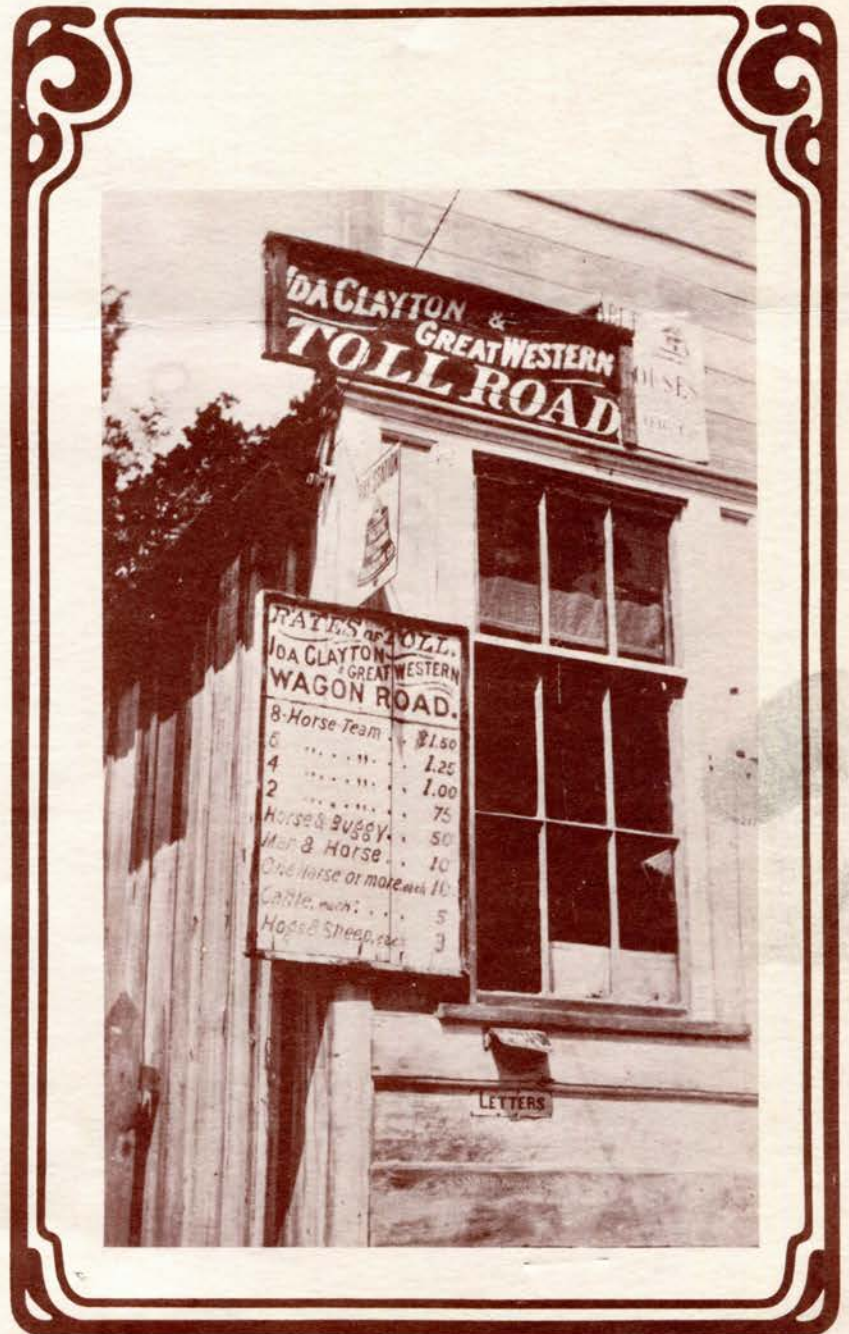


RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

Published by
HEALDSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OCTOBER 1977



Toll Station for the Ida Clayton Toll Road near Kellogg in Knights Valley. This was one of several toll roads located in northern Sonoma County.

RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

Published by
HEALDSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

133 Matheson St. Healdsburg, Calif. 95448

Issue No. 6 October, 1977

P.G.& E. TRIP TO THE GEYSERS SPRINGS

"The Geysers" have been an attraction since they were first seen by William Bell Elliott in 1847. One of the earliest written accounts was published eight years later and said, in part:

"The whole air of the valley seems strongly impregnated with sulphuric vapor, and on first descending is slightly disagreeable, but we are soon accustomed to it and derive benefit instead of inconvenience. In approaching the principal ravine, we notice a column of steam arising like mist to the clouds, and the roar of an apparent waterfall of considerable magnitude, which as we come nearer proves to be but the rush of escaping vapor. We stand upon the brink of a yawning gulf where the very earth beneath our feet is heated with hot springs, and look down upon the jets and masses of mist issuing with a roaring sound from the fissures in the rocky wall.

"A small stream runs through the entire ravine (Devil's Canyon) whose bed and banks to a considerable height are so filled with boiling springs, and streams of escaping vapor, as to heat the whole surface to an unpleasant degree. Some of the springs are of inky blackness, and strong with minerals, while others have various shades of color, even to pure limpid water, whose only peculiarity is extreme heat.

"We are constantly enveloped in a cloud of mist so dense as to limit the view to a narrow circle of a few feet. In one point it escapes in a ceaseless roar, in another in regular puffs, similar to those of a high pressure engine, occasionally throwing jets of scalding water to a considerable height, while in others it rises silently from the boiling surface, or comes out in great volumes from cavernous fissures, or beneath huge boulders."

Your editor is not as fluent with the adjectives and, you can be sure, we didn't see the same "geysers", but on Thursday, Sept. 29th, thirty-eight members and friends journeyed to the famed resort, not for the curative powers of the waters, but to see the magnificent, modern engineering marvels of the Pacific Gas and Electric Co. As guests of the P.G. and E. we visited most of the electrical generating plants they have constructed, and saw the many wells drilled by those who followed in the footsteps of Dan A. McMillan, former president of Thermal Power Co. In 1951 the late Ed Norton had suggested to Mr. McMillan that he turn his engineering talents to development of the Geysers steam power potential. His successes were realization of the dreams of John D. Grant, who in 1921 drilled the first wells at the Geysers.

The nominating committee asks that nominations for the various offices of the Healdsburg Historical Society be submitted to the committee at 133 Matheson St., Healdsburg, prior to November 15th. Elections will be held at the next regular meeting - Nov. 17th.

PIONEER RECOLLECTIONS

By John S. Williams

(Editor's Note: This is the third of four articles written by J.S. Williams in 1914)

I will not forget to mention the old ferry boat. To omit mentioning that would only be leaving out one of the early means of access to the other side of Russian River at this place. Thomas Hudson was master. He lived near the river about where the French laundry now is (On south University street). All the old residents knew Thomas Hudson. It was his duty to ferry the stage twice each way every day during most of the winter. Four horse stages ran from Ukiah to Petaluma connecting with a horse-car below the city of Petaluma, then by steamer to San Francisco. I think it was the steamer "Antelope". There was also another. One came up, the other toward the city of San Francisco. There were not so many going to and from the city for the reason that there were not many in this section of the country at that time who left their homes - too much work clearing up and improving them. A great deal of travel then was to and from the various mines - Washoe and the Feather river mines. The ferry was located at a point between where the railroad and county bridges now span the river. In the early settlement of the Russian river section the channel was narrow and it did not require as much rain to cause it to overflow as now. Hundreds of acres of the Russian river's most valuable land has washed away, which, had it remained, would today be a valuable accession to Sonoma county financially, as well as making a satisfactory addition to the present population.

E.H. Barnes at one time had a store on the river bank, on his ranch - in '55 or '56. I suppose he was not aware that the river would ever dispute the right of way with him as to the ground it occupied. But to his possession the river asked no favors, as during one of the winters above mentioned it left its proper bounds and spread out from one foothill to the other, the result being that a store building with its valuable contents could be seen floating down stream, and was lodged in a brush thicket about three-quarters of a mile from its former site. They brought a couple of canoes into requisition and got such goods as were in danger of getting wet and housed them on dry land. I was a small boy then and of course I housed a few nuts and some candy. I got that much above high water mark to my credit. The old store building was brought up from its enforced resting place and placed out near the road above high water mark, only to remain a year or two, and then Mr. Barnes came to the conclusion that it would be a valuable acquisition toward enlarging the city of Windsor. I think it was in 1859. Anyway the store building was placed on two wagons, the motive power being four yoke of Missouri steers. Everything went very nicely until they reached a point near the top of the hill, when from some unexpected cause it struck the limb of a tree, causing the center of gravity of the building to seek new quarters which was a heap of kindling wood on the ground. The old oxen seemed to be as much surprised at the sudden termination of affairs as the driver and others were. I think one could find pieces yet where the building lay some fifty years ago. The best was removed soon after the accident.

