

RUSSIAN RIVER



R E C O R D E R



The Field Family Letters

Thomas and Emma Field, circa 1860

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Upcoming Events

Claire Rithner

This winter the Museum will feature our annual toy exhibit. If you are interested in loaning your antique and/or collectible toys please let me know.

Next spring we will construct an exhibit on World War II in collaboration with the Sonoma County and West County Museums to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the end to the war. We are hoping to conduct several oral history interviews in conjunction with this exhibit. If you, or someone you know, would be a good interview subject, please contact me at the Museum. We are interested in various experiences: those of our veterans, the home-front in Healdsburg, and the *Bracero* project, for example.

Several people have mentioned to me that they would like to see the Museum have an exhibit about the large parades and festivals Healdsburg used to host. I love the idea, and we have some wonderful photos of the Water Carnivals, Floral Festivals, and the Cloverdale Citrus Fair, however, we don't have the artifacts to support such a project. If you know of any artifacts relevant to this project, and/or if you know someone who might be interested in building a small replica float, please call me at the Museum, 431-3325.

Recorder Staff

Editor: Darla Meeker
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Save These Dates

September 25

Autumn Fest
Awarding of Instant Wine Cellar

November 10

HMVA Craft Fair

Healdsburg Historical Society

Ed Langhart, Founder

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Staff

Claire Rithner *431-3325*
(Curator)

MUSEUM NEWS

Claire Rithner, Curator



1903 marriage of Florence Cranston & Harmon Heald, grandson of Healdsburg's founder Harmon G. Heald

On July 19 the Museum opened a new special exhibit *Joining Hearts and Hands: Wedding Traditions in Sonoma County* which continues until October 30. This was the first exhibit for which I officially took the helm. Mary Beth Shaw, who curated the last exhibit, lent her talent and guidance on this one as well. Constructing an exhibit on weddings was a wonderful first project since artifacts associated with these celebrations are the most beautiful things in every culture which inspires people to save them for future generations to see. In other words, weddings are almost a dream come true for a museum curator!

I was very fortunate to have many talented people volunteer their expertise to make the construction of this exhibit proceed more smoothly. Dawn Moser researched and prepared all the textiles for exhibit. Sherrie Smith-Ferri advised me on the text and

artifacts for the Pomo section. Bob Rawlins made heroic efforts on the ladder to hang two bridal quilts. And, Doreen Zanzi went hither and yon to collect many of the wedding photographs now on display. Many thanks to all of them and to the many other fantastic folks who made suggestions, and lent their support to help with the completion of this project.

Downstairs at the Museum:

The Museum is very fortunate to have an intern from Sonoma State University's history department for the summer. Jim Myers has been busy inventorying and cataloguing the books in our research library.

June Smith, who is in charge of the Museum's research, has brought in several new volunteers to work on the newspaper indexing project. Catherine Curtis and Jeanie Ohman are two of the most faithful.

Another recent addition to the Museum's research office is Dawn Moser. Dawn recently moved from Berkeley where she volunteered for many years at the Oakland Museum. She is an expert researcher and has been busy cataloging and dating our textiles.

A Special Thanks

The following generous people have donated artifacts to the Museum's permanent collection since our last publication:

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| Pat Schmidt | Robert Hill |
| Carla Hoag | Eugenia Ohman |
| Tom Nardi | Lorraine Kimes Owen |
| Robert Young | Doreen Zanzi |
| Mae Malone | Jim Myers |
| Dorothy Simon for the estate of Rena Phillips | |
| Dick Hafner/ Alexander Valley Fire Department | |

EDITOR'S NOTE

When I first came upon the Field Family letters, which were donated to the Museum by Thomas Field's great-grandson, Robert E. Hill of Modesto, California, they seemed like a wonderful way in which to expand upon the wedding and marriage theme of the Museum's current show. Better yet, photos of both Thomas and Emma Field were available as well. What luck!

Upon transcribing the handwritten letters, however, I discovered that Emma certainly was less than enthusiastic about settling in Healdsburg. And for that very reason, I was tempted to pop the letters back into the files and move on to something that struck a more positive note. After all, we all know Healdsburg is a wonderful place to live. So, why knock it? Yet, in the final analysis, the Field Family letters do, indeed, touch upon the subject of marriage as well as afford Recorder readers a unique opportunity to view Healdsburg as a very homesick newcomer saw it, one hundred and thirty-four summers ago.

