

# RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

Published by  
HEALDSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JANUARY 1977



Scene at Plaza on Center Street, December 3, 1873



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133 Matheson St. Healdsburg, Calif. 95448

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THE HEALDSBURG MUSEUM IS OPEN

Members of the Healdsburg Historical Society gathered at the museum on Sunday afternoon, December 12th, for a preview party. 230 persons signed the guest register that day and stayed to view the displays and visit with friends. It was an enjoyable affair and its success was the result of many members participating. A number of people donated almost all of the refreshments which included punch, coffee, cookies and cakes, cheese and crackers, and wine. Others brought in on loan special items for display that rounded out the collection of the museum. These included furniture used in the room display, vintage dresses and other garments, pictures, dishes, glassware, and artifacts from the early days of Healdsburg.

Mayor Eddinger took part in a ribbon cutting ceremony at 2:00 o'clock and from then until it closed the museum was overflowing with interested people. The directors of the historical society and museum trustees were hosts and hostesses for the occasion and assisted in serving refreshments.

Ethel Gately has arranged a schedule for the volunteers who will man the desk at the museum from 1:00 to 4:00 o'clock Tuesday through Saturday. This will be the most important task in the future, the day to day operation by interested persons who volunteer their time and take this time from their own busy schedule.

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW OFFICERS - At their meeting of November 18th three new officers were elected and five of the present officers re-elected to the Board of Directors of the Healdsburg Historical Society. The immediate past president becomes the ninth member of the board and so the new roster of officers is:

Tom Roscoe	President	Major Phillips	Treasurer
Rose Demostene	Vice President	Carmel Bottini	Director
Carol Barbieri	Recording Secretary	Robert Hasset	Director
Jan Harrison	Corresponding Secty.	Jack R. Relyea	Director
		Ed Langhart	Director



## JOHN D. HASSETT, PIONEER

By Robert J. Hassett

John D. Hassett arrived in the community in 1852 from the gold mines of Placerville. There he had met Felta Miller, who told him of the beauties and opportunities in what was later to be the Healdsburg area. Hassett liked what he saw here and determined to settle.

Born in 1832 in Ohio, one of a family of five boys and one girl, Hassett in his 'teens had been apprenticed to a brother-in-law who owned a flour mill. His apprenticeship was to last two years and for his two years work he was to receive \$100 per year. When he left for California he joined a group who were taking horses and mules west and he paid \$150 for the privilege of accompanying the traders.

Reaching Salt Lake City safely after crossing the plains, Hassett and the rest of the party were stranded there when the owner of the outfit sold out and abandoned them. Hassett was determined to reach California. He bought a pack mule and supplies and started out on foot for the land of promise, traveling only at night to avoid encountering the Indians.

He arrived in Placerville and was mining gold when he met Felta Miller and heard of the Russian River countryside. After a few months ranching near what is now Geyserville, he went to work for Felta at the mill built by William March on Mill Creek, and worked there for nearly three years. Hassett then built a sawmill for himself on what was later the Bill Gray ranch on Mill Creek about nine miles from town. He worked this mill for two years.

John Hassett's brothers, Aaron and Charles, had by now come west and also settled in this area. In 1858 John and Aaron joined in a venture to build a flour mill, a mill located on West Street just south of the present day Odd Fellow's Hall. When it was completed it was the largest flour mill in the county and to commemorate its opening a "Grand Concert" was held in the building. The Petaluma Journal states "Mr. and Mrs. A.N. Hamm gave a grand vocal and instrumental entertainment at Healdsburg in Hassett's new building on Friday evening, June 18th. The house was crowded to its utmost capacity and the singing gave entire satisfaction . . . ." The Fourth of July was celebrated with a "grand dance in Hassett's Hall".



The following year (1859) the first Sonoma County Agricultural and Mechanics Society Fair was held in Healdsburg and at this fair Hassett's Mill received a gold medal for the best corn meal. In 1859 too, Hassett married Sarah E. Vaughn, who had crossed the plains from Kentucky in a covered wagon with her parents in 1857. In 1862, their first child, James T., who died in 1953 at the age of 91, was born in their home which is still standing at 239 Center Street. Two years later, a sister Lulu was also born there.

