

RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

Published by
HEALDSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY
JANUARY, 1980



Truitt's Opera House - Center Street - 1910
Pastime Minstrels and Town Band

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Post Office Box 952, Healdsburg, Calif. 95448

Issue No. 15 January, 1980

* * * * * REPORT ON OPEN HOUSE/APPRECIATION DAY * * * * *

For those of you who were unable to attend our 'Appreciation Day for Members' on Sunday, November 4th, you missed a great day. A large crowd was in attendance, totaling 319. There were lots of refreshments, including sandwiches, cookies, nutbreads, and a large cake which said "Thank you", as well as coffee, punch and an assortment of wine. More than 30 hosts and hostesses were on hand to greet and serve guests. I wish to thank all of them, and express my special thanks to host Dennis Hill, and hostesses Rose Demostene, Anne Woltzen, Evelyn Iversen and Pearl Guptill for the many hours they contributed to ensure the success of this event.

Our Curator, Hannah Clayborn, worked diligently with her crew to ready the museum for this large crowd. Countless hours of work were put in to accomplish the task of changing nearly all the displays for this occasion. The membership appreciates all your efforts, Hannah.

Shortly after 3:00 p.m. the unveiling of an oil portrait of our founder, Edwin Langhart, took place. This was accomplished by Mrs. Langhart and her daughter, Melinda. The portrait was painted by Artist James C. Vanderbilt of Sonoma who was on hand to deliver a few words. He explained that the picture was surrounded by a Chinese silk mat and had a solid maple frame. Mr. Vanderbilt, who was a close friend of Mr. Langhart, donated his art work to the museum. The maple frame was a gift to the museum from our Society. If you have not done so yet, do stop by the museum and view this beautiful addition.

Thank you for attending this special function. It was held in honor of each and every one of you and, of course, our founder.

Jan Harrison

IMPORTANT NOTICE

OUR NEXT MEETING WILL BE THURSDAY, JANUARY 24th, AND JOSEPH VERCELLI WILL BE OUR GUEST SPEAKER. MR. VERCELLI IS GENERAL MANAGER AT THE SOUVERAIN WINERY AND WILL SPEAK TO US ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE LOCAL WINERY INDUSTRY FROM THE YEAR 1933 TO THE PRESENT. HE HAS HAD EXPERIENCE WITH WINERIES THAT ARE NO LONGER OPERATING. MR. VERCELLI HAS BEEN IN THE INDUSTRY FOR 47 YEARS AND IS CONSIDERED TO BE AN HISTORICAL LANDMARK IN HIS OWN RIGHT. YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS THIS ONE. REFRESHMENTS WILL FOLLOW. SEE YOU AT 7:30 P.M. ON THE 24th!

GOLD RUSH AND QUICKSILVER: HEALDSBURG MINES

Sonoma County was passed by in the great rush for gold in California. Gold was reported in the Russian River in 1852 and again in 1854, but these reports never "panned out". An 1895 Healdsburg directory asserts that a gold-bearing quartz lode was being developed on the Board Ranch in Dry Creek Valley, and that Isaac Gray had a "fine prospect for a paying gold mine" 10 miles west of Healdsburg, but we can only assume that these men's hopes exceeded their strikes.

However, Sonoma County did have a respectable amount of sulphate of mercury, otherwise known as quicksilver or cinnabar, beneath its lush surface. Until 1868 most of the quicksilver mined was in demand for use in Placer County gold and gold-quartz mining, hydraulic workings, and pan amalgamation. From 1868 to 1874 quicksilver production in Sonoma County went into a slump as the high grade lump ore began to give out. The invention of the Scott Fine-ore furnace in 1874 allowed lower grades of cinnabar to be utilized, and production of quicksilver rose again until an injunction was placed against hydraulic mining in 1884. The need for quicksilver in industry barely kept production going in Sonoma County until World War I brought the great boom to the California cinnabar mines. Prices for the ore shot up to \$117.50 per flask in 1918, and the privately-owned California mines proceeded to flood the market. Price competition being what it is, the price per flask had plummeted to \$40.00 a flask by 1921.

Except for another small boom during World War II, quicksilver production diminished slowly but steadily in Sonoma County, and ceased altogether by the mid 1940's.

