed as a Jehu on account of his skill and daring in driving his team of Spanish ponies over the old "hog's-back" road. Mr. Foss was by no means a reckless driver, but he was fond of doing sensational things, and did perform some wonderful feats in horsemanship.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
Clark Foss driving a stagecoach from The Geysers, painting by E. A. Rockwell, 1876.

I remember this one: There was a party of six or eight wealthy gentlemen from the East, doing this coast for pleasure, and they wanted to take in the Geysers in one day. Foss arranged a relay of horses for every ten or fifteen miles of the circuit, and took them from Napa, by Calistoga, to the

Geysers, back by way of the hog's-back to Healdsburg, Santa Rosa and Petaluma, in the day, having been on a sharp gallop all the time except a short stay at the springs. For this service he received a fabulous fee, and no end of gloves, whips, and other souvenirs by mail and express.

William Macy had the first drug store. He died in 1859, and was succeeded by W.S. Canan. Later Canan was joined by Charles E. Hutton. In connection with their drug business they did a small money exchange, which, growing to some importance, they incorporated the first bank in the town. M. H. Hayes and W. A. Maxwell started another drug store in 1860, which was destroyed by fire in 1861.

The Hassett Brothers established a flour mill in 1858, on West Street, south of the Plaza. On the Fourth of July of that year, before putting in the machinery, a grand independence ball was given in the building. One of the invitation cards still in my in my old scrap book shows that the invitation committee included the following prominent gentlemen: John Hassett, Ransom Powell, Josiah Brown, Dr. E. Ely, Joseph Dow, Dr. Buttermore, George H. Peterson and W. B. Mulligan. Tickets, including supper, \$5.00.

The Plaza was a grove of young oaks, manzanita. and madrona trees, scattered well over the entire square. As I remember its appearance then, and look at it now, I am not sure whether the advance of civilization has improved it or not—it is very neat now: it was quite natural then.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
The Plaza Madrone, c.1873

Just off the corner where the Bank of Healdsburg is, with only space for a wagon to pass, was the large madrone tree which everyone of those early times will remember. Its spreading branches reached well across the street and, like great arms, held over the place a grateful umbrella of evergreen coolness. At one time the question arose of removing the monarch as an obstruction to the thoroughfare, to which A.J. Cox, a pioneer editor, raised a strong protest, closing an article on the subject with this touching paraphrase—

*"Woodman, spare that tree a-now,
The glorious pride of summer:
That's sheltered many an honest brow,
And also many a bummer."*

Besides being thus embalmed in verse, an old madrone was further immortalized by having its picture occupy a page in Richardson's "Across the Continent," from a photograph furnished the author, by the writer, when at Healdsburg on his way to the Geysers. The other day when I was there, I missed the old land-mark, a fire having so injured it that it was removed some years ago.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
Presbyterian Church, 1869
Middle of the block opposite the Plaza on Matheson Street

The old Plaza church was another of the objects of this early history which grew venerable with the years and passed away. Begun in 1858, by the Methodist church, it was sold to the Presbyterians, who completed and occupied it up to recent date. The first minister in it was Rev. James Woods. Then came Rev. Ben. E. S Ely, followed by Rev. R. R. Wells.

The Life and Times of Reverend Dr. Benjamin Blackman Bonham Contributions to Early Healdsburg

by Jane Bonham, great-great-great niece of Dr. Benjamin Blackman Bonham

“Dr. B.B. Bonham was one of those whole-souled, unselfish Christians who so willingly contribute their life’s efforts to the welfare of mankind.” — Pomona Courier, February 2, 1884

Born in 1814, Benjamin Blackman (B.B.) Bonham was the fifth son of an active ministerial family settled in the fledgling city of Maryville, Tennessee.

First Calling—Religion

A graduate of Doak Theological College in Green County, Tennessee, B.B. received a license to preach while still in his teens. He preached for four years in his home state, before finding his true ministerial calling as a young man in the frontiers of Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa.

In Fairfield, Jefferson County, Iowa, B.B. encountered another ministerial family, headed by Cumberland Presbyterian Minister John Miller Camron. Reverend Camron and his wife raised a household of 11 daughters and one son. In 1839, B.B. married Martha, one of the daughters, thus joining the Camron clan.

Together, the young couple shared a passion for spreading the Protestant word and were soon traveling to frontier towns along the mighty Mississippi River.

Second Calling—Medicine

By 1846, they had moved on to Hannibal, Missouri, a slow growing city on the Mississippi. Life on the frontier was difficult and fraught with dangers. This led B.B. to a second calling—to heal the body as well as the soul. He pursued his studies at McDowell Medical College in St. Louis, where he graduated with a degree in medicine.

Stories still abound about the college dean, Dr. Joseph McDowell. Acknowledged then and now to be one of the finest doctors of his time, his eccentricities have made him a popular figure in the ghoulish tale-telling of St. Louis’ history.

A skilled surgeon, the doctor brought the study of anatomy to his students. Legend has it that he required them to take part in dissecting bodies, even robbing graves! (At that time, dissection was against the law.)



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
McDowell Medical College, founded in 1840 by Joseph Nash McDowell, M.D., was the first established Medical College west of the Mississippi. In the later 1840s, they built this building to his specifications, with two large Greek Revival wings flanking an octagon tower.

Outraged neighbors reported the school was haunted. Paranoid, McDowell prepared a line of defense with cannons on the deck around the tower and, some tales tell, a bear kept in the basement to disperse potential mobs. These tales, however shocking, may be only exaggerated stories of the dean’s contentious and colorful personality.