Mr. Barnes opened up a store in Old Windsor later and continued there for several years, or until he abandoned the mercantile business to take charge of his valuable ranch some six or seven miles below Healdsburg, which he still owns.

In '58 or '59 Healdsburg held an agricultural fair. I do not remember whether it was a general county fair or whether it was for Healdsburg and vicinity, anyway we had one. It was in the neighborhood of where the Northwestern Pacific depot is now located. It was a grand success for an early demonstration of that kind, the country then being comparatively new. Healdsburg and vicinity has since been successful in the agricultural department of affairs pertaining thereto. Fruits of all kinds and in great quantities were on exhibition. The inhabitants of the valley, even the aborigines, were conspicuously present. But the white people were mostly Missourians, of which there were three classes, namely: "flop-eared", "corn-fed", and "reel-foot", of which none could utter one sentence against the honesty and integrity of either. Time has wrought great changes since then, in many ways for the welfare of its people here. They know many things now that are helpful in the performance of their respective duties that they never even dreamed of then. But it is like Mr. Lincoln said, "I don't think much of a man who is not wiser today than he was yesterday."

We had in those days, say from 1857 to 1860, a May party and tournament on the first day of May each year. People gathered here from all parts of our county to enjoy themselves. Miss Mary Jane Mulgrew, the eldest daughter of our village blacksmith, was the first queen of the May ever elected for the occasion and she was a success.

The grounds for the occasion were where the Oak Mound cemetery is now located. People then had a good time, were sociable and took a great interest in one another - more so than they do today, in my opinion. They were, however, neat and well behaved toward all with whom they came in contact. Selfishness was an entire stranger in those times. People were not afraid to ask you to their homes for fear you would eat some corn bread and bacon. No sir, you were welcome then to anything a man had but his wife. They were good old times, they were. Everyone felt at ease and that his presence was just as important as the next one. There are a few of the old-timers here yet, but not many. Time has dealt kindly with them and some of them are apparently as active as ever.

R. K. Truitt was among us in the tournament and took an active part. Rev. E.B. Ware was also there, familiarly known then as plain Benton Ware. I could name many but it would occupy too much space and time. But I think I have one on Benton Ware, as he was known in that day. It was in the year of 1856 or '57. Mr. Ware came down to the ranch, which is now known as the Nalley place, after a cow. He was then in his teens - just a big awkward boy - which may be considered no particular objection. It was rather late in the day to undertake the return trip with a cow, so he remained overnight with us. As it happened, my mother had old-fashioned pancakes for breakfast the following morning. If there was ever anything on earth that Benton Ware liked better than another it was pancakes. As he said

to me one day, "I ate so many pancakes I was ashamed to pass my plate for more for fear they would think I never had any at home." The question now is, who knows whether he had or not? If Benton Ware ever had any inclination at that time of entering the ministry and expounding the gospel to his fellowmen, it vanished long before he reached home with that cow and pancakes in vogue.

(to be continued)

YOU ARE AN OLD-TIMER IF YOU KNEW "HAPPY JACK"

"Happy Jack" Edwards, widely known hermit living in the hills in the vicinity of the Geysers, was found dead on Monday, January 30, 1928 by guests at the Geysers, who were passing by his place. He was 84 years of age and, according to those best informed, he had resided there for close to seventy years. As soon as he was old enough he claimed a quarter section of land in the hills near the Geysers, pasturing cattle on its range.