The Field Family Letters, c. 1860

Background Information

A decade after Thomas Alonzo Field's Uncle Elias joined the throngs of gold seekers in California, Thomas, accompanied by his wife, Emma Ross Field, emigrated to Healdsburg, from Portland, Maine via a temporary residence in San Francisco, in late 1859.

A carpenter by trade, Thomas was born in Portland in 1817, with Emma's birth date listed six years earlier. Records show they were married in Brewer, Maine, in 1841. Together they raised four children, Emma, Racilla,

Walter, and Ada, who apparently all remained behind on the family farm in Maine while their parents sought a better life in the West.

The following letters portray both Thomas' hope and Emma's despair. Emma's letter also speaks to the sacrifices such a transcontinental move entailed, in terms of dividing her allegiance between her children and her partner in marriage. Consequently, her first impression of Healdsburg leaves much to be desired, as you will soon discover.

*San Francisco
Aug. 3, 1859*



circa 1865

*My Dear Children,
I suppose you will feel sorry when you hear of the accident that I met with. I fell from the building that I was at work on and sprained my left ankle and broke a piece of the cap of the anklebone.*

The Doctor thinks it will be three months before I will have the use of it but I hope not so long. It was hurt three weeks ago yesterday. I can get around the house a little on crutches. I am in hope to be able to go up to Russian River Saturday. Uncle Elias (Field) is very anxious for us to come home.

Mother is getting quite smart again. Four days after I was hurt Mother was taken sick. Eight days the doctor was in to see us every day. He says Mother was very dangerous. You may think it rather tuff for us to both be sick and amongst strangers but we have got along quite comfortable, but it is lonesome to be away from you, my own dear children.

I suppose it looks a little blue to you not seeing any money. It looks blue to me too but still I shouldn't give up yet. . . I had a letter from Marien Hewit. He's in Petaluma. He says carpenter work is good there. He was quite anxious to see me.

We received your letter and were very glad to hear from you and that you are well. You write a very good letter but now is your time to be a little careful about your spelling and capitals where they ought to be where your Grammar tells you...

Mother thinks we shall be home when the two years are up or before. After I have been up to the Russian River I hope that I shall know more what I shall do. I suppose that you have seen Mr. Miller and heard from us. Mother don't feel able to write this time. She has many a crying spell when she thinks of you. But I hope this will find you all well.

If you see Mr. Dunning tell him that I have seen harder times that I did on the old (illegible). I want Walter to see that everything that is not sold is put in the Barn or under cover. Direct your letters Healdsburg.

Our love to you all. Hope that we shall see you by the time that the two years are up. Our best respects to all neighbors and friends. I hope that you will excuse this by writing a good handsome letter as my foot aches quite a bit and there is a piece gone from the paper and I shall have to close by hoping that you are enjoying yourselves in peace and quietness.

This from your Affectionate Father,
Thomas A. Field
Healdsburg Sept. 15 1860

My Dear Children

I now address a few lines to inform you of my poor health. I have been confined to my bed

three weeks with enzepelas (encephalitis?). I am now able to be up most of the time but still a great sufferance and so Homesick that I know not what to do. I have wished myself a home a thousand times and shall ever regret leaving you my dear children, but I pray and trust to God that I may be spared to return to you. Father says he will go home with me just as soon as he can arrange himself so as to leave. Money is very scarce and business rather dull. Father likes this place so much I wish that I could like (it), but it is out of the question. I cannot be contented here and I am afraid the children would not like it here.



circa 1865

Aug. 17th

My Dear Children,

I had a very sick night and do not feel able to write much. I don't want the children to come here to be slaves as all have to be who do come here.

This summer has been the warmest that ever was known here. You can judge for yourselves how much I have suffered when the leaves burned on the trees and apples roasted on the window. And the fleas are worse than the heat.