The now Reverend Doctor B.B. Bonham practiced both of his professions in Missouri for a time. He found great demand for his knowledge of

healing, along with his impassioned demonstrations of the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lure of the West

In 1853, the Bonham family paused for a time in Weston, Missouri. Touted as the second largest port on the Missouri River, Weston was a major "jumping off" point for the Santa Fe Trail, the Oregon Trail and the California Gold Rush. Men from the area went west, most returning with some financial success, and so the word spread. Travelers from the east also stopped at local stores to prepare themselves for the overland trip, transforming small settlements like Weston into boomtowns.

For the doctor's family, the strongest calling from California was not the lure of gold, but rather images of the rich lands and young settlements as described in letters sent from B.B.'s younger brother, Baxter Newton, and his Camron in-laws. (The Camrons had left for California in 1849, mined for gold along the American River near Sacramento and then settled around San Francisco Bay and the valleys to the north.)

B. B. BONHAM, M. D.,
Physician and Surgeon,
Office at the Post Office, Petaluma. 31

Source: ancestry.com

Newspaper advertisement, June 14, 1856

In 1854, B.B., Martha and the children joined a west-bound wagon train in Boonville, Missouri, and crossed the plains to California. They settled in Petaluma, and "B.B. Bonham, M.D., Physician and Surgeon" hung out his shingle in an office at the town post office, while he also took advantage of the medical seminars available in San Francisco.

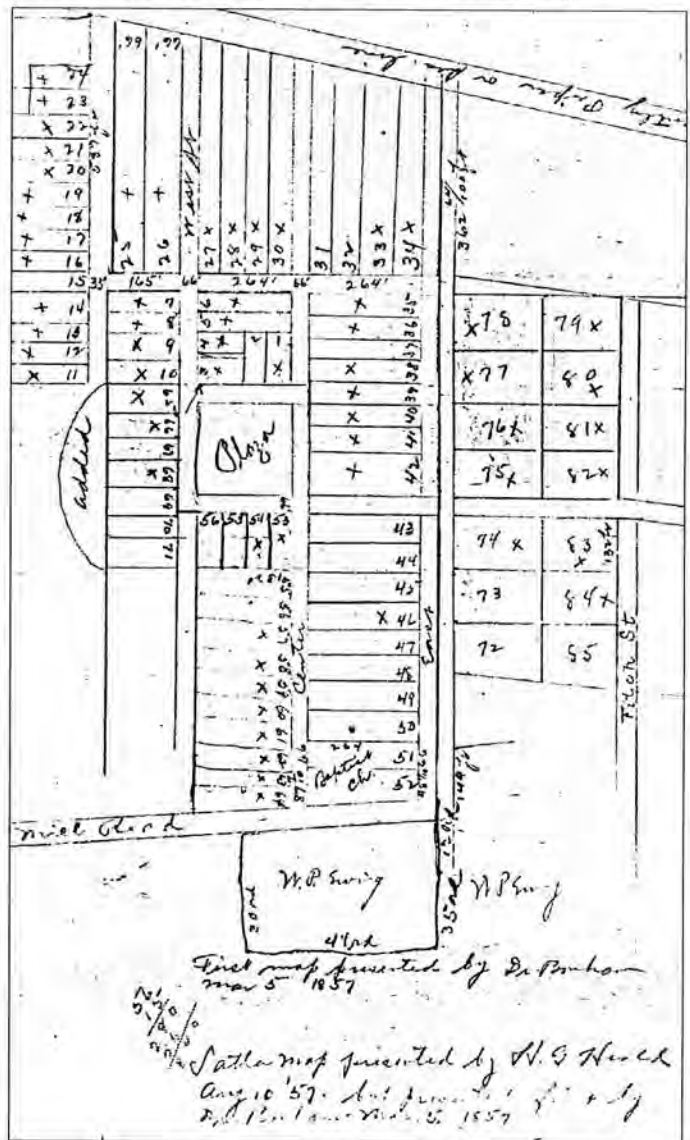
As with his pursuits along the frontiers of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, B.B. practiced as both a minister and a physician along the coastal ranges and valleys around Petaluma.

By 1857 B.B. and his family relocated to the settlement that would become Healdsburg.

Settling in Healdsburg

B.B. presented a sketch dated March 5, 1857, to the county assessor's office. Over time there have been errors made and even rancor expressed, all related to the story of this artifact.

In 1918, William Thomas Heald, nephew of Healdsburg founder Harmon Heald, told the story of the Heald family and the town of Healdsburg, with great attention to accuracy. He wrote, "There were two of the Bonhams. One of these was a Presbyterian and a school teacher [Baxter Newton]. The other was a physician, but also did some preaching [B.B.]. The latter it was who filed the first plat of Healdsburg for record, and evidently took fully as much interest as did Mr. Heald in getting the town underway."



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

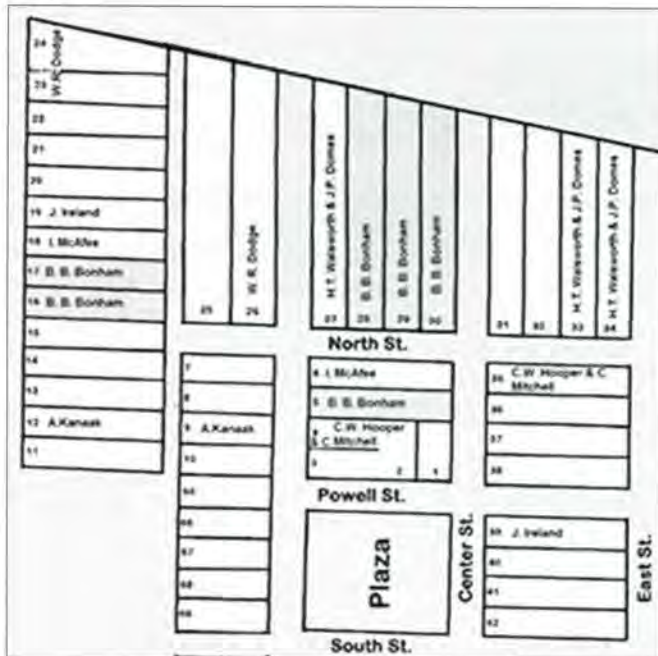
The writing below the sketch reads: "First map presented by Dr. Bonham Mar. 5, 1857. Latter (sic) map presented by H.G. Heald Aug. 10, 1857."