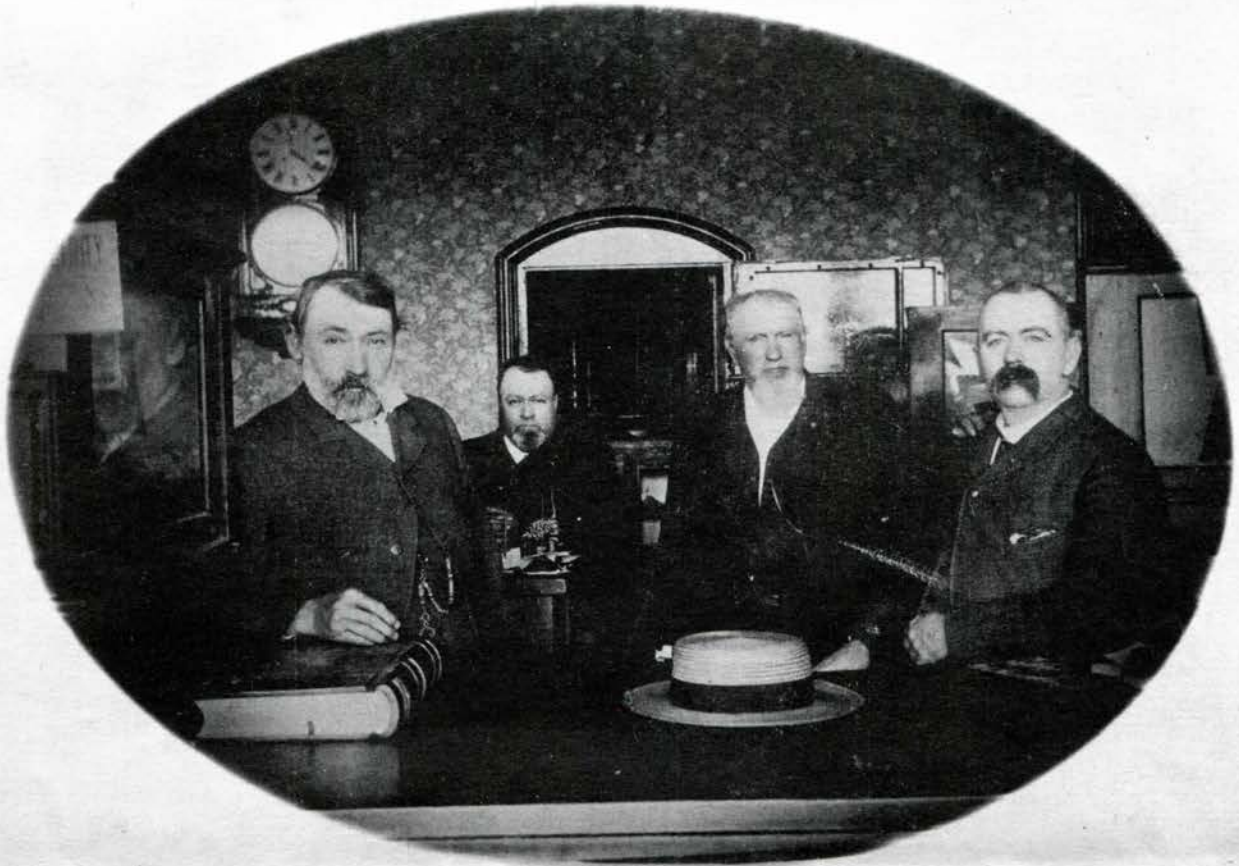
He was a hermit from choice, but could not be called a recluse. His home was always open to callers and his visitors found him true to the disposition that gave him his name. His wife had died many years before, and after that his self-isolation was more pronounced. Up to his death, however, he was active and attended to all the chores on his ranch and the work of his home.

Coroner Fred Young searched the cabin and found a will, written in 1916, stuffed into a tomato can. A brother, Frank, living in Kentucky, received a share of the estate, which included 26 head of cattle and \$404 in cash. He was buried on the ranch where he had lived for most of his life. Several months later his grave was marked with a headstone erected by a group of friends. Chris Fredson, Will Ferguson, Herbert Morrill, and Harry Meyer of Geyserville and Cecil Fewell and Harold Sullivan of Healdsburg carried the stone to the hills and placed it over the grave.