Ranchers brought their grain on pack mules from as far away as Lake County to have it ground at the mill on a 50-50 basis. The mill prospered and John Hassett began to expand his operations. He established and conducted the Sotoyome Meat Market and in 1863 bought 1000 acres from the Fitch estate. The acreage included all of Fitch Mountain and extended westerly to what is now Tayman Park. In 1868, Hassett, with his brother Aaron, bought 150 acres on what is now Grove Street. The land was bounded on the west by Dry Creek, on the east by the railroad, on the north by a line extended from Powell Avenue, and on the south by North Street. Here Aaron built the home now occupied by Ken Buchignani and John built a new family home, still standing, and owned by Perry Austin. Grove Street was formerly named Hassett Lane. The surrounding land was covered with large madrone trees and was a favorite picnic ground for the community.

In 1872 Jesse and William Vaughn took over Hassett's Mill and in exchange Hassett acquired a 4,000 acre ranch on Mill Creek, known now as the Collier Ranch. He later added about 2,000 more acres to the holding by the purchase of adjoining ranches.

Hassett felt a personal responsibility for the growth of the community and was involved in many ways. For a number of years he was a trustee of the Healdsburg schools and in 1868 was a member of the City Council. He later served as County Supervisor and held other offices before he passed away in the summer of 1887.



RULES AND RECORDS

of the

PENNY ANTE CLUB

meeting each Wednesday eve at  
The Boar's Den

Poker Hounds Club

Organized March 4th, 1924

Charter Members:

J.A. McMin  
Chas. Sherriffs  
H.W. Cummings  
Wellman Goddard  
Geo. C. Coddling  
Geo. Sherriffs  
A.H. Flournoy  
Ben H. Barnes

\*\*\*\*\*

New Members:

John Reiners  
Ed Barry  
A.W. Garrett  
Fred Stevenson  
H.D. Sacry

CLUB RULES

1. Play starts as soon as 3 or more are present.
2. Play stops at 12 o'clock midnight - sharp.
3. New deck of good cards will be used at each game.
4. Game will be a game of dealers choice.
5. Dealer will not be permitted to look at coming cards during a play.
6. No player shall expose any cards during a play.
7. Any player overlooking his hand looses to his opponent.
8. Parallel hands are considered ties, and the pot may be split.

9. No take out will be made, other than for cards and lights.
10. Ten cents shall be the maximum bet allowed.
11. Any member caught bluffing looses the pot and can "cry".
12. Post mortems after a play shall be limited to one minute.
13. Any player who looses often enough to tear up his hand or any other part of the deck shall forfeit 50 cents for a new deck.
14. The two high winners on Dec. 15th of each year shall purchase a Turkey at least 20 lbs. for the Poker Hounds banquet.

HEALDSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1977 Membership

dues are now payable

Active Membership	\$ 5.00
Student Membership	2.50
Sustaining Membership	25.00
Patron Membership	250.00

Make checks payable to the:  
Healdsburg Historical Society  
and mail to:

Major Phillips, Treasurer  
310 Mountain View Drive  
Healdsburg, Calif. 95448

(See enclosed statement)

General membership meetings  
are held the Fourth Thursday  
of every other month, com-  
mencing with January.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY



## RECOMMENDED FOR REAL OLD-TIMERS

While reading this keep in mind that it is from the Tribune of Nov. 25, 1927:

In response to a request for further information in regard to houses built in Healdsburg in the early days that are still standing and in good condition, Mrs. J.W. Ward, one of the oldest pioneers living in this city and who still has a remarkable memory, has given us the following list:

The "Ohio" house, occupied by the O'Neil family at the upper end of West Street, opposite the present Nye home.

The Greist house, corner of University and Mason streets. It was built by Peter Greist, great grandfather of coroner Fred Young. At present the place is occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Jagers.

The Fenno house, which was moved from the corner where the telephone office now stands, to its present location on Center street next to the place recently razed at the corner of Mill street. This place was built by John Young, grandfather of the coroner.

The house built in the '60s by John Born still stands at the corner of Piper and Johnson streets.