This is perhaps a careful sketch, rather than a survey. There are only four streets and one road named: east to west—Fitch, East, Center and West Streets and along the bottom, Mill Road. The W.P.

Ewing additions are not solid lines. However, all the lots are squared and numbered. The seven lots to the left of the town plaza are higher numbers than their four neighbors. A series of 60s and 70s follow the lots 7, 8, 9 and 10, indications that this is a working draft. If they made the many small cross marks before they submitted the plan to the County, it appears many more interested parties joined in helping Harmon Heald with the layout of what would soon be their town.

Delivering the draft plan was nothing unusual, since B.B. was familiar with the office of the county assessor. From 1852 to 1880, the chief fiscal officer in Sonoma County included the office of "Assessor and Superintendent of Schools." B.B., appointed by a county judge to Superintendent of Public Instruction in the fall of 1855, served in the assessor's office in 1856 and 1857. How natural for him to be the one to deliver a draft map to his place of work after a planning session up north.

Harmon Heald then hired William Mock to survey and lay out the town lots and delivered the map to the county assessor's office on August 10, 1857.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

B.B. purchased the six lots identified above



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

On North Street B.B. built a residence (far right) and barn (left of the house) and planted an orchard (from barn all the way to the left). Joseph Downing photo, 1871



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Close-up of the former Bonham house on left with laundry on the clothesline. Joseph Downing photo, 1873

Medical Contributions

Besides erecting a "comfortable dwelling house," B.B. maintained an active medical practice.

In 1951, a newspaper published Dr. W.C. Shipley's biographical sketches "about doctors out of the Redwood Empire's past." His record of early doctors in the Healdsburg region begins with Dr. Bonham. "According to the record in Thompson's *History of Sonoma County*, a Dr. B. B. Bonham located in Healdsburg in 1857, built a house and attended to the aches and pains of the growing population. He was the first medical man to locate in northern Sonoma County."

He was not long without colleagues. An 1860 article in *The Review* reported statistics provided by

Bonham, including that amongst the 453 inhabitants of the town, six were doctors.

Newspaper articles of that time suggest that doctors were not competitive, but cooperative in practicing their professions.

“Pursuant to the call of a number of the Physicians of the County, a Convention was held at the office of Dr. Wells, in Petaluma, on the 24th of March [1858], preliminary to the organization of a County Medical Society. Present, Drs. Brown, Barnes, Hylton, Wells, Burnett, Powell, Boyce, Todd, Van Geldern, Bonham and Bond... the Convention then proceeded to organize a Medical Society, auxiliary to the State Medical Association... and resolved themselves into the ‘Sonoma County Medical Association.’”

A single column in November 1858 *Sonoma Democrat* provides two pictures of doctors working together. The “Serious Accident” story tells of a hunting accident in which G.W. Mapes took part in a bear hunt with his brother Ira and Phillip Hesler. Late in the day when shadows grew long, Ira and Phillip mistook G.W. for a grizzly. They brought him into town where “Drs. Boyce & Todd were called in, and after consulting with other reliable surgical gentlemen, amputation was considered the only chance of saving his life, which operation was performed by them.”

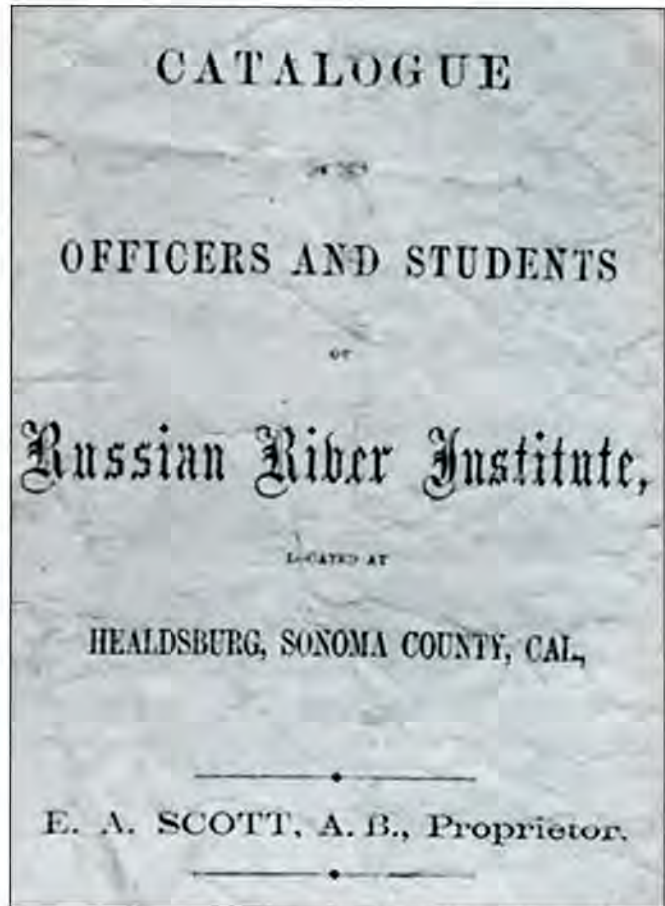
In the same column is a short paragraph that reads “Correction—Last week in a portion of our edition we erroneously said that Dr. Boyce was the operating surgeon in the amputation of Major Brown’s leg. We should have said Dr. Todd, instead, who was assisted by Drs. Boyce, Bonham, Buttermore and Ormsby.”