Healdsburg falls into what is known as the Western Mayacmas Quicksilver District which included such local mines as the Socrates or Pioneer Mine, Contact Mine, Cloverdale Mine, and Culver-Baer Mine, all north of Sulphur Creek. These four were the major producers in the area and remained in operation with some interruptions from the 1860's to the 1940's.

Smaller mines near Healdsburg with such colorful names as Buckeye, Black Bear, Rattlesnake, Eureka, Last Chance, Hope, Cinnabar King, and Yellowjacket also produced in their day.

Healdsburg may not have been rich in gold, but by supplying quick-silver for gold-mining operations, and by becoming home to many failed gold prospectors, she both took part in, and profited from, the Great Gold Rush.

Hannah Clayborn

WE WISH TO WELCOME THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS WHO HAVE JOINED OUR HISTORICAL SOCIETY SINCE THE PUBLICATION OF OUR LAST RECORDER:

- Bruce Appel
- Martha Brooks
- Glenn Burch
- Philip Cadosi
- Virgie Cadosi
- Mario Deas
- Frances Etchell
- Robert Etchell
- Helen Ester Day Freed
- Eleanor Hadrich
- Dale Iversen
- Jaine Jackson
- Mrs. Velma Kock
- Mrs. Cleone Clayborn Kuhn
- Dolores McGuffey
- Mrs. Nives Deghetto Nash
- Mrs. Helen Petersen
- Mrs. Billie R. Raust
- Mrs. Ruth Andrews Simonini
- Thomas Sweeney
- William M. White

HELP! HELP! HELP! HELP!

We have a request. Our docents have been doing a fine job taking care of the museum, according to Hannah, but we still need volunteers who can work on Fridays and Saturdays. If you could spend 3 hours a month on a Friday or Saturday, PLEASE call Hannah Clayborn, Curator, at 433-4717 or 433-9362. She will be extremely pleased to hear from you.

The Healdsburg Historical Society solicits your continued membership in our organization. As you know, our dues run from January to January. As a member, you are mailed copies of our newsletter, the Russian River Recorder. PLEASE return your membership check today in the enclosed envelope. (Don't forget to place a stamp on the envelope). Please submit your dues as soon as possible. We thank you for your consideration and hope to see all of you at our meetings.

Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of every other month, commencing in January. There are a few exceptions, as you will note below, where the meeting dates have been changed to the third Thursday. This occurs in May and November.

So you will know when to expect your newsletter, they are mailed out in January, April, July and October.

Listed below are the meeting dates for the year 1980:

JANUARY 24, 1980

MARCH 27, 1980

MAY 15, 1980

JULY 24, 1980

SEPTEMBER 25, 1980

NOVEMBER 20, 1980

MUSEUM NEWS

Happily, our kind members have been bringing in more beautiful and interesting Healdsburg artifacts. Ida Roman gave a porcelain cocoa pot from pre-war Japan and a print of "Custer's Last Stand". Molly and Carl Thrift added a coffee grinder to our early housewife display and Walter Wilson a metal pan scraper (as well as a chain car jack for the gas station). Jaretta Swanson put an 1880 Lady's haying hat on our housewife and gave a lovely 1880's beaded evening bag, 1906 greeting cards, and a 1920 photo of her family, all belonging to her grandmother, Cynthia Allen. Major Phillips surprised us with 39 obsidian and chert arrowheads, as well as several old woodworking tools. John McClish gave a lovely photo of his grandfather of the same name; Dr. Francis Ritz gave us an old photo from the Granucci family collection, and Eloise (Prince) Liston sent us 5 old stamped photos in a leather case from her family collection and a photostat from a 1907 Enterprise. Peggy Cadd gave a signed 1917 Healdsburg road building document and clippings concerning our Christian Church and old General Hospital, and Bud Christenson left us four tasseled picture hangers.

Hannah sends her special thanks to the following people who helped make the Christmas antique and collectible toy show at the Edwin Langhart Museum such a success:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Dr. Francis Ritz | Steven Castelli |
| Verna Lafon | Pat Schmidt |
| Billye Tsarnas | Rosinda Holmes |
| Holly Hansen | June Jones |

.....and watch out for the show next Christmas!

At any rate, stop by the museum and see the new Healdsburg Photographers and mining display. Our Curator is still looking for Chinese/American artifacts, and World War, Civil War, etc. artifacts for a show in June, 1980.