I have very kind neighbors. Mrs. Dort Ormsby is as kind to me as ever. I have lots of presents of fruit and vegetables. We have many warm friends here and Father is very much respected by all but I feel I am failing fast and unless I can go home I shall not be here but a short time. This climate does not agree with me. I have been failing for the last six months. I

think I should be better if I could get home. Tell my neighbors that I have not forgotten them and if I never see them again that God will bless them for their kindness to me. The physicians all say that this is the worst climate for women and children that ever was known. There was three children buried last Sunday and one Monday morning. When anyone is taken sick here they hardly ever recover.

I feel very sorry that Father has not been able to send you some money but hope he will be able soon. Money is very scarce here and I should like to be able to do washing. That is the best business here. That is what ill's so many women having to work so hard. They are so fond of fine dress they work themselves to death. My dear children, I let (name crossed out) the money I earned last winter for good interest. I should have kept it and sent it to you if I had known that Father could have sent you some. If you know how it would comfort your sick Mother, I know you would write oftener. I have made many attempts to write you but wept so that I

could not. I hope you will answer this as soon as you receive it and I trust I may be spared to hear from you all. And be sure and write me where Uncle James is. My love to all.

From your affectionate Mother
Emma Field

(The letter then continues, although the actual date of correspondence is unclear.)

My Dear Children,

I don't know what to think. One time Father says he will go home. At another he will say that he never will. However, if I live I shall go home. I want to do whatever is for the best and pray that God may guide me that whatever I do may be for the best. You know I had no peace at home. Therefore I thought I had better come as Father was so discontented, and thought he would do so well here, and so he came. But this Climate is so hard upon me I cannot stay here. It is hard for me to leave Father, and it is hard to stay from you. Therefore I know not



Walter and Susie Field with children Gertrude and Edith, Healdsburg, circa 1898.
Walter was the son of Thomas and Emma Field.

what to do. Mrs. Ormsby says she knows how to pity me for the first two years that she was here she thought she would go crazy. She was so homesick although she had her family with her she could not be contented and now she says she would not go home to live for all the money there is here. But I am well satisfied that I should be content at Home and hope that I may be able to go... The Doct has just been in. He says I must keep perfectly calm and not do anything to excite me and leave off weeping and I will get better when it comes cooler weather. But how can I help crying when I am so far from you and don't hear from you any oftener . . . When I get better I will write oftener. . . I am so exhausted I can write no more.

*From you affectionate Mother,
Emma Field*

P.S. Sept 24

My Dear Children, the weather is much cooler and I feel much better. I am able to go out now. Good-bye until I hear from you and let it be soon. Direct your letters Healdsburg, Cal, by way of Panama, and I think they will come more direct.

(A hasty postscript from Thomas completes the letter)

Oct 1,

My Dear Children, be sure and stick to your books for you will soon see the need of learning. See what you can get for the farm for I want you out here. My respects to all friends and love to you all.

*This from your affectionate Father
Thomas A. Field.*

Postscript

Emma Ross Field lived the remainder of her life in Healdsburg, with her death receiving front-page coverage in the January 3, 1895 edition of the Healdsburg Tribune. All but one of her children were at her bedside at her Magnolia Farm residence (located one mile south of town), where Thomas had died twenty years earlier.

Help Wanted

The Autumn Fest Committee needs volunteers to help make this year's fund-raiser a success. Please call Don Reukema at 433-0384, Eleanor Zak at 433-3059 or Betsy Bippart at 433-9337 if you wish to help with the food, parking, decoration, set-up, ticket sales or auction.

Oral History

For those of you who would like to learn how to take an oral history so that it has meaning for generations to come, you're in luck. Peggy Rawlins, Oral History Chair for the Wine Library Associates of Sonoma County, is offering a one day course for anyone interested. Call 431-1109 for information.

Portable P.A. Needed

Please call the Museum 431-3325 if you have a portable public address system that you would like to donate to the Historical society, for use at upcoming Museum related functions.

Our Picnic an Outreach Event

Peggy Rawlins

On August 14, the Sonoma County Historical Society in conjunction with the Healdsburg Museum and Historical Society, held a joint picnic at Hoot Owl Creek/Alexander Valley Vineyards. Participants enjoyed a display of antique cars, a 1930's fire engine, and old surveying equipment, as well as Maggie Wetzel's talk about the Valley history.