Third Calling—Education

Along the way B.B. added a third professional interest in education and took a keen interest in the community. In these early days, he worked with like-minded pioneers and settlers to bring quality education to the area. While serving as the County Superintendent of Common (public) Schools, B.B. took part in establishing the first private college, acting as an agent (manager) and an instructor at the Russian River Institute.

The Institute opened in January 1858 with high hopes, but by the end of the year the Institute’s founder, Professor Erastus A. Scott, had given up his

post for financial reasons and moved to Santa Rosa. Roderick Matheson, also an instructor, took charge of the school.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Inside the Catalogue along with rules for students, are the motto and listing of Agents of the Institute: “This school is strictly anti-sectarian, leaving each one to his own conscience to act with reference to his fellow and to his God. Hence, no religious tenets will be taught, but ‘Virtue and intelligence are the safeguards of the nation,’ is our motto.” Agents E.D. Hooper, Ukiah Valley, Rev. Mr. Riley, Napa City, K. Maxwell, Dry Creek and B.B. Bonham, Healdsburg.

By 1859, Matheson and a Board of Directors re-opened the facility as the Agricultural and Mechanical University of California. The new institution proposed “imparting practical as well as theoretical instruction in the various branches of Agriculture and Mechanics,” offering hands-on labor “to be performed at such hours as will not interfere with the pursuit of a regular course of study. A farm and steam power are connected with the University.” The levels of schooling included The Primary Department, Academic Classes, University Classes and Music, Drawing, and Embroidery.

In addition a "large and commodious boarding house will be ready for the reception of students, where the young men will be under the immediate supervision of someone of the faculty...Arrangements have been made for boarding a number of young ladies in private families in the village."

"Besides the Faculty, the following scientific and literary gentlemen [were] engaged to lecture for the benefit of the classes: Hon. Dr. Ormsby, Rev. James Woods, Rev. Dr. Bonham, Rev. James Pierpont, Rev. E. P. Henderson, L. A. Norton, Esq., G. W. Granniss, Esq., Dr. J. J. Piper."

The total attendance at the Institute in 1859 was 114 students, 45 girls and 69 boys, including B.B.'s daughter, Eliza Theresa Bonham, and son, Altimont Byron Bonham.

B.B. also achieved Master Mason (the highest rank) in the 1858 Charter of the Sotoyomi (sic) Lodge No. 123, Grand Lodge of California.

Ministerial Services

As stated, William Thomas Heald in 1918 told the story of the town of Healdsburg with great attention to accuracy. However, he created a tale of two churches and two brothers which, carried as gospel to the present times (including by myself, *Russian River Recorder*, Fall 2013, "A Tale of Two Brothers").

William's history focused on the lots and the purchasers of those lots, building up the village. In one of the church lots deeded by Harmon Heald, he writes about history with an all too creative flair.

In the early days of the village, "church" identified the doctrine followed by the congregation, rather than a building managed by a preacher. Well into the 1880s, traveling ministers brought different teachings to the community by holding camp meetings in a meadow west of town or along the river.

The Methodist congregation built the first church on the Plaza on a lot deeded by Harmon Heald, with a loan from Cyrus Alexander. Other congregations shared the Plaza church until each could secure property and funds for the building and the parsonage.

Heald deeded lot #84 to the Presbyterian church on November 7, 1857. However, "the lot would lay idle till 1876."

William elaborated on how the delay occurred for building the Presbyterian church "on account of a difference in views of various members of the denomination. As an outcome of these differences, two schools resulted, the old and the new... Since the two schools formed separate assemblies and held property separately, it may readily be seen that where property was deeded simply to the Presbyterian church, there might be a question as to which church was meant."

At that time the trustees were Cyrus Alexander, John S. Ormsby, John McMannis, Johnston Ireland, Thomas T. Heald, and C.W. Shane. "We know that of the board of trustees who received this lot for the church, at least two were of the new school. These two were Cyrus Alexander and T.T. Heald. Possibly others on the board were of the old school. However, that may be the reason the lot lay idle... The breaking out of the civil war [in 1861] introduced a new difficulty."

It is also possible that the priority for building churches was not high. In the spring of 1860, there were 49 merchants, businesses, carpenters, blacksmiths, and doctors needing shops and housing; four liverys requiring stables, four liquor saloons, three schools and three church edifices.

Regrettably, while exploring the reasons the lot was empty for so long, William entangled the two Bonham brothers: "Healdsburg was already well represented by each of these two schools. Of the two...Dr. Byron (sic) B. Bonham...was of the old school. Baxter Bonham was a preacher of the new school." Later historians used these few sentences to depict the two brothers as opposing contenders for that property and named contributors to the delay in building!

B.B. was of the old school and of the Southern persuasion, but nowhere is he named as an elder or a trustee on the board which received lot #84. His name is also missing from those associated with the first church built by the old school in 1863.

His younger brother, Baxter, was a pastor of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, an offshoot of the Presbyterian Church, newer even than the new school. He assisted his father-in-law in building the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Sebastopol. Baxter and his family moved from the valley about 1860 and lived later in Sebastopol.