Many comments have been received regarding the outstanding job Hannah is doing at our museum. We are pleased to know that such a capable person is taking care of our museum in such an excellent fashion and continuing the work which was begun by its founder, Ed Langhart.

ADDRESSES

Edwin Langhart Museum, 133 Matheson Street, Healdsburg, Calif. 95448
Healdsburg Historical Society, Post Office Box 952, Healdsburg, CA 95448

THE GOOD TIMES OF 100 YEARS AGO

Back in the 1880's, before there were such things as cocktails, cigarettes, road houses, equality of sexes, about the only form of diversion outside of Fourth of July celebrations, May Day picnics, and occasional circus, minstrel show, patent medicine outfit or stock company traveling the country, was the good old-fashioned church social.

Sometimes there would be strawberry and ice cream festivals or harvest home or Halloween socials in the fall, and whenever the church needed finances there would be other gatherings during the rest of the year.

Ice cream was a special treat and not had too often in those days as it was rather expensive and usually sold at twenty-five cents a plate and with strawberries ten cents extra. Sometimes socials were held at the church, a private home, or if extra space was needed where a dinner was to be served, it was held in a vacant store.

The boys would set to work turning an old fashioned ice cream freezer awkwardly at that, and hulling strawberries. They would go round and round the plaza ringing a bell and calling at the top of their voices announcing the social or dinner, its price and where it was to be held. In exchange for this effort they would be rewarded with a free dish of ice cream with strawberries and cake or whatever would be the special treat on a particular occasion. The boys considered this 'big time'.

When benefit socials were held this seemed to enlighten the boys most for nearly every member of the congregation came bringing gifts or donations for the poor pastor and his family, as well as food to eat at the party. Some of the items brought would be useful and some would not; however, the poor preacher had to accept all these things in a spirit of thankfulness and humility. The boys, of course, sized up the gifts and rated the religious fervor and purity of heart of the bestower by the quality of the gifts laid at the pastor's feet.

It was announced that there was to be a great turkey dinner with all the fixings to be held in a vacant store in the Gobbi block. It was well attended, and everyone could indulge in second and third helpings. One gentleman attended who was especially famous for his

INTRODUCING FRANCIS BRANERN, OUR NEW PRESIDENT

Fran was born, raised and schooled in Healdsburg, having graduated from high school in 1931. He was absent from the area for a five-year period while serving in the Army during World War II.

Beginning in 1938 Fran accepted employment at Basalt and remained there until his retirement in July of 1978.

In 1942 Helen McMillen, of Annapolis, became Mrs. Branern, and they reside at 317 Matheson Street.

For more than 20 years Fran has been active in the local Kiwanis Club having served in the capacity of President, and at present is serving as the Club's Secretary.

For the past 30 years Fran has been very involved with the Friendship Lodge No. 91 of the Knights of Pythias. Over the years he has served as Chancellor Commander, and has just completed 3 years in that office.

The City of Healdsburg was fortunate to have Mr. Branern on the Planning Commission from July, 1971 until February, 1977 - nearly 6 years.

Busy as Fran is, he finds time to serve as a docent at the Edwin Langhart Museum on a regular basis.

He lists bowling and fishing as his favorite pastimes. An additional member of their household is their pet cat, named just that, "Cat".

We're very fortunate to have such a qualified and capable President to begin this decade, and let's demonstrate our support by attending his meetings. Afterall, we're the fastest growing society in Northern California!

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Healdsburg Enterprise: August 14, 1889

DRY CREEK VALLEY WINEMAKERS

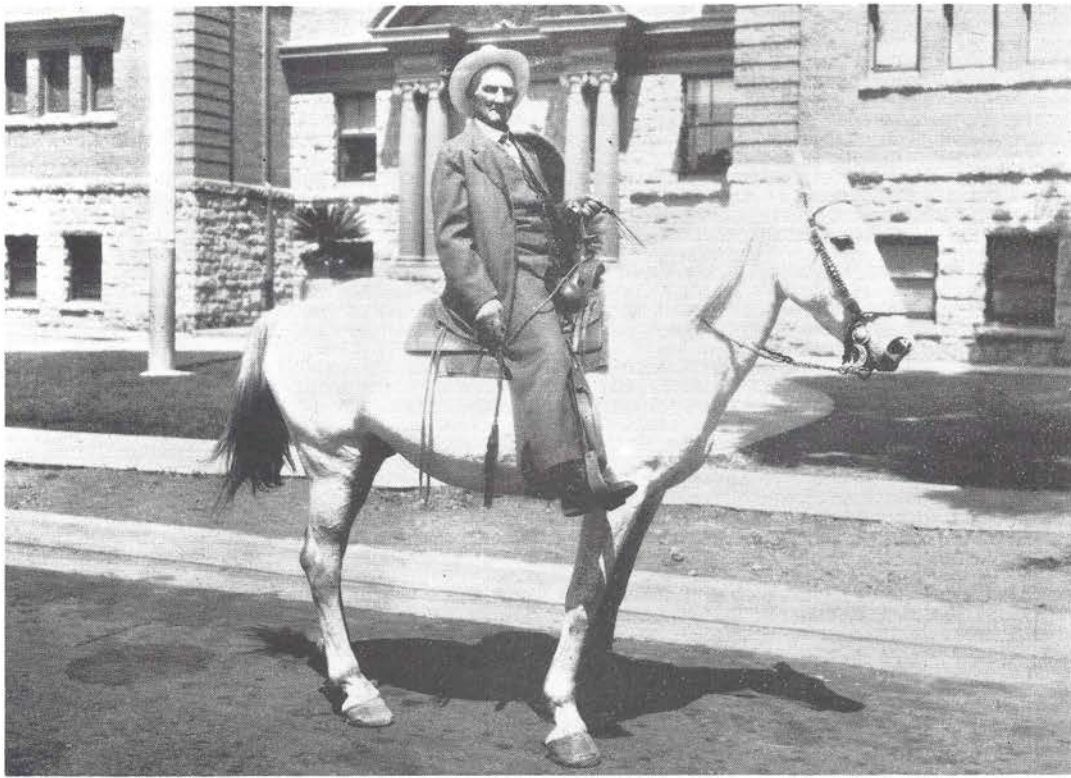
A spirit of enterprise is being displayed by the wine-growers and wine-makers of Dry Creek Valley. It was learned Saturday that Priest & Fricke and Robert Bonner are erecting new wineries and the capacity of C. Wagele's winery is being considerably increased. But this is only one of the steps which are being taken by the wide-awake wine men of Dry Creek to improve the condition of their industry. It is their intention not only to increase the facilities for manufacturing, but to make every improvement possible in the quality of their wines in order that they may compete successfully with the high-grade foreign product on the home market and abroad. They have employed a gentleman by the name of S.P. Hallengren, who is going to Europe, to negotiate the sale of their wines and make a careful study of the foreign market and of the industry in its every branch.