The Albert York house on West street was built in the early '60s and occupied by a family named Rapp.

The place now belonging to Mrs. Hattie Bennett was once an elegant home of early settlers. The home now occupied by Frank Meisner and family once faced the Plaza, being moved from the present site of the furniture store. Mrs. Annie Hampton's place on East street once housed the pioneer Bailhache family. The house now occupied by Mrs. Gnecco on East street, Miss Thayer on First street, the Foss house on Foss Street, and the Robinson place on Lincoln street, were all built in the early days. The latter was moved to its present location from the present site of the Tribune office. The Grannis's, Dr. Oliver's, Dr. Ely's, Downing's, Edrington's, Col. Norton's, Dr. Maxwell's, Major Ewing's, Pierpont's home and many others, all were built in the late '50s or '60s.

The house on North street between West and Center, was erected in the late '50s by Dr. Bonham.

Enterprise: March 20, 1909

BASKET TOO LARGE FOR BOX CAR

The Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Science has purchased from the Indians at Ukiah a giant basket, woven for a granary, and which has been used for that purpose. The Institute is now seeking a way to get it transported east. The basket is the largest ever woven, and will provide a great curiosity in Boston, if it can be taken there.

The basket is too large for any box car, and it is feared that it will be injured in the tunnels if placed on a flatcar. The Institute is said to have secured the basket for \$25, but it will cost several times that amount to get it east. General Passenger Agent J.J. Geary is trying to devise a method of transportation.

\* \* \* \* \*

ROLL OF HONOR, Sotoyome School District, for the month of March 1882. First class, Millie Miller, Edgar Calhoun, Edwin Petray. Second class, Nellie Petray, Mary Morris, Warren Packwood, Bennie Lowry, Frank Strong. Fourth class, Rachel Miller, Freddie Wright. Fifth class, Lena Calhoun, Walter Wright and Ned Strong.

MARY McDONALD, Teacher

RECUPERATING - - -

Will Cummings, who may be the oldest member of the Healdsburg Historical Society, has been laid low with complications resulting from a broken leg. He is now improving and is anxious to be up and around again. For the time being he is at the Good Hope Sanitarium at 14745 Grove Street, not far from home. A note to Will would be a cheerful reminder of your friendship.

The Healdsburg Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the following donations made by our members:

MUSEUM MEMORIAL FUND

In memory of Clement E. Auradou  
Bernice Auradou

PATRON MEMBERSHIP

Opperman and Sons Inc.