Both brothers helped in building the early Presbyterian church congregations, but neither helped in establishing church buildings in Healdsburg.

Moving On

Having once found his true medical and ministerial calling as a young man in the frontiers of Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa, B.B. grew unhappy with settled life in Healdsburg. In the early 1860s, he traveled to Nevada and practiced in Virginia City and Washoe City.

He returned to the valley in 1866, hanging up his medical shingle in Sebastopol. In 1872, B.B. and Martha sold their three lots in Healdsburg, leaving the house, barn and orchard to travel together as they once had done, visiting the frontiers of Northern California. They settled awhile in the present site of Davis, where B.B. answered the call to heal the bodies and the souls of the congregation and helped to build a church.

By 1879 the couple migrated as far as Riceville in Tehama County in the area now called Corning.

In the early 1880s, B.B. and Martha moved to Pomona in Southern California for health reasons. There, at the age of 70, the Reverend Doctor Benjamin Blackman Bonham passed away after a short illness.

Sources:

ancestry.com

beckerexhibits.wustl.edu

bellaonline.com

Board of Supervisors: *Oaths of Public Officials, Bonds, Sonoma County, Ca. 1854-1894*, Historical Records Commission, October, 1986.

California Voter Registers, 1866 to 1898.

Healdsburg, Sonoma County, Grand Lodge of Calif F&AM proceedings 1858, Sotoyomi Lodge No. 123

Healdsburg Tribune, Enterprise and Scimitar:

August 19, 1954; September 2, 1954.

IRS Tax Assessment Lists, 1862 to 1918.

Lingenfelter, Keith, Genealogy and Research Collection, California State University, Chico, *Manuscript 110*.

Murphy, Alice Purvine, *The Rev. John M. Camron and Descendants: 1790-1962*, 1962.

ourhealdsburg.com.

Pomona Courier: February 2, 1884.

Russian River Flag: April 11, 1867; July 1, 1877; February 26, 1880; April 21, 1884.

Russian River Recorder: April, 1982; Spring, 2013; Summer, 2016.

scoe.org.

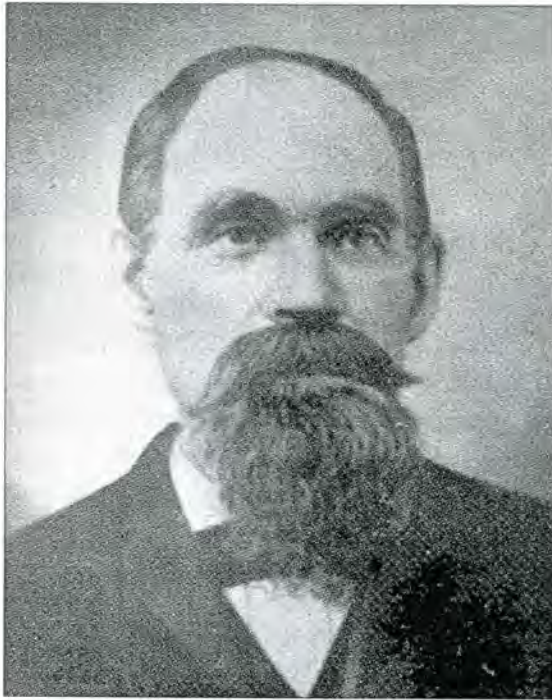
The Sebastopol Times: June 9, 1915.

Sonoma Democrat: April 1, 1858; November 18, 1858; July 14, 1859; December 8, 1859; July 5, 1860; October 13, 1866; February 16, 1884.

Taylor, Troy, *Haunted St. Louis: History & Hauntings Along the Mississippi*, 2002.

United States Federal Census: 1850, 1860, 1870.

Western Sonoma County Historical Society Newsletter: June, 2015.



Source: Dorothy Sawyer
Cephus Perley Moore



Source: David Garlinger, findagrave.com
Electa Odell Moore

Cephus Perley Moore and Electa Odell Moore, Geyserville Pioneers

by Ann Howard

Cephus/Cephas Perley “C.P.” Moore, one of the earliest teachers, if not the first, in Geyserville, wore many occupational hats during his lifetime.

C.P. was born on August 21, 1835, in Bangor, Penobscot County, Maine. He was the first child of Henry A. (1793–1845) and Lydia (Hayden) Moore (c.1804–1879).

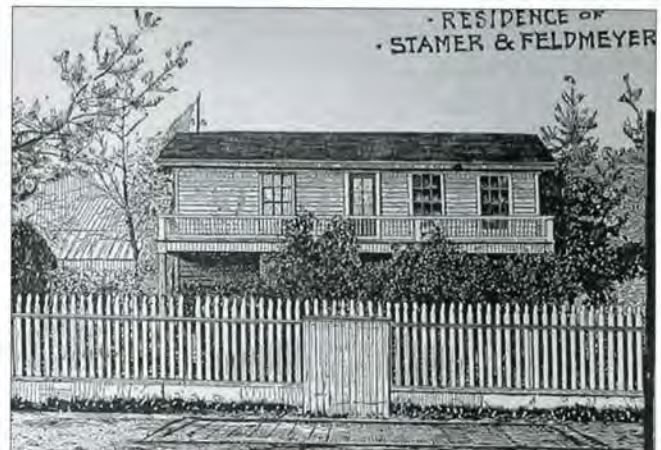
C.P. had one brother and one sister. His brother Henry Allen was born in 1843 and died of sickness in 1861 during the Civil War. Their sister Sylvena “Jennie” was born in 1845. Unfortunately, their father died the same year.