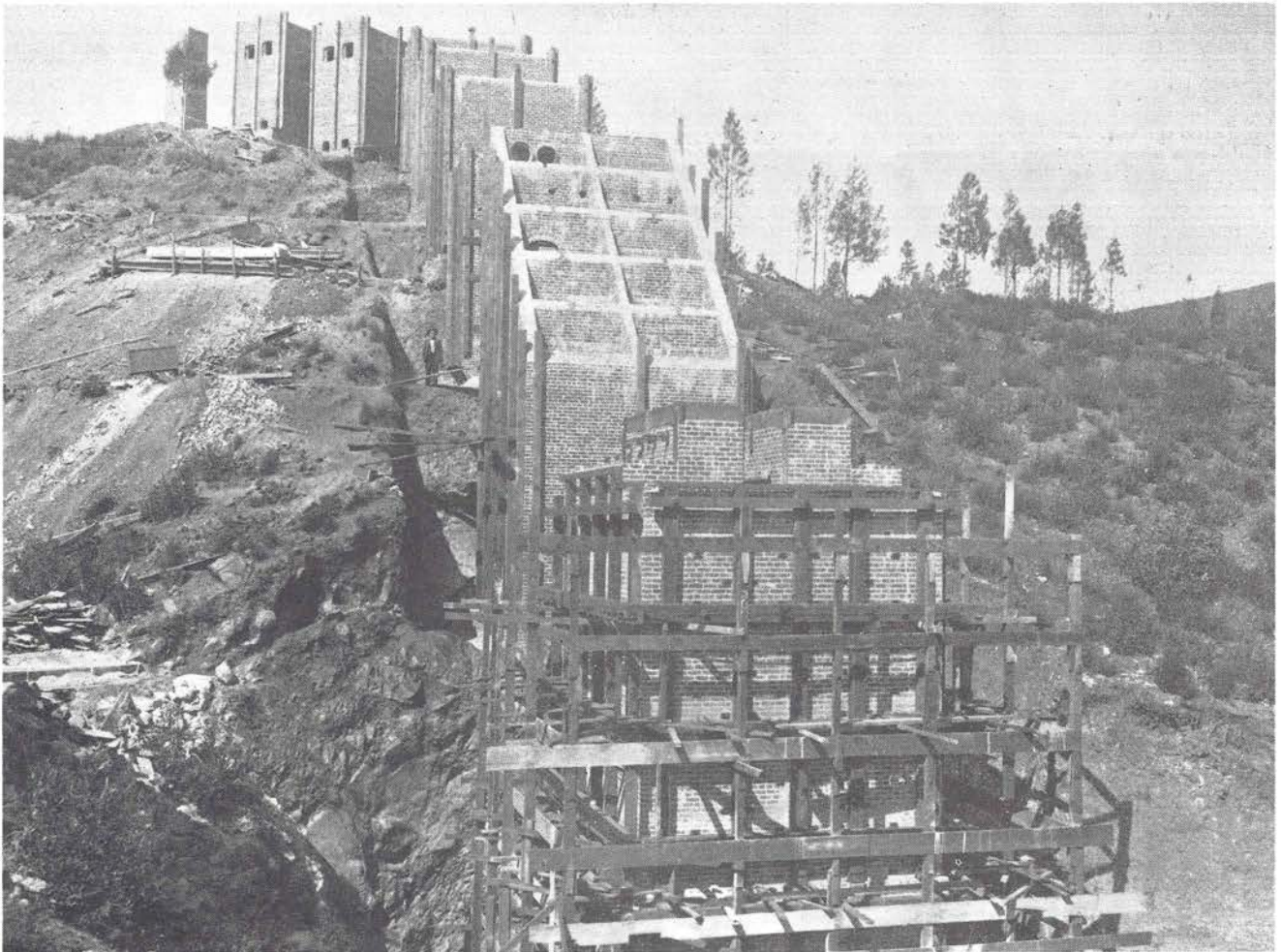
Jos. H. Downing's Gallery (G.A. Cook's Glove Cutting Shop and office on right)
November, 1873



Interior of Jos. H. Downing's Photography Studio - Reception Room,
looking east through operating room. 1873.



Roland K. Truitt, aged 86, as Grand Marshal - July 4, 1927



50 ton Scott furnace at the Helen Mine - typical of the furnaces built at several quicksilver mines from 1874-1890

Sonoma County Democrat: March 31, 1859

(Letter to the Editor)

EDITOR OF THE DEMOCRAT: The Town of Healdsburg is only about two years old. It has labored under the usual difficulties attending to great uncertainty of land titles, and yet its growth has been so rapid that its population is estimated at 700. For beauty of scenery and salubrity of climate, it is hardly excelled by any other in the State. We have a daily stage run by the enterprising Charley McLaughlin, daily mail, and daily express.....We have a district school of sixty scholars, taught by an accomplished and competent teacher, Mr. Graham. Besides, the Russian River Institute, with an average of over one hundred scholars, where all the English branches, together with the higher branches of study, including the languages, are taught by competent male and female teachers. We have a surrounding agricultural country, which cannot be surpassed.....

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(from Tales of Sonoma County
by Dr. William C. Shipley)
Courtesy of Sonoma County Historical Society

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS

When I was a small boy, along with a lot of other small boys and girls, our doting parents took us to the local photographer to have our cherubic features recorded, to be placed in the old family album along with those of bygone, contemporary relatives and friends.

It was indeed a momentous event. After being posed rigidly with a metal support to steady our nodding noggins, and after the photographer had posed and reposed, adjusted and readjusted his camera under the black cloth, before shooting the picture, just to hold our childish attention he would hold his hand in the air, snap his fingers and say, "Look at the little birdie". We innocent kids would look in vain for that rare avis and while looking, the picture would be shot. It indeed an ordeal for parents, photographer and the small subjects for artistic preservation.