* * * * *

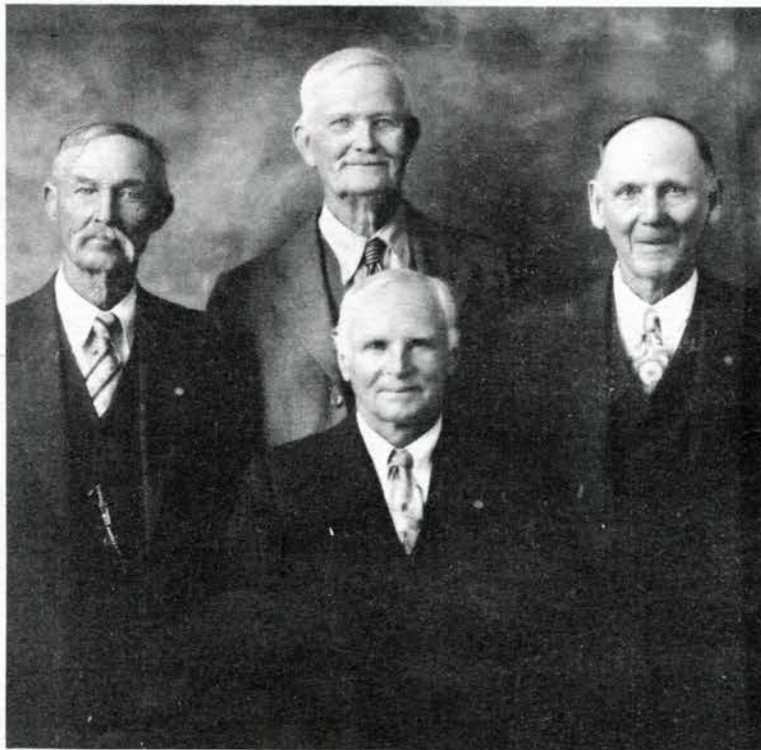
Officers and Directors of the HEALDSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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



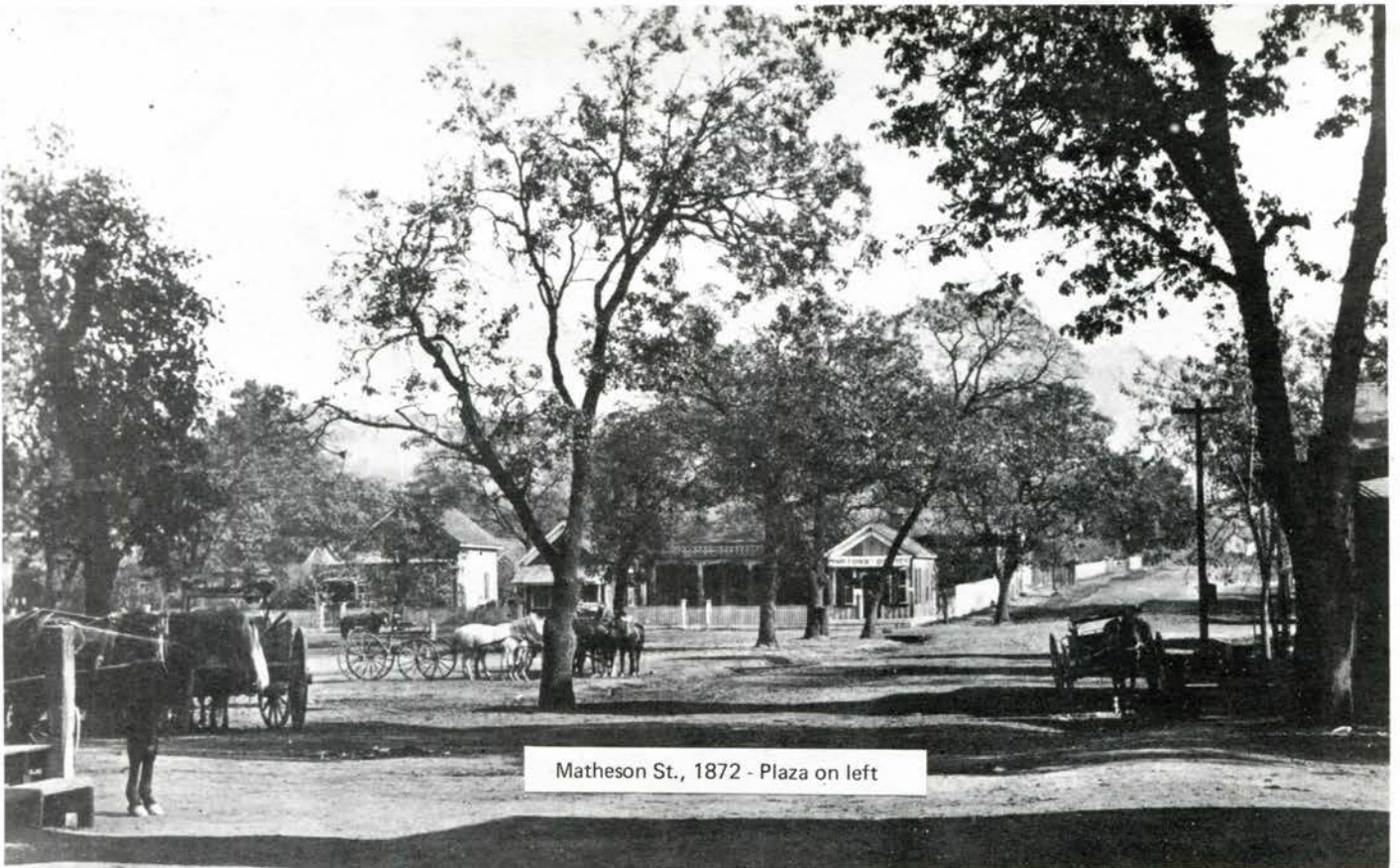
PIONEERS:

Harrison Barnes, Ransom Powell, Lewis A. Norton, *R. H. Warfield*



OLD TIMERS:

John Bidwell, Nate Cox, Dan Goddard, Walter Matthews



Matheson St., 1872 - Plaza on left



"Fred Young & Co.", Circa 1896

OUR PLAZA

The first survey to ascertain the cost of a fence around the Plaza was made in 1858, just prior to the death of Harmon Heald. However, for fifteen years nothing was done, and the Plaza continued to serve as a parking lot for wagons and horses, and when necessary, was cleared of weeds and brush. It was considerably low in the center and during a heavy rain appeared much like a shallow lake in the center of town.

But the community was prosperous and growing and the people of Healdsburg were taking some pride in their town. In 1873 a "neat and substantial fence" was built around the plaza at a cost of nearly \$1,000, the work being done by Proctor and Hogle. A chain and post railing was also installed on the street side of the walkway around the plaza for hitching horses. It was proposed that an underground irrigation system, recently patented, be installed after the plaza was filled and graded. Quoting from an editorial in the Russian River Flag of March, 1873:

"The Healdsburg plaza might be made an ornament to the place. Much work and money have already been spent on it to make it such, and much more will yet be done. Without irrigation a public park or plaza in this State is a farce. It is like a fine house without furniture, a store without goods, a well-set table without any food in the dishes, a - well, language fails us. A public plaza without irrigation is a public nuisance; with irrigation it becomes a "thing of beauty and a joy forever." Until Healdsburg secures a system of water works, a tank can be constructed back of the business houses on West street, and this tank can be supplied with water from a well, raised by wind power, or by dog power such as adopted by John Grater back of the Union Hotel."

Well, no irrigation system was installed until 87 years later (in 1960). But in that year of 1873 the old oaks and madrones were cut down, the plaza was filled and graded, the walkways were laid out to correspond with the gates in the new fence, and pines, firs, and eucalyptus trees were planted at random.

* * * * *

If you have an unlisted telephone number, perhaps you're not being reminded about our meetings. If this is the case, and if you wish to be informed of upcoming programs, please contact Jan at 539-2701 (evenings) and your name will be placed on the telephone committee's list.

THE "GRAVEL PIT", known today as the Basalt Rock Company, had its beginnings more than a hundred years ago. As early as 1876 labor troubles developed at the pit. At that time the railroad company, on land leased from John Grant, took out gravel for ballast on their various lines. Thirty Chinamen had been brought up from a branch road and put to work in the pit loading the cars. However, the Celestials struck because they were not allowed a full day's pay for a half day's work. The gang boss, supposed to be the instigator of the strike, was fired and the others ordered to go to work or leave entirely - they went to work.

The plant was established here primarily because of the unique formation of the aggregate in the Healdsburg vicinity. Quoting from the Enterprise (Sept. 11, 1930):

"Here, and nowhere else along the wide reaches of Russian River, is found just the appropriate mixture of sand and gravel that is proper for concrete work. Farther up the stream the gravel mixture is too coarse and much soft rock is found. Farther down the river there is too much sand and too little gravel.

"It is a happy combination known to whites since 1871, when Peter Donohue, father of the old San Francisco and Northwestern Railroad, found the gravel bar from which the Russian River Gravel Company today continues to extract important building materials.

Here, in olden days, labored as many as 500 Chinese at a time, laboriously shoveling by hand the gravel from the sand bar and stream bed into cars run down on sidetracks from the main line of the railroad. Later on the gravel was removed by steam shovel.

"But it remained for John D. Grant, native Healdsburg resident and descendant of two pioneer families, to establish in 1906 the first gravel grading plant in California. On a site a few hundred yards below stream from the present plant, Grant set up his grader, and sold gravel to all comers. In 1911 he acquired some 75 acres of land upon which the new plant is now operating."

Major improvements and additions were made in 1930, including great concrete bins and a tunnel 290 feet in length through which a conveyor belt ran. The plant was still operated by Mr. Grant and his son, J. Delano Grant, who had joined his father upon leaving college in 1926. May 1, 1931 marked the transfer of ownership of the Russian River Gravel Company from the Grant family to the Basalt Rock Company of Napa. President A.G. Streblov of the Napa concern announced that the personnel of the local plant would be unchanged. Delano Grant continued for awhile as manager until Lloyd Smead took over. In 1935 Jim Kennedy became plant manager but upon his death in 1964 Virg Botterini was made manager.

TERIYAKI FEED

On Saturday, September 10th, at the Villa Chanticleer, one hundred and seventy-five Teriyaki barbecued chickens were served to members of the Healdsburg Historical Society and their friends. The occasion was a benefit sponsored by the society in an arrangement with the Church of Latter Day Saints who prepared the delicious repast.

!!!!!!!!!!!!

TOUR OF THE ALEXANDER HOME

The Cyrus Alexander adobe, built in the late 1840's, and for years the center of social activity in the valley, was so severely damaged in the 1906 earthquake that it was removed and another home built on its foundations. This house continued to be occupied by the Alexander family until the death of Annie Alexander in 1963.

It was this home, now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Wetzel, that the members of the Healdsburg Historical Society toured on Saturday, October 8th. Some fifty members enjoyed an assortment of delicious homemade cookies and a variety of fruit punch prepared and served by Mrs. Wetzel. The Wetzels have enlarged the house in such a manner that the new work and the original appear to be one and the same. The furnishings are in keeping with the period of the home and reflect the good taste and decorating skills of Mrs. Wetzel.

In the rear of the home is the adobe storeroom that still stands and it has been improved and enlarged and today provides additional living quarters and storage. The old Alexander Valley schoolhouse has been relocated and restored and is now occasionally used as a guest house.

IN APPRECIATION

The museum Board of Trustees wishes to express its appreciation to the members of the Healdsburg Historical Society who, without fail, continue in their support of the museum by volunteering their services as receptionists. For the past quarter these have been:

Gwen Hassett	Lucile Ware
Muriel Bronner	Carmel Bottini
Aleta Rulofson	Marian Anderson
Jeanette Beeson	Charlotte Nalley
Maxine Bell	Evelyn Iversen
Duval Bell	Rose Demostene
Alice Petersen	Geraldine Barbieri
Marie Taeuffer	Bess Cunningham
Ed Collins	Bernice Donaldson
Pat Saini	Gladys Barnes
Irma Cuneo	June Jones
Lori Buroker	Mary Larson
Doris Farris	Bernice Auradou
Virginia Zobel	Margaret Bell
Bertha Vranna	Lilly Clement
Dan Dowling	Florence O'Brien
Bernice Roscoe	

!!!!!!!!!!!!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Date _____ Check enclosed \$5.00*

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail your check to
HEALDSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Atten: Major Phillips, Treasurer
310 Mountain View Drive
Healdsburg, Calif. 95448

*OTHER MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATIONS
Sustaining \$25.00 Student \$2.50
Patron \$250.00

Annual dues for all members for the year 1978 may be paid at any time up to March 31st, after which a member will be placed on an inactive roll until reinstated.