In 1850 C.P. was 15 and living with his widowed mother, siblings and some Hayden relatives in nearby Hermon, Maine.

He came to California in 1853, worked the mines for six years and then moved to Geyserville in 1859.

C.P.’s first Geyserville residence is assumed to be a home on the west side of what is now the junction of Geyserville Avenue and Highway 128.

It was “built in 1857 of a redwood tree that grew in the canon nearby...a public house by a man named Whitney, and C.P. Moore was one of the boarders at twenty dollars a month.”



Source: Pen Pictures for the Garden World
An illustration of the C.P.’s first residence in Geyserville

According to the 1870 census, C.P.’s mother and sister eventually traveled to California and were

living in Healdsburg. His mother died in 1879. Nothing further is known about Jennie. The two may be buried in Oak Mound Cemetery in unmarked graves.

Electa

Electa Odell was born in 1842 in Iowa, the eldest child of David (1816–1882) and Minerva Boggs Odell (1797–1875). David and Minerva married in Muscatine, Iowa, on December 6, 1840, and were parents of as many as thirteen children.

According to a later account by one of C.P. and Electa's granddaughters, Verna Maud (Smith) Dagby Waldon, "Electa was the daughter of the Odells who owned the stage line from San Francisco to Skaggs Springs [in upper Dry Creek Valley]. The Skaggs Hotel in Geyserville was their depot until the railroad came [in 1872]."

C.P. married Electa in Sonoma County on April 5, 1863. To this union were born at least ten children. They were Frank Hood (1864–1932), Selena Pernice (1865–1927), Farris/Ferris David (1867–1950), Bertha Evelyn (1869–1958), Charles Chester (1871–1928), Myrta Flora (1873–1947), Grangie Etta (1875–1890), Fred Tucker (1877–1952), Asa Redington (1880–1934) and Eliza Ellen "Nellie" (1881–1889).

A Teacher and More

C.P. is first mentioned in the *Sonoma Democrat*, November 18, 1858, as receiving \$8.50 for his job as School Marshall, Strawberry Ridge District.

C.P. is said to have acquired a teacher's credential in 1861 and was listed as a teacher in both the 1860 and 1870 California census records.

According to the April 10, 1862, *Sonoma Democrat*, he was voted in along with two others as members of the Board of School Trustees for the Washington District.

In September 1864 there were 57 students between the ages of 4 and 18 registered in the Geyserville School according to the September 10 issue of the *Sonoma Democrat*.

Descriptions of the educational system in Geyserville were included in some of the correspondence of the local doctor, Dr. Elisha Ely (1819–1906). Since late 1851 Dr. Ely and his wife Asenath Narcissa (Campbell) Ely (1820–1882) lived

north of what became Geyserville near Canyon Road.

On June 18, 1861, Dr. Ely wrote in a letter to his mother, sister and brothers in Connecticut that his five-year-old-twin daughters Louisa and Mary Ely, born August 5, 1855, "have started to school again after being absent a month. They are greatly pleased with school going. The plan of instruction now-a-days [sic] is as much an improvement on the method of my boyhood, as the Telegraph is on the method of transmitting intelligence in these days. Instruction here is so combined with recreation as to make it attractive to scholars of all grades in the school...They walk twelve miles a week to school besides running forty more at play. Their spirit exceeds their physical ability."



Source: Healdsburg Museum & Historical Society

1867 Map of Geyserville by A. B. Bower

Note "Dr. Ely" above word "Geyserville" and "D. Odell" below word "Geyserville." C.P. Moore taught in the Public School and lived in the Whitney roadhouse before it became David Odell's property

On August 11, 1861, Dr. Ely continued that his daughters "just finished a three-month term at school. We shall not have another school before next spring. Three months in the year is all the time the publick [sic] money will sustain a school, and the illiterate hounds of this region would sooner see their brats in jail, than spend \$5.00 for them in the way of education. Consequently they have nine months idleness to three of attendance at school, a proportion not calculated to make statesmen or heroes of them. We shall be obliged to teach ours at home. They are too small [age six] to send away yet, and we could not afford to do so were they large enough."

In his letter dated February 3, 1862, Dr. Ely wrote, "The girls [age six and half] go to school,

study arithmetic & read & spec. [sic]. They are quite backward, but are advanced in school to classes with girls 14 years old. Vulgarity & obscenity—they learn more of than I ever heard, old as I am, and we have no other opportunity—unless we could send them to a Private School in some large town.”

In 1871 Dr. Ely abandoned farming and moved his family to Healdsburg where he could practice his profession as a doctor and surgeon, also enabling his daughters to attend the Alexander Academy.

Given the short school year it is not surprising that C.P. added farming and ranching to his means of support during the ensuing years. At various times, he identified himself as a teacher, rancher, grape grower, stock raiser and farmer.

In the January 1864 Civil War Draft Registration, Northern District, Sonoma County, C.P. was listed as 27, married and a rancher. No records of military service have been found.

He was also one of three District Clerks representing Geyserville at the Sonoma County Teachers' Institute and Educational Convention in Santa Rosa, June 23–26, 1868.

According to the 1870 census, C.P. was 34 and a schoolteacher with \$600 personal property living south of Cloverdale. Electa was 28 with four children, Frank, Selena, Ferris and Bertha, ranging in age from six years to ten months.

In the *Russian River Flag* of June 12, 1875, C.P. was listed as the secretary of a convention of wine growers of upper Russian River and Dry Creek valleys. The group met in Geyserville to determine the “steps necessary for the disposal of the grape crop in future. The supply of grapes had outgrown the demand to such an extent that during the past year hundreds of tons of fine mission grapes in the state went to waste. Large quantities sent to San Francisco were sold at prices which scarcely paid the expense of shipping.”