Going back to the very earliest of history, when my mother arrived in Healdsburg in the spring of 1870, a photographer by the name of Alhands was holding forth without competition. What his initials were is lost in the dust of ages, but he was a fairly good photographer for the day and, on account of his odd name, was the butt of many jokes by the local boys, most of whom considered themselves pretty tough hombres.

Of course the town was growing numerically, financially and artistically, so along about 1876 Andrew Price, another worthy follower of the photographic art, came to town intending to make a short stay, but he became interested in one of the Mulligan girls, who became Mrs. Price and they settled down and lived in the old home town for many years, rearing two fine sons, Percy and Arthur, who have both done well and are honors to the place of their birth and its public school system.

During the years the Geysers was a celebrated, fashionable resort where whole flocks of the rich, the elite, the great and the would-be great congregated to show themselves off and make one another jealous. Andrew Price would spend most of his time at this resort making good money taking pictures of these celebrities. The rest of the year he spent in town busily engaged in his chosen field of work. He was one of Healdsburg's well known and beloved citizens, remaining until 1900, when he and his family moved to Berkeley.

Along in the 80's the Piatt family moved to town. One member of this large family, C.E. Piatt, was a photographer, and for a number of years conducted a gallery where people went to have their youth and beauty recorded for future generations to admire. Itinerant photographers would come and go, some conducting their business in tents, others in buildings, seldom remaining more than two or three months at a time, being what you might call Gypsy photographers.

In looking over my collection of old photographs, I find many bearing the names of Alhands, Price and Piatt. These three seem to be the only ones that were stable, possessed families and became definite parts of the body politic. Alhands, being a green easterner when he came to Healdsburg, was initiated by the boys, who took him snipe hunting and played other practical jokes. Andrew Price was a rather serious man with good intentions and never the butt of early day horse-play. C.E. Piatt was a devout Methodist and of course refrained from the sins of the world during all the years he resided in our midst. To these able men and their good work, we who survive owe a debt of gratitude.

With all due respect to the late Dr. Shipley's opinion, the archives of the Edwin Langhart Museum give evidence that Healdsburg had additional photographers. Some these became well-known. Our Curator has supplied the following list of photographers:

- J.H. Downing - 1870's
- N.R. Davidson - 1880's
- B.F. Howard - 1880's
- Thomas Ley - 1880's
- W.A. Maxwell - 1880's
- George May - 1880's
- W.B. Monmonier - 1880's - Location-NE corner of Center & Plaza Sts.
- C.E. Piatt - 1890 - Location-east side of Plaza
- Sanders and Company - c. 1893
- Jonathan Hardy - 1900
- Andrew Price - c. 1880's-1890's
- Piggot and Shaw - c. 1905
- Mrs. M.J. Tate - c. 1905 - a woman!
- Johnson - c. 1905-1910
- O.G. Cummings - 1910
- H. Riether - 1916
- S.E. Langhart, operated from early 1900's until retirement in mid-sixties - studio on Plaza/Matheson Street.

PHOTO CREDITS ARE GIVEN TO THE EDWIN LANGHART MUSEUM ARCHIVES

Editor's Note:

I would like to thank the following members for their assistance in collating this issue of the Recorder: Major Phillips, Hannah Clayborn, Maria Taeuffer, Norman Taeuffer, Chrystal Langhart, Anne Woltzen, Charles Scalione, Gladys Barnes and Jan White. Maria, Gladys and Anne have provided their services on a regular basis for the past four years. Also, Carmel Bottini assisted with the first three years of this publication. Major and Norman have been assisting for over a year, whereas Hannah, Chrystal, Charlie and Jan are newcomers to the assembly line.

When it's time for the newsletter to be sent out, this group contributes as much as 5 hours (straight) of rapid paper gathering, stapling, folding, labeling and sorting for mailing. I couldn't do it without their assistance, and their efforts are greatly appreciated.

ATTENTION MEMBERS:

Do you realize that we had our first meeting on January 29, 1976! And do you know what that means? Yes...this January meeting will be our 4th anniversary. Not only do we need your support in the form of your membership (which ensures our ability to handle printing costs for our newsletter), we also need your continued attendance and participation at our meetings. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK.

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IN THE YEAR 1979.....

Our greatest gain was 456 members!

Our greatest loss was the passing of Ed Langhart, founder of both our Historical Society and our Museum. As we all remember---- Mr. Langhart left us on February 16, 1979, nearly one year ago.