WE HAVE RECEIVED: A wooden butter churn and a table-type coffee grinder, vintage of 1895, from Joe Howard; a Haviland platter and three pieces of sterling from Mrs. Lee Lindwall; and a watercolor of the old Joe Fitch house on the bank of Russian River next to the auto bridge, from the artist, Olive Goddini-Bacigalupi.

Maxine Bell donated a baby's hat (Panama), a Red Cross Motor Corps uniform and a Motor Corps insignia for the auto, a commencement program for the class of 1922, and a programme for a musical recital of Mrs. Bert Haigh's pupils.

Early day photos were also received from Maxine, and from Walt Davis, from Rose Demostene, Walter Wright, and Eloise Prince Liston. Eloise also donated a shaving mug used by her father, Jos. B. Prince, a sterling letter opener, a key ring, and a stamp box from Mr. Prince, and a gold thimble and a pen used by Luella Prince.

Robert McAfee presented the museum with a framed photo of Fitch Mountain and two cash books from the old Plaza Hotel. Commercial paraphernalia, a barber shop photo, and personal papers of P.R. Tully were received from Alice Grove.

"California Local History, a Bibliography" and its Supplement were received from Mrs. M.L. Griffin; and "Birthrights Restored", a 1913 booklet on the children's home at Lytton was presented by Paul Pugh.

THE HENRY BELL TOOLS: A very special collection of hand tools were originally brought into this area in 1853 by Henry Bell, grandfather of Mr. Fred McCutchan, who has donated them to the museum. Thirty-three planes, three marking gauges, a planer, scribing compass, two Spofford bit braces, and extra bits and blades are in the tool collection, all in working order. In addition the collection includes three very old padlocks, a powder flask, and a unique harness with a shot and powder flask combination. Mr. McCutchan, who now resides in San Francisco, was born in the family home that stood where the new Windsor Winery is today.

SHAMELESS BOYS

Geyserville, August 11, 1873:

ED. FLAG: - Allow me through the columns of your paper to state to the people of Healdsburg that some of the boys of their town are in the habit of bathing in the river near the railroad bridge, in the day-time and in full view from the road. It is not very creditable to Healdsburg that ladies in traveling a public highway within the limits of the town, should have to pass a crowd of naked boys in plain view. Can not your town authorities put a stop to such disgusting exhibitions.

AN EYE WITNESS.

Later, the editor of the Flag stated: "This is disgraceful and ought to be stopped. A more secluded, and just as good a place for swimming, is at the end of Tucker street. We recommend the boys do their daytime bathing there and not put the authorities to the trouble of restricting them by law."

* * * * *

THE RIVER, ABOUT 1845

From the Healdsburg Enterprise, May 18, 1882:

"Mr. Franklin Bidwell relates that when he came to this region nearly forty years ago the channels of the streams were neither so wide nor so deep as at present. In the early stages of the settlement clusters of willows and timber growing along the banks prevented their washing away. The same bars were in Russian River, but the width of channel has increased and changed in places."

LAST, BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST - NOVEMBER 17TH - NEXT MEETING

Dr. Coke Wood, also known as "MR. CALIFORNIA" will honor us with his appearance as our guest speaker at our next regular meeting to be held Thursday, November 17th. Our meeting will be set a week earlier due to the Thanksgiving Holiday. Dr. Wood serves as the Executive Secretary for the Conference of California Historical Societies located at the Pacific Center for Western Studies on the University of Pacific campus in Stockton. Being a well-known historian throughout California, we feel very fortunate to be able to have Dr. Wood and his wife with us on the 17th. Following elections, refreshments will be served. Let's give Dr. Wood a good reception--be sure to join us at the High School Library on Nov. 17th.