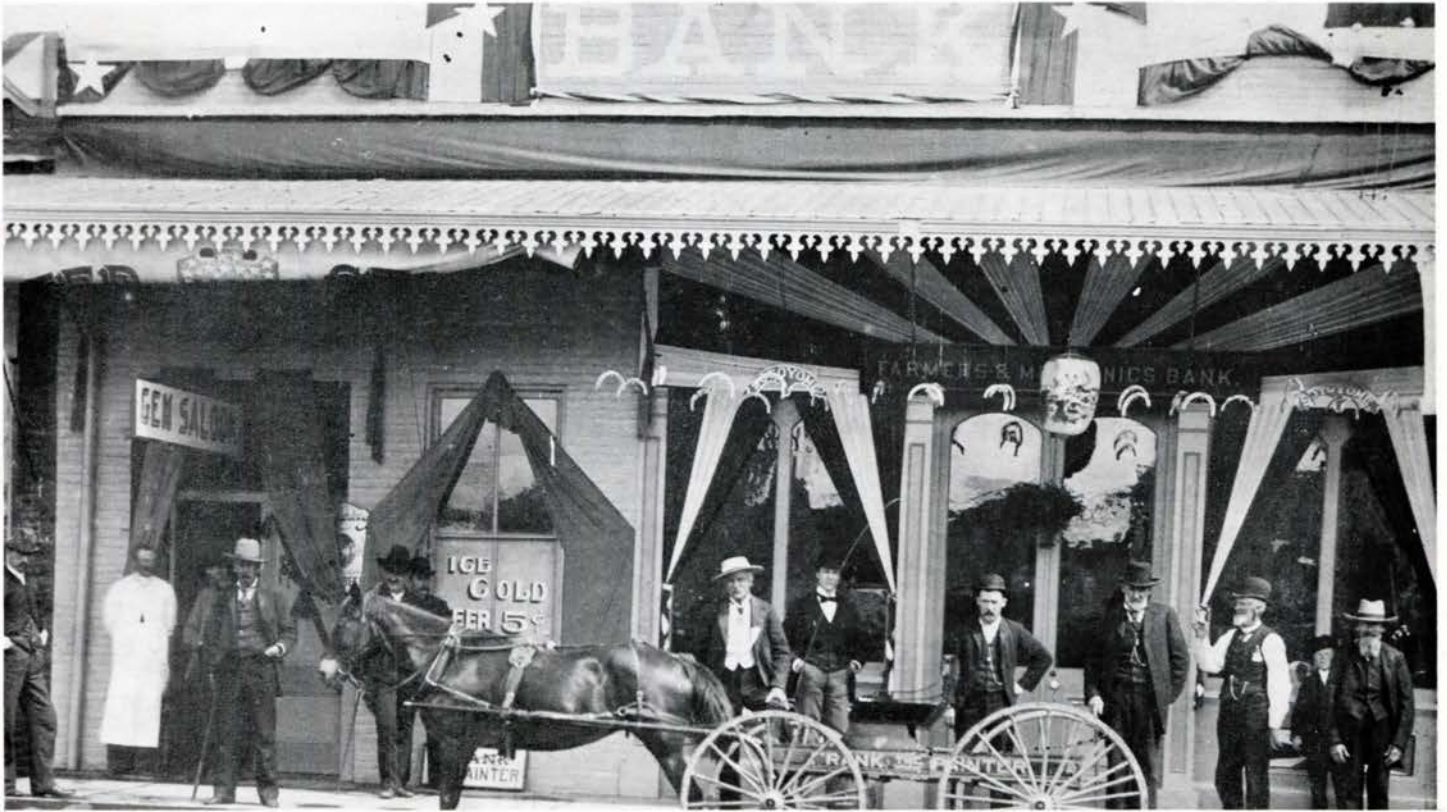
DONATIONS

Mr. and Mrs. Duval Bell  
Mr. and Mrs. David Opperman  
EMCO Electric Company

Enterprise: March 13, 1909

Mr. Nardi of Antioch, has purchased the Mile-house saloon and is now in possession. Mr. P. Plasberg and family have moved to their place in Dry Creek Valley, part of the Reiners ranch, and will reside there.





Farmers and Mechanics Bank -- 1897. This was located where the Lingerie and Gift Shoppe is today, 117 Plaza Street.