According to the *Sonoma Democrat*, June 15, 1878, C.P. “who was so unfortunate as to run the tine of a pitchfork through his foot, has nevertheless been able to look after his sheep, securing fleeces from the backs of 650 of them that weigh in the aggregate 2,073 pounds. He has also a flock of 75 head of goats, but these he did not shear this season. His flocks are all looking well.”

By the 1880 census, C.P. was listed as a stock raiser, age 44, Electa 38, and eight children, Frank H., Selena, David [Farris] A. F., Bertha, Charley C., Myrta, Francie E., Asie R., ranging from 16 years to six months.

In a March 15, 1883, *Russian River Flag* article, C.P. thought the phylloxera (an almost microscopic insect that feeds on the roots and leaves of grapevines) worked on all vines, but attacked sickly vines first. Vines he had planted the previous year had been attacked by a new insect from the roots and he sent sample to the Secretary of Vinicultural Commission; this insect was unknown to the Commission. The insect destroyed four-fifths of his vines, the cuttings brought from Napa. C.P.'s then 15-year-old son Farris who was very interested in insects had found this one. C.P. felt that all cuttings, grapes and trees should be bathed in concentrated lye or a chemical preparation before planting. The Italians working for C.P. had seen the same insect in Italy and reported that it had been destroyed with sulphur.

According to the *Sonoma Democrat* on June 23, 1883, “Ferris Moore, 15 years old, went swimming one of the hot days last week and afterward, to get the water out of his ear, put a hot pebble in it. After carrying it in his ear for several days, Dr. Pierce gave him ether and worked an hour before the offending stone was removed. It is feared his ear is permanently injured.”

C.P.'s property was located north of Geyserville on what is now Chianti Road, west of Highway 101. A barn of unknown vintage has “Dr. Pierce” painted on the north side in fading large letters. Harry Bosworth, now age 80, says the sign is more recent than the Moore's residence. Curious though, Dr. Pierce was indeed practicing in Healdsburg at the time Ferris needed his help.

The Grange

C.P. and Electa were also among the founding members of the local Order of Patrons of Husbandry (Grange). Listed in a *Russian River Flag* article of September 18, 1873, were both C.P. as Overseer (vice-president) and Electa as Pomona (assistant in ritualistic ceremonies).

In 1876 the Geyserville Grange consolidated with the Healdsburg Grange. There C.P. became the

Gatekeeper (greeter) and Electa became Ceres (assistant in ritualistic ceremonies).

C.P. continued to be active with the Grange for many years working to improve farming practices and the marketing of their crops. In November 1901 "despite rain falling in torrents, a number of grangers and guests assembled in Woodmen's Hall and had an old-fashioned husking bee with a pleasing program prepared." Among the speakers, C.P. "was full of blood and thunder over the Fall of Cornwallis."

Electa Passes

Electa died on February 4, 1883. According to the obituary notice in the February 8 *Russian River Flag*, "The deceased was able to attend to the usual household duties of wife and mother on Friday last, having two sick children to care for, one of which is said to be dangerously ill at presence, but on Sunday evening breathed her last. The cause of her sudden death was paralysis of the throat...Deceased leaves a husband and large family of children."

Electa was buried in one of the area's oldest cemeteries, Hall Cemetery of Alexander Valley.

C.P. Remarries

On December 8, 1890, C.P. married Mrs. Naomi Vassar, a widow, whose maiden name was Romine when she married Jarratt Vasser on April 25, 1867. Vassar had died in 1885 at age 38. She had three children by that marriage: Samuel, Elizabeth and Maud.

A Rancher and More

C.P. continued to add to his land holdings. On February 21, 1885, the *Sonoma Democrat* announced that a U.S. land patent of 133.77 acres had been granted to C.P., expanding his property north of Geyserville.

He also continued to increase his community involvement. In addition to his working his ranch, C.P. became a Justice of the Peace in October 1897 as noted in the *Press Democrat*, and again in August 1898 when he was a delegate to the Republican County Convention held in Cloverdale. He also became a member of the Central Committee. In the first issue of the *Geyserville Gazette*, dated February 3, 1899, C.P. was listed as Justice of the Peace of

Geyserville Township. By March of that same year, C.P. was also erecting a new residence.

For the year 1890, C.P. was appointed to the Sonoma County Grand Jury along with three others by the Board of Supervisors, according to the *Sonoma Democrat*, January 25, 1890.

One interesting case covered in the *Press Democrat* on April 18, 1901, heard by C.P. involved an unruly and dangerous steer loose on the highway that was shot by the defendant. The carcass was sold to a butcher, but not to its worth according to the owner.

C.P. was reelected J.P. as reported in the November 13, 1892, *Healdsburg Tribune, Enterprise and Scimitar*.

On January 5, 1905, the *Press Democrat* reported on that "Justice of the Peace C.P. Moore of Washington Township handed in his resignation of that office...a position held for many years."

C.P.'s Health Decline

On October 21, 1908, Naomi applied for "letters of guardianship on the estate of C.P. Moore, an incompetent." C.P.'s son Fred is said have contested his stepmother's wishes, but Naomi won the case.

On December 1, the *Press Democrat* reported that "C.P. Moore was examined at the Courthouse on Monday on a charge of insanity. Dr. J. W. Jesse and Dr. G. W. Mallory were the Lunacy Commissioners. The afflicted man was committed to the Ukiah State Hospital for the insane."