The First Outreach Program

Peggy Rawlins

Leona Dixon Cox, the 92 year old woman who homesteaded in the Sonoma hills spoke to us for our first Outreach program and delighted everyone who heard her speak. She signed her books at the Library, the Museum, Foss Creek School and Levins' Bookstore. Leona tells me she has begun her third book about one-room school houses in Sonoma in general, and on the school which she and her sister attended, in particular.

Endowment Plans

Peggy Rawlins

When the city began reducing financial support to the Museum, the Museum Board of Trustees drew up plans to establish an endowment fund in order to keep the Museum in funds over the long term. When Museum operations were taken over by the newly created Museum and Historical Society Board of Directors, the idea for an endowment fund was introduced to that group. Now, after several months of work, we have written "Articles of Terms and Conditions of the Endowment Fund" which have been

approved by the Board of Directors.

The Endowment Fund will be managed by seven trustees, four of whom are Society officers and three "outside trustees" who are not members of the Board. The four board members, President Norbert Babin, Treasurer Rich Iverson, Thelma Frey and Peggy Rawlins will be joined by Paul Erdman, B. J. Green and Arch Monson. The trustees will meet soon to plan a campaign to reach the goal of \$800,000 for the Endowment Fund established by the Board of Directors.

At the end of June, about \$30,000, a private donation which had been left to the Museum in a will, was transferred from city accounts to start the Endowment Fund. This and other monies raised for the Fund will be invested in safe or secure investments not to be used until the goal is achieved. The Fund Trustees will be soliciting donations to the Fund and asking members and friends to consider adding to the Fund in their wills or as a memorial, so please be thinking about this.

Barn Sale

Nanci Gunnerson

When Barbara and Jim Fagan had their first Barn Sale meeting, they set a goal of \$2,000. This goal was more than doubled: \$4103 was raised for the Museum. Barbara and Jim's generosity in time, space, and industry has made the Barn Sale our most productive fund-raiser to date. Literally hundreds of volunteer hours were clocked. Special thanks to the Nucleus Group: Jeri Myers, Catherine Curtis, Les Davis, De Andersen, Ginny Canfield, Katie Banks and Rhea Bain.

According to Jim, the real heroes in this activity were the generous citizens and Museum members who gave family treasures

and heirlooms so willingly. He also credits participants with cash in hand on the day of sale.

Great job!

Dinner at Madrona Manor

The Healdsburg Museum and Historical Society gratefully acknowledge the following individuals and businesses for their support of the May 11th Dinner at Madrona Manor:

Winifred (Fritz) Kennedy	Rena Phillips
Mrs. Joseph Jacksa	John Hoag
Milton and Mary Brandt	Felix & Verna Lafon
Dorothy Dissmeyer	R. Leslie Jones
Piper Sonoma Cellars	Jordan Winery
Mazzocco Winery	Simi Winery
Clos du Bois	Sebastiani Winery
Alexander Valley Vineyard	

New Members

Tom & Bernice Roscoe	Marianne Pedroncelli
Elinor Rich	Winston Engvall
Mr. & Mrs. J.W. Wells	Heidi Blumenthal
Mr. & Mrs. K.J. Campbell	John Crevelli
Phyllis & Christian Baldenhofer	John N. Dayton
Gary & Martha Bannister	Jane St. Clair
Kenneth C. Wilson	Dr. & Mrs. John Fries
Mr. & Mrs. John D. How	Dry Creek Inn
Dr. & Mrs. Daniel Sooy	Eric & Janet Ziedrich
John Carl Warnecke	Thomas & Beth Evert
Richard & Sandra Etter	Dr. & Mrs. Doug Pile
Ruth Andrews Simonini	Constance & Arthur Reno
Vince Dougherty	Dane & Alison Martin
Mr. & Mrs. Nathaniel Dodge, Jr.	
J.Schmidt & Assoc., Inc.	
Dragonfly Farms, Mr. & Mrs. Yuill Thornton	
Healdsburg Tax Service, Linda Summerville	
Morf Vineyards, Roger Morf	
Giovannoni & Cooper Realty	
Wittke's Tire Service	
Healdsburg Inn at the Plaza	
Holtzen Jewelers, Dick & Lorraine Holtzen	

Gift Shop News

Eleanor Zak

The Gift Shop at the Museum is alive and maintaining. All we need is a buying public. In order for that to happen, there is a need for a greater variety of gift items of interest to the visitors to the Museum who are potential customers. I would like to have more inventory of locally crafted items and am making an appeal to the readers of this newsletter. If anyone knows of local artists, crafts people or writers who have merchandise, please contact me. My home number is 433-3059, or I can be reached at the Museum 431-3225.

We presently have a nice collection of silver and beaded jewelry made by local crafts people. As the fall season arrives, I will be stacking the shelves with more items that will appeal to everyone for Christmas gifts. Come browse and find a gem.

Memorial Donations

In Memory of Eloise Liston:

Joseph & Margaret Otterson
Barbara G. Ashley
Reginald & Jan Ohlssen

In Memory of Edward J. Phillippe:

Jack & Doreen Zanzi

In Memory of Martha H. Willig:

Lois Doran
Elizabeth Schenck

In Memory of James L. McClish:

Bill & Bernice Auradou

In Memory of Rena Phillips:

Temple & June Smith

In Memory of James Mazzoni, Sr.:

Jack & Doreen Zanzi

In Memoriam

We regretfully acknowledge the following Society members who have passed away:

Rena Phillips

H.M.V.A. Report

Betsy Bippart, Volunteer Coordinator

HMVA (Healdsburg Museum Volunteer Association) is now entering its eighth month of existence as a support group for the Historical Society. We have continued all the previous volunteer work at the Museum and started several new programs. Top priority has been finding ways to raise money to keep the Museum going with minimal support from the city.

What's happened so far

The Madrona Inn Dinner was "Sold Out" this year. It was a wonderful celebration of enthusiasm and friendships. Our thanks to honored guests, June and Bob Jones, their family and many special friends. To Carol and John Muir, again thanks for inviting us to party at their inn. A place we all love to go.

With just two months to plan, Jim Fagan pulled off one terrific fund raiser at the "The Barn Sale." It's an "odds-on" certainty that we'll want to have this event again next year. There's not denying that the Healdsburg Historical Society members and their friends provided the greatest "Barnage" in 1994.

What's happening now

To all members: We, HMVA, are anxious to have you join us and take an active part in all the fun.

Volunteers working in the Museum are the large and ever faithful docent group; the on-going indexing & research group; the exhibit assistants, the computer and mailing committee, the training committee (reception and history), school and visitor tours, the computer experts, the hostesses for meetings and varied social occasions.

Outside the museum, members are building a speakers' bureau and a crafters' group. Collecting oral histories from long-time residents is one area that needs to be reactivated as soon as we can find the right

volunteer.

If you are inspired to join us, call Elizabeth Neal (431-8038) or me (433-9337). We have a perfect job for you.

And in the future

We will continue to promote the "Instant Wine Cellar" until Autumn Fest, September 25 and the moment of the big drawing.

The crafters' group has been working on various projects for a holiday boutique. The date is November 10. The place is Madrona Manor. Invitations/flyers will be sent in October.

"Instant Wine Cellar" halfway to colossal success

The "Instant Wine Cellar" had its premiere at the Barn Sale, June 4, and really thrilled all of us by bringing in \$450 the first day. Since then, our members have sold tickets at our "Stand" in the Plaza every Sunday during concerts and antique fairs, bringing in (what we love) "Foreign Money". Would you believe some from as far as Illinois? (He said he would have his wine shipped!)

At this date, twenty-five percent of our members have responded with cash or check and we are halfway to our goal with two months to go until the drawing on September 25 at Autumn Fest. It would be very much appreciated by the "Wine Cellar" committee if those of you who intend to buy tickets could do so soon.

There are tickets at the Museum desk that wait to be sold to you or your wine-loving friends and business contacts. At a distance? Call and we will mail them to you. You can really sell tickets in unexpected places if you have some with you.

Thanks to the generosity of 50 fine Sonoma wineries this fundraising project is very low on expense and has serious potential. Please, may we have your enthusiastic and continuing support.