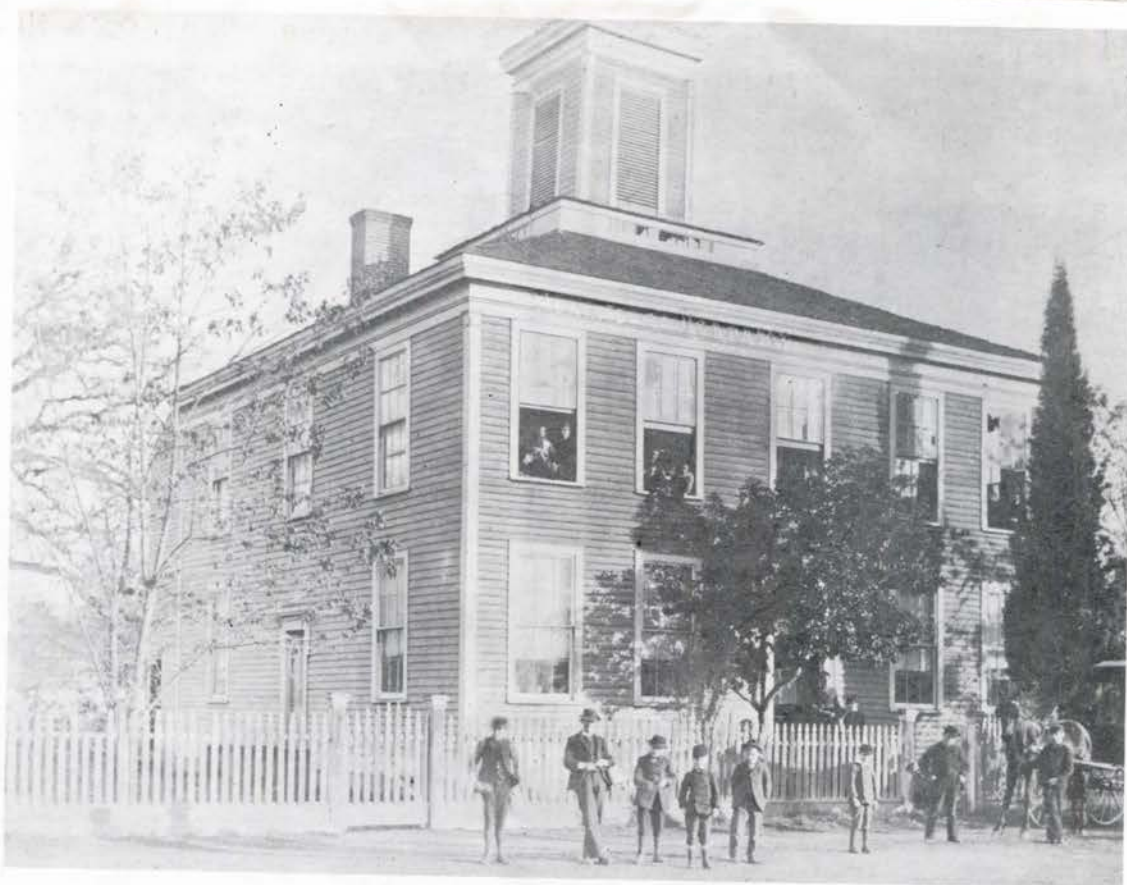


Healdsburg Flouring Mills, Hassett Bros. -- 1873





Herman and Shorty Pals Club -- 1939. Herman Wolf and Shorty Cornell and friends in front of Buffi's Hotel.



Russian River Institute (Alexander Academy) -- 1872



## IN APPRECIATION

The Museum Board of Trustees wishes to take this opportunity to express their appreciation to the Healdsburg Historical Society for the arrangements they made and for financing the Preview Party at the museum on December 12th. Many members participated in the affair to make it a success. Seventeen ladies brought in cakes, cookies and other delicacies for the refreshments, Rose Demostene prepared the punch and donated wine, Geyser Peak Winery was generous in their contribution of Reisling wine, and Jan Harrison and Carol Barbieri set up the tables and coordinated the total service, including the coffee.

Members of the Museum Board of Trustees and officers of the Historical Society were hosts and hostesses for the day and did their job well, making the party comfortable and congenial for everyone.

To supplement the museum collection and enhance the displays certain items were loaned for the occasion by members. Particular thanks for these loans must go to Bernice Auradou, to Mrs. George Warfield, to Mr. and Mrs. Duval Bell, to Nina Rose, to Zelma Ratchford and to Pat Schmidt.

Recent acquisitions of note received at the museum are from Mr. and Mrs. Louis Bottini, Mr. and Mrs. Duval Bell, Loraine McDonough, Nina Rose, Laura Wagele, and Mr. and Mrs. Will Cummings.

Special thanks must go to Waldo Iversen and Jack Relyea for the work that went into moving and handling much of the material that came into the museum.

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW MEMBERS who have joined the society since last October are:

Beeson, Jeanette	Herrick, Steven Grant	Saini, Michael
Bevis, Hilary	Irwin, Richard	Saini, Patricia
Campanella, Vincent	Jensen, Jane	Saini, Mary
Chapin, Betty Frampton	McAuliffe, Lisa	Salvon, Benjamin
Conklin, Dr. Tom W.	Miller, May G.	Salvon, Jane
Conklin, Dolores	Nalley, Charlotte R.	Sonoma County Library
Cuneo, Irma	Opperman, David S. Sr.	Soracco, Teresa
Cuneo, Eugene	Opperman, Betty	Varcoe, Janet
Frampton, Woodley E.	Opperman & Sons, Inc.	Vogt, H. Phillip
Green, Russell H. Jr.	Relyea, Shirley	Vogt, Nelle
Green, Betty Jean	Roscoe, Bernice	Warnock, James
Haugsten, Robert	Saini, Eugene	Willig, Martha J.