Further information provided in a letter by another granddaughter, Monette Moore Wright, "Committed to the Mendocino State Hospital [in Ukiah] November 30, 1908. Petitioner was George Bosworth. 50-year resident of California, occupation farmer, religion Protestant. Grandfather lost his mind. Facts indicating insanity: sits in a stupid manner, is not able to carry on a conversation at all; very feeble and unable to comprehend. He has not been able to talk in a rational manner since earthquake [April 18, 1906]. Diagnosis senile dementia. C.P. Moore died Dec 26, 1908."

Jerrold D. Moore, a great-grandson of C.P. and Electa, compiled an in-depth biography of C.P. published in 1986. He concluded "C.P.'s death certificate stated that he had been a resident of California since 1858. He was able to acquire a

considerable amount of property in the Geyserville area through his lifetime, all recorded in the Sonoma County Recorder's Office."

On January 2, 1909, the *Healdsburg Enterprise* offered a more sympathetic death notice. "C.P. Moore, well known and much respected citizen for many years of Geyserville and Washington Township, is dead. He passed away last Saturday and was laid to rest on Monday afternoon in the presence of a large gathering of relatives and friends. For a long time the deceased, who was formerly Justice of the Peace of Washington Township, has been afflicted in body and mind, and death came as a happy release from suffering. For many long months Judge Moore was cared for by his devoted wife, who ministered to his every want."

Cephus Perley Moore was buried in Geyserville's Olive Hill Cemetery.

As reported in the *Press Democrat* on January 5, 1909, Naomi, through her attorney, petitioned the Superior Court for letters of administration on the estate of her deceased husband. The property, real and personal, was valued at \$7,500. Great grandson Jerrold Moore's research revealed that property not disposed of to pay debts and provide \$500 to each of the Moore children was passed on to Naomi and, upon her death, to her three children.



Source: Bosworth Collection

Naomi Jane Moore in front of Geyserville Christian Church on April 6, 1930. Naomi died on April 29, shortly after this photograph was taken.

Naomi Jane (Romine) Vassar Moore died on April 29, 1930. She was buried next to her husband.

Sources:

ancestry.com
Bosworth, Obed – letters from Verna Maud (Smith) Dagby Waldon.
Census records – Maine 1850, 1860; California 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910.
Ely, Dr. Elisha – letters from Bancroft Library, Berkeley, CA.
findagrave.com
Foote, Horace S., editor, *Pen Pictures for the Garden World, Sonoma County, 1889.*
Geyserville Gazette: February 3, 1899.
Healdsburg Enterprise: January 2, 1909; January 8, 1909.
Healdsburg Tribune: November 5, 1901; January 8, 1909.
Healdsburg Tribune, Enterprise and Scimitar: November 13, 1902.
Hoeffler, Mr. – letter from Verna Maud (Smith) Dagby Waldon, May 28, 1985.
Moore, Jerrold D., "*Documented Biography of Cephus Perley Moore 1835–1908.*"
Muscatine, Iowa, Marriages 1837-1845.
New Historical Atlas of Sonoma County, California, Illustrated 1877.
Papp, Richard Paul, *Bear Flag Country, Legacy of the Revolt, A History of the Towns and Post Offices of Sonoma County, California.*
Press Democrat: September 18, 1873; June 12, 1875; February 8, 1883; March 15, 1883; January 5, 1905; January 5, 1909.
Proceedings of the Sonoma County Teachers' Institute and Educational Convention, Santa Rosa, June 23-26, 1868.
Russian River Flag: September 18, 1873; June 12, 1875; February 8, 1883; March 15, 1883.
Sonoma Democrat: November 18, 1858; April 10, 1862; September 10, 1864; June 15, 1878; June 23, 1883; February 21, 1883; January 25, 1890.
Sonoma County Genealogical Society, Sonoma County Marriages 1847–1902, March 1990.
Sonoma County Office of Education, Santa Rosa, California.
Sotoyome Scimitar: January 6, 1904.
U.S., Civil War Draft Registrations Records, 1863–1865.
Waldon, Verna (Smith) Dagby – letters.
Wright, Monette Moore – letters.

Meaning of the Word "Sotoyome"

reprinted from Healdsburg Enterprise, August 1, 1908

The *San Francisco Call* in its query column gives the meaning of the word *Sotoyome*, which no doubt will be of interest to some of our readers.

SOTOYOME - W.R., Philo: A gentleman who is well versed in the Spanish language told me in reply to a question that Sotoyome, a California Indian name, is Spanish and means "the land of flowers, or the land of violets." Is that correct?

Your question was referred to the Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American ethnology and the reply was that "the Sotoyome Indians are the same as the Wappo tribe of Northern California. Wappo is from the Spanish name *guapo* (brave). This is a small detached portion of the Yukian family of northern California." More definite information can be furnished by Dr. A. L. Kroeber of the Affiliated Colleges, San Francisco.

The following is the information furnished by Dr. Kroeber: "*Sotoyome* is derived from the name of an Indian chief formerly living near Healdsburg. He was called by the Spaniards Santiago or Manteca (fat). His Indian name was Soto. The ending *yome* means "the home of." Sotoyome is therefore the home of Soto and was applied to the village of rancheria inhabited by him and his people.

Another and more usual name of this rancheria in the Indian language was Wotokkaton. It was situated on what is now the Luce ranch, less than two miles from Healdsburg, about a mile above the Healdsburg cemetery, but on the opposite side of the river. The Indians who inhabited this and the surrounding villages belong to the Pomo stock, and the words given are in the southern or Gallinome dialect of that language."



Third Class

**NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
HEALDSBURG, CA
PERMIT 149**

**Healdsburg Museum & Historical Society
P.O. Box 952
Healdsburg, CA 95448**

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED