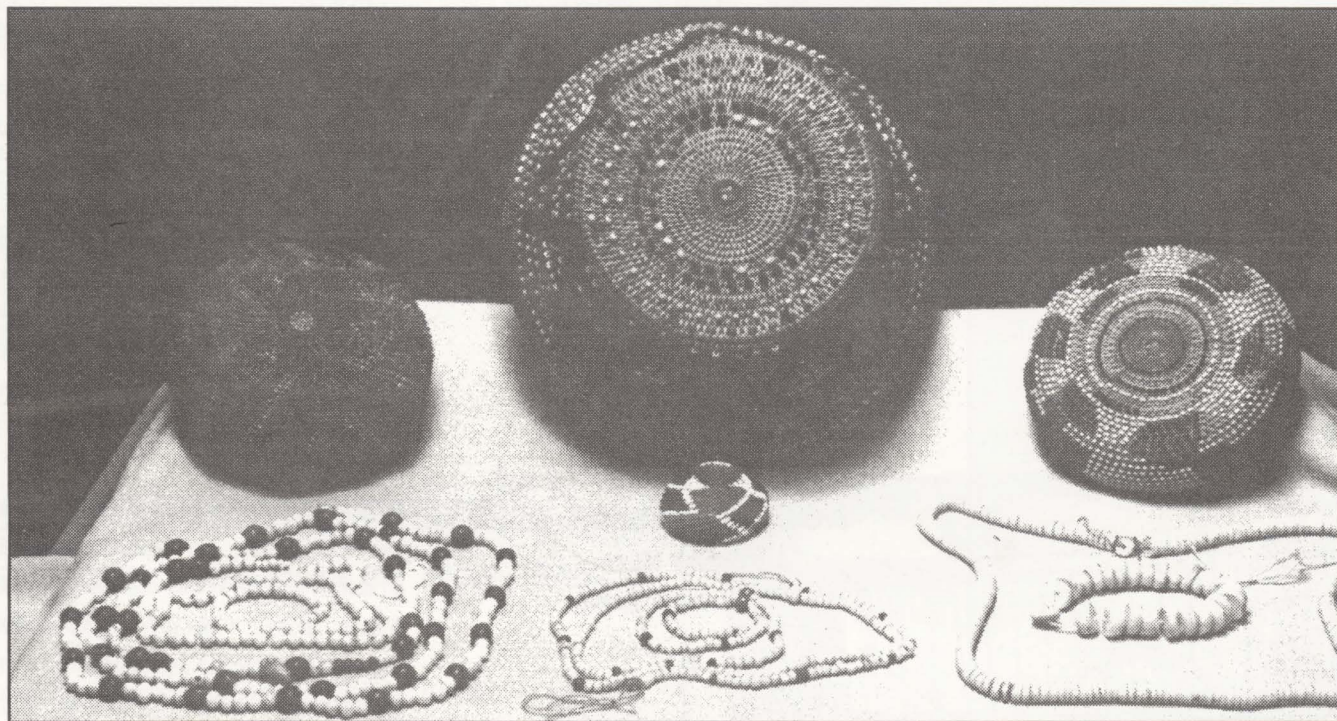




RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

FALL 1997 • ISSUE 58



Beaded Baskets

From Function to Aesthetics: The Development of the Commercial Market for Pomo Baskets, 1880 - 1940

Also In This Issue

- **Hides and Tallow: The Economic Realities of Rancho California**
- **The George Alexander House**
- **Keeping the Faith at St. John's Church**

An Official Publication of the

• **HEALDSBURG MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY** •



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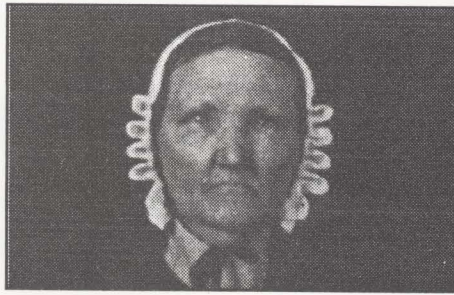
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In This Issue

Fall 1997

In this issue we continue with two subjects which we initiated in our last publication - historic homes that are now bed and breakfast inns and the churches of Healdsburg. June Maher Smith gives us a very interesting account of the George Alexander Home and assistant curator Holly Hoods delves into the rich history of the Catholic Church and specifically St. John's Parish.

Our very capable curator, Marie Djordjevich, tying in with the recent refurbishing of the Museum's permanent exhibit, writes about two very important subjects - the Pomo Baskets, how they were utilized and what they meant to the Pomo culture, and the economics of the vast Ranchos. Healdsburg was a part of the Sotoyome Rancho, originally owned by Captain Henry Fitch.

Rounding out this issue are two short articles - one on an artifact (an English Stoneware Bowl) on display and the history of Depression Glass by William Caldwell, a past president of the Museum and a retired educator and administrator. He is a collector of Depression Glass and part of his collection is on display in the West Gallery, the third in a series showcasing the mini-collections of local residents. Grant Canfield, the Museum's current president, also is featured in the Showcase Exhibit with his collection of classic and antique radios.

This is the sixth edition of the Russian River Recorder since I was appointed editor. It has been an exciting experience and I could not have accomplished the goal of publishing the RRR on a quarterly basis without the valuable help of Marie, June and Holly and the members of the board who gave us the encouragement and the challenge to do so. My thanks to them and also to Steve Perkins of Solo Press for his tremendous assistance.

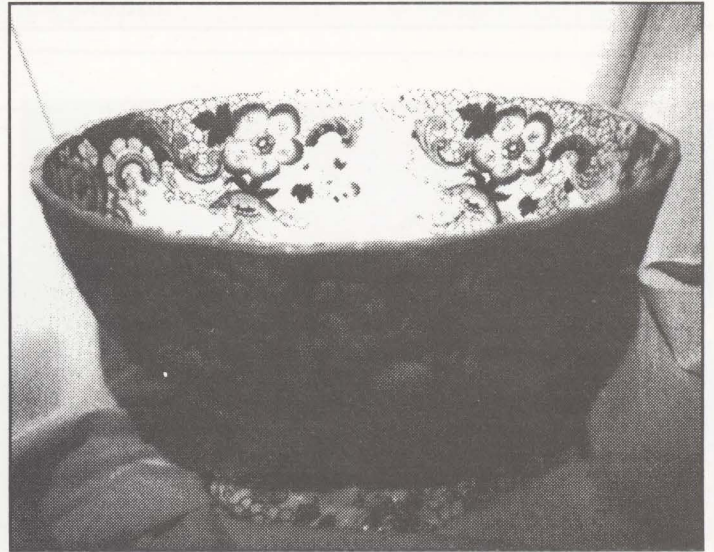
Arnold Santucci
Editor

Artifact

Bowl

*English stoneware
raised base, scalloped edge on top*

This English bowl belonged to Sarah Hendricks. It was carried seven times across the plains in a covered wagon, including four separate trips to California. In 1852 Hendricks, a widow, and her family drove a herd of 100 cattle from Missouri to Suisun Valley where they farmed the land for a year. They returned to Missouri and purchased more cattle before crossing the plains again. After only one year, the Hendricks returned to Missouri, this time by ship. In 1864, the Hendricks made their final journey across the plains, settling in Solano County. They lived there for eight years. In 1872 the Hendricks family moved to the Skaggs Springs area near Healdsburg. ♦



Bowl

Depression Glassware:

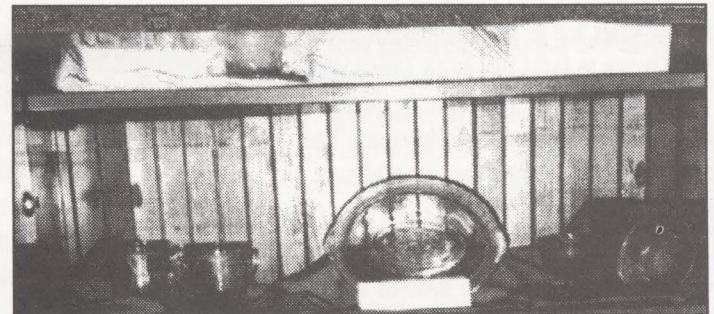
A Mini Exhibit That Reflects the 1920s-1940s.

by William Caldwell

(In the West Gallery's Mini-Collectors Exhibit, a part of an on-going program to display collections by members of the Museum and area residents, the newest exhibit features the Depression Glassware collection by William Caldwell, a retired educator/administrator and past president of the Museum's board, and antique and classic radios by Grant Canfield, the Museum's president. The showcase exhibit will be on display through November 8.)

Depression Glass is usually defined as the colored glassware made primarily during the Depression years in the colors of amber, blue, black, crystal green, pink, red, yellow and white. There are other colors and some glass made before, as well as after, this time. But primarily it was made from the 1920s through the 1930s and into the 1940s. It generally includes the inexpensively made dinnerware turned out by machine in quantity and sold through smaller stores or given away as promotional or premium items for other products of that time. Depression Glass was often packed in cereal boxes, flour sacks, laundry soap, or given as gifts at the local movie theatres, gasoline stations and grocery stores.

The Shirley Temple breakfast set included in this exhibit came packed in oatmeal boxes. The yellow Florentine pattern was won by



Glassware

Marny Caldwell's mother at a movie theatre in 1935. The green Georgian or "lovebird" pattern was collected almost exclusively here in Healdsburg since 1960 and a set of this pattern is housed at the Smithsonian.

The prices of Depression Glass have soared in recent years. A 44 piece set of dinnerware that sold for \$2.99 in 1937 is now worth \$400. A water pitcher that sold originally for 39 cents is now worth \$150.

Do you have some hidden treasures in your cupboard that you inherited from your mother or grandmother?

Samples of more than 40 different patterns and colors are on display. You may recognize a pattern that you own! ♦

The George Alexander House

Healdsburg's Historic Bed and Breakfast Inn

by June Maher Smith

(Healdsburg is the location of several well-known historic bed and breakfast inns. In this issue of the Russian River Recorder we are publishing the second of a series of articles about these gracious homes.)

The George Alexander House at 423 Matheson Street, one of Healdsburg's beautiful bed and breakfast inns, was built in 1905 for the son of Cyrus Alexander. Cyrus, of course, was the person for whom Alexander Valley was named. Cyrus and his wife Rufena had a family of ten children. George, who was born in 1869, was the youngest of these.

George Alexander grew up on the family ranch and in 1895 he built a home in town at 419 Tucker Street. Five years later he married Nellie Maud Sarginsson. They lived in the Tucker Street home for five years and in 1905 contracted with builder Will Chaney to build this lovely Queen Anne style home. The house is noted for its quatrefoil windows. When George and Nellie moved into their new home it was considered an ornament to the community - and it still is.

George was active in his home town. He was a director of the Healdsburg National Bank, a City Trustee, High School Trustee, and involved in agricultural affairs. In addition, he was interested in music and played in the Sotoyome Band. He was a member of the Masonic, Eastern Star, and Odd Fellows lodges and the Woodmen of the World.

George and Nellie had two children, a son who died in infancy and a daughter, Lucille. In 1923 the Alexanders sold their home to Wellman and Blanche Goddard and moved to the Oakland-Berkeley area so Lucille could attend the University of California and Mills College.

In 1929 the Alexanders returned to Healdsburg and George and Nellie once again built a lovely home - this one at 660 South Fitch Mountain Road. George died in this house in 1941 at the age of 72 and was buried in Oak Mound Cemetery. His wife predeceased him by several months.

The history of the house at 423 Matheson Street



George Alexander House

continues. In 1960 the Goddards' grandson, Robert Silzle, with his wife Jan and their family moved in. They enlarged the kitchen by removing the butler's pantry. They also added more than 30 electrical wall outlets - as was typical of older homes, each room had only one outlet - and updated the closets, replacing clothes hooks with rods.

In 1968 the Silzles sold to Sally and Harold Nordmeyer. They installed wall-to-wall carpeting, a new furnace, and a stereo system. They reopened the fireplace throats which had been sealed by Mr. Goddard and converted the wood room on the back porch to a bedroom.

The Nordmeyers sold the home to Miquel and Dorene Mojica in the mid 1980s. The Mojicas removed the wall-to-wall carpeting, refinished the wooden floors, and made minor changes to the interior. They also built a three-car garage and apartment at the back of the lot and gave the house its colorful exterior paint.

In 1991 Christian and Phyllis Baldenhofer purchased this historic home and converted it to the attractive bed and breakfast inn you see today. Phyllis saw the possibilities and carried through her ideas so that each of the four luxurious bed-

rooms has its own formal dining room. Several large shade trees shade the outside of the house and a rose-covered arbor provides a quiet and relaxing sitting area.

Even though changes have been made throughout the years, the floor plan of the home is much the same as when the Alexanders moved in. The Baldenhofers are to be congratulated for updating the house while maintaining its original charm. They are, however, now ready to move on to other projects and this historic home is for sale once again. ♦

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Pomo Baskets

From Function to Aesthetics: The Development of the Commercial Market for Pomo Baskets, 1840-1940

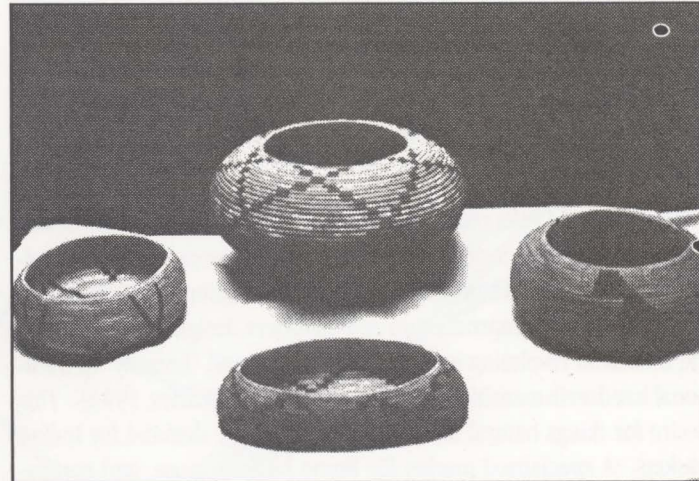
by Marie Djordjevich, curator

The Pomo are acknowledged as being weavers of some of the most beautiful and complex baskets in the world, baskets "recognized for their beauty, quality of construction, elaborate designs, and sumptuous ornamentation of beads and feathers" (Ortiz, 1996). Both aesthetics and function determine the finished product's materials, design and used technique.

Unlike many other basket making people, the Pomo used both major basket weaving techniques - twining and coiling. Twining consists of a finger weaving technique in which two or three horizontal strands (weft) are maneuvered around a vertical base of plant shoots (warp). Coiling involves the use of a tapered awl to pierce a hole between or through the rods (either a single rod or a combination of three rods) of the basket's foundation (warp). A sewing strand (weft) is then pulled through the hole. The coiling usually spirals in a clockwise direction, from right to left.

Because the Pomo used different techniques in their basket making, there was an incredible amount of diversity among the finished baskets. Many different shapes emerged, including cones, ellipses, spheres and basins (Ortiz, 1996). A variety of both simple and complex color designs can be found, including that of a single color - red, dark brown or black - against a tan background; or a diversity of color and intricate designs (Ortiz, 1996).

Basket materials included willow and redbud shoots, sedge and bulrush roots. Not only did the Pomo gather the material for basket making, but they cared for and managed plant gathering areas. They carried out such tasks as pruning (willow), weeding and thinning (sedge), and burning (redbud). Collecting sites were rotated to allow for new plant growth. This care and management insured both the quality of the material, and the proliferation of plants in the gathering area.

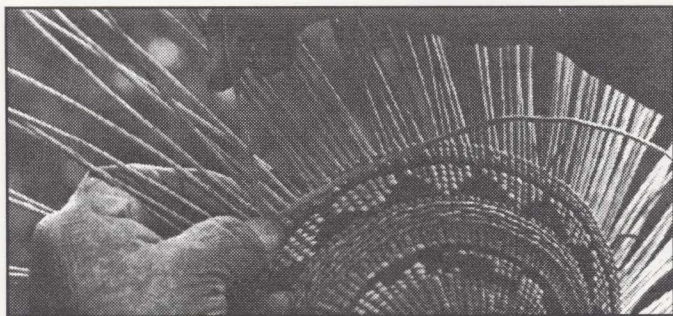


Gift and trade baskets, Healdsburg Museum Collection

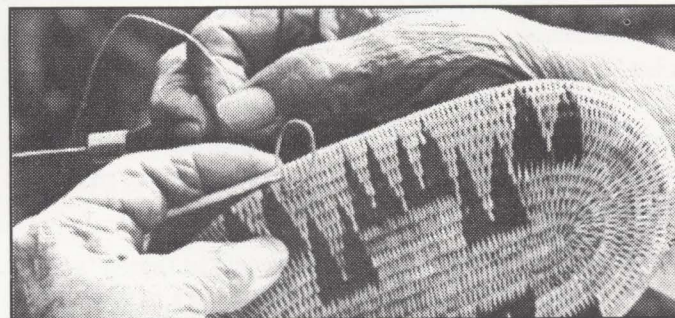
There is much preparation that goes into the making of a basket after the materials are collected. Materials are stored - or cured - to allow for water evaporation. The gathered materials are then prepared: sedge is split and stripped of bark; foundation rods are also stripped and scraped evenly; split material is soaked until flexible, and then cut to the same width and thickness; some material may be dyed a certain color. The preparation phase takes time, and "many weavers consider this painstaking work to be the hardest part of making a basket" (Ortiz, 1996).

Both men and women made baskets. Men generally wove twined, openwork, simpler baskets. Women wove the more technically complex, finer, decorated baskets. The Pomo used their baskets to fulfill a variety of utilitarian needs. Women used them to gather, process, cook, serve and store foods. Men trapped fish, birds, and other ani-

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Weaver Laura Somersal demonstrates twining



Weaver Laura Somersal demonstrates coiling

mals using their baskets. Baskets were constructed and used for carrying firewood, and for carrying babies. Some baskets were made as gifts to mark special occasions, such as weddings and funerals. Others were used in healing practices, ceremonies and the redistribution of wealth. These gift and trade baskets were smaller in size, usually coiled, and intricately designed.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century Pomo basket making went in a new direction. In the 1880s a commercial market developed for Pomo baskets, and the demand for these types of baskets - which reached its highest point in 1910 - lasted until the 1930s. The development of this market was tied to the Arts and Crafts movement (Smith-Ferri, 1996). This new market had implications for both the perception of the baskets themselves, and for the women weaving them.

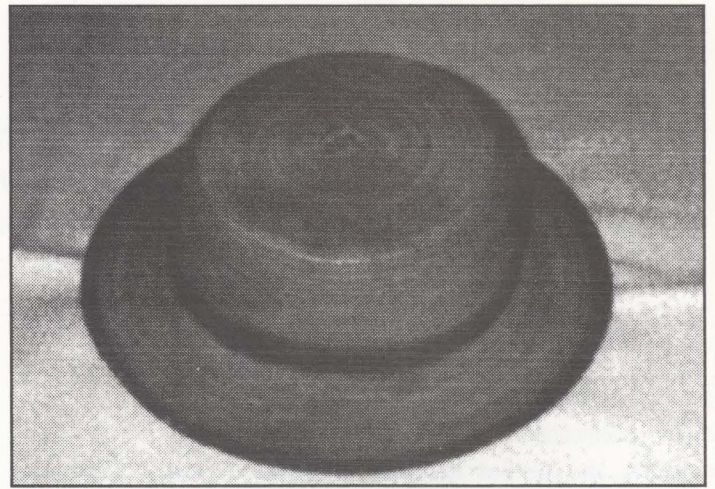
The Arts and Crafts movement started in England in the 1880s, and was picked up in America by the 1890s. This movement was an intellectual reaction to urbanization and industrialization. The movement "rejected the mass reproduction and mediocre design associated with the Industrial revolution in favor of the beauty and "honesty" of traditional handcraftsmanship and natural materials" (Carley, 1994). This desire for things natural led to an increase in the demand for Indian baskets. A specialized market for Pomo baskets arose, and companies were developed to market these baskets. By 1889 the railroad linked San Francisco to Ukiah, so there was a way for buyers - collectors and dealers - to get to the makers.

The commercial market for baskets produced changes in the way baskets were made, used and viewed. For Native American women, making and selling baskets for the commercial market was an appealing alternative to the mostly low paying laborer jobs that were available to them (Ortiz, 1996). Additionally, it was easier to combine child care with this type of work, as well as it offered an opportunity for women to work in groups (Smith-Ferri, 1996). By the time the commercial basket market developed, manufactured goods had replaced the functional basket. Because of this there was not a large native demand for baskets, but rather a non-native one. Aesthetics replaced function, and "this style of work may best be termed *art baskets*" (Ortiz, 1996).

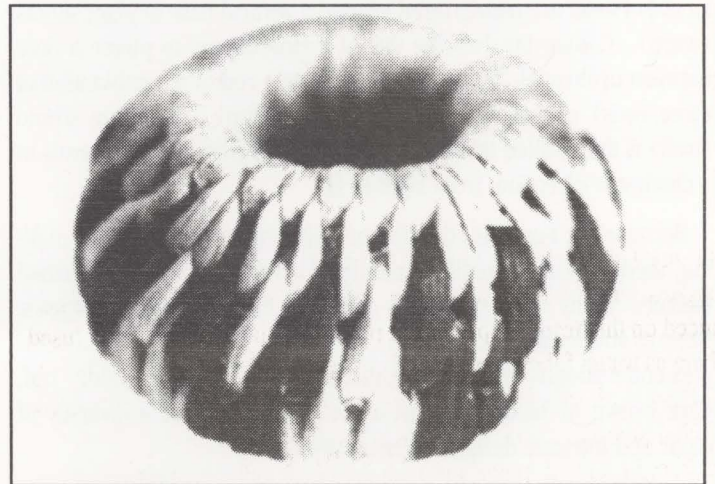
The baskets made for the commercial market differed in construction and appearance from traditional baskets. More coiled baskets were being made, and there was an increase in ornamentation: for instance, clamshell beads were woven into the design; fully feathered baskets (using woodpecker (red), meadowlark (yellow), blue jay (blue), mallard (green) and quail topknot (black)) were popular. There was an introduction of new materials, like glass trade beads, into the making of baskets - "they wove tiny, multicolored glass beads across the entire surface of their baskets" (Ortiz, 1996).

The baskets developed during this time could be termed "novelty" baskets. New untraditional shapes emerged, such as goblets and plaques, and those of human forms and items like hats. Size also emerged as a differentiating factor. Most commercial baskets are termed 'miniature' baskets, being smaller than the functional baskets, and more along the lines of Pomo gift and trade baskets. However, as

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Novelty basket, hat shaped



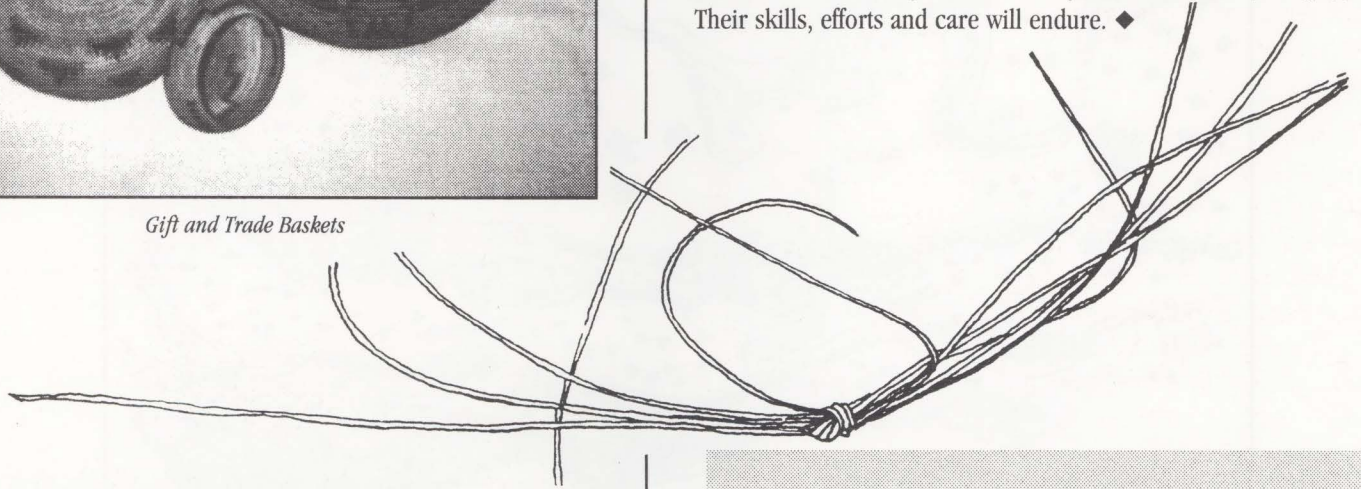
Microminiature basket, 1/4" diameter, "sunfish rib" design



Fully feathered basket



Gift and Trade Baskets



Today there are basket weavers who have learned their skills from Pomo elders, and they carry on the traditions and skills of weaving. This new generation of basket weavers struggle with difficulties that hamper their activities. Access to materials is tough - many traditional sites have been destroyed, and many are restricted private property. Many sites are contaminated with waste or pesticides. Basket makers have fought back against these barriers in various ways. For instance, some have participated in the transplanting of materials; others lobby for pesticide restrictions. In spite of the complications "those who continue to weave have the patience, skill and determination to carry Pomo basketry into the future" (Ortiz, 1996). Their skills, efforts and care will endure. ♦

the market developed, weavers began making smaller and smaller baskets. These 'microminiature' baskets - some that could be balanced on the head of a pin - were popular with the buyers, who "used them as watch fobs, charms, and conversation pieces" (Ortiz, 1996), and are indicative of "astounding achievements which only the most skilled weaver could master" (Smith-Ferri, 1995). Certain basket makers became popular and famous individually like they never had before (Smith-Ferri, 1996). Weavers, encouraged by the collectors, competed in contests (Benson, 1986) and began to use finer and finer stitches (Ortiz, 1996), which would be then counted by the collectors.

Though the trend towards smaller baskets was forefront, an attempt at gigantic baskets was also made. Weaver Mary Smith began a huge basket for the 1916 Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. Before she could finish this basket she died; however, a group of eleven women - with one gathering materials, and ten working on the weaving - finished it. The basket measures four feet wide by eighteen inches tall, and is the largest existing Pomo basket (Ortiz, 1996).

The commercial market for baskets finally crashed in the 1930s, largely due to the Depression. With less commercial demand and more occupational options available to native women, there were less weavers, and as a result, the tradition of basket weaving began to wane. However, there were still Pomo women that were weaving for themselves - for use around the house, gifts, and personal gratification (Smith-Ferri, 1996). The skills were ultimately passed on to the next generations.

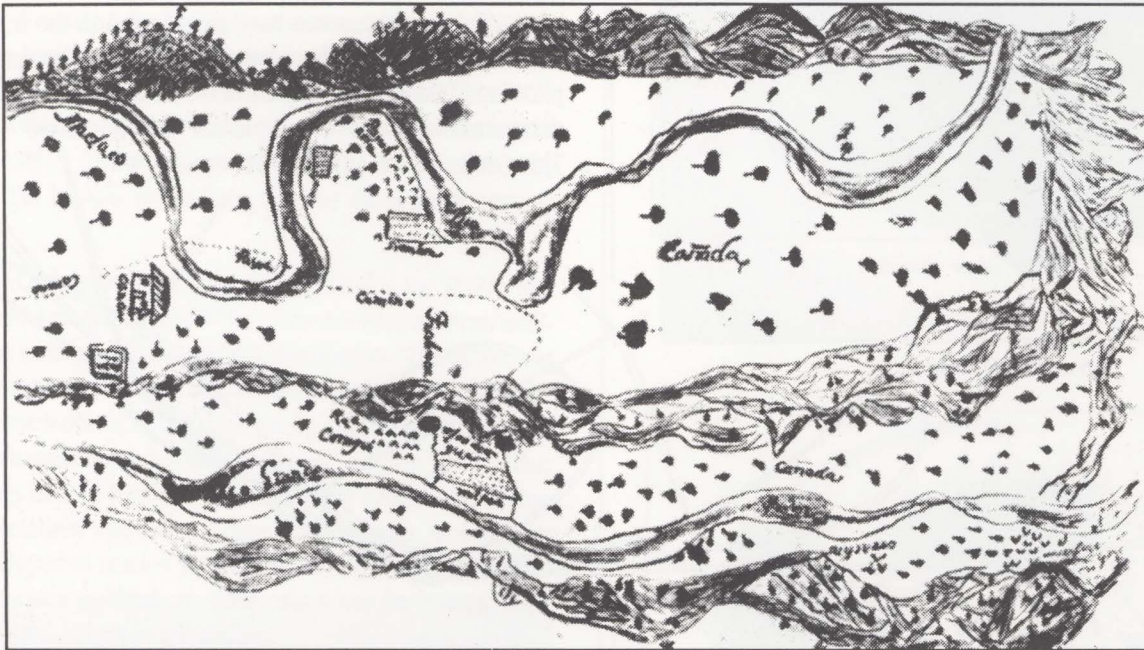
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Hides and Tallow

The Economic Realities of Rancho California

by Marie Djordjevic



The *diseno* of the Rancho Tzabaco (present day Dry Creek