## RUSSIAN RIVER INSTITUTE

Professor Erastus A. Scott arrived in Healdsburg in the summer of 1857. He was an educator and his first thought was the establishment of a school in the new town that had, just that year, been laid out by Harmon Heald. As a result of his encouragement farmers and businessmen subscribed money, mechanics gave work, the mills furnished timbers, and under the able direction of Charlie Proctor a schoolhouse was erected, the first in Healdsburg. (in the surrounding country three schools had been previously built, one near Dry Creek, one on Westside Road, and one near C.L. Lambert's place, further up Dry Creek.)

It was located in a grove of oaks and madrones about a half mile east of Heald's store on a two acre parcel donated by Jesse Seaman and Rod Matheson. The building was a two story square structure with a belfry housing the first school bell. By the close of the year it was completed and the bell rang in the new year of 1858. On January 23rd a grand concert and festival took place in the new school, known as the Russian River Institute. Two days later school opened with 103 students in attendance.

Prof. Scott was assisted by Miss E.A. Downing and in March Rod Matheson was engaged as a teacher. This was a private school, depending on tuition and contributions for support. There were plenty of pupils but very little income, for most of the students had been given scholarships for assistance given by the parents in the building of the institute. The patronage was mostly local, although two registered from San Francisco, one from Petaluma and one from Santa Rosa. At the close of the third term in 1859 the property passed out of the hands of Prof. Scott and the building and premises were taken over by a group of local citizens, of whom the leaders were: Rod Matheson, R.M. Deneen, W.M. Macey, John D. Hassett and C.E. Hutton. It was then re-opened with Charles Hutton as principal and was known as the "Agricultural and Mechanical University of California" and at least some of the students paid for their education by working on the Matheson farm which was used for training in agriculture. Since that time the street fronting the school has been called University street.

In 1861, after being closed for a brief time, it was opened under the management of Rev. J.W. Stump and J.A. Burlingame. It was closed again in the fall of that year, and re-opened in the spring of 1863



by Prof. J.W. Anderson, under the name of "Sotoyome Institute". It continued under this name until the close of 1867.

Prof. Anderson made quite a success of the school. He established a literary society and installed a library of 300 volumes. Some of these books were later taken over by the Citizen's Library of Healdsburg. Instructors at the Institute during this period included Miss Mary Duncan, J.J. Maxwell, C.F. McGlashan, C.A. Menefee, Miss Hattie Dudley and Miss Mattie Clark.

Upon the closing of the Institute the property fell into the hands of Cyrus Alexander, who conveyed it by deed to the Presbyterian Church. Thereafter it was known as the "Alexander Academy". In 1872 the Misses Stone opened a school in the Academy which they conducted for a year or so.

In 1875 Mrs. H.E. McCullough opened a school in the Academy. She was assisted by Misses Cora Blackington and Luella Wolcott. In 1877 Dr. S. H. Thomson assumed charge of the school. His faculty was his own family, R. Heber, Henrietta and S. May Thomson. The growth of the school was slow.

In the fall of 1877 the new Healdsburg Institute (located where Plaza Court is now) was completed, to which Dr. Thomson removed his students in 1878. So the poor old pioneer schoolhouse was deserted. All during its existence it had to compete with the free public school over on Tucker street between Fitch and East streets. Now all about it modern homes were springing up and the old school building became a ghost house for bats and birds. The old bell rang no more, except by some truant boy, who climbed the rickety belfrey stairs. There is but one monument to it today. At the front gate to the grounds were planted two cypress trees, and one of them still stands in the front yard of 112 University street.

In 1882 it was written "yellow-hammers have taken possession of the Alexander Academy, the bell is gone, the curtains in shreds, paint off the house, and pickets off the fence and altogether it is not a credit to the community." In 1886 Mr. Gates, a deacon of the Presbyterian church, purchased the old building and lot for taxes due, tore down the schoolhouse and then subdivided the grounds, selling the lots for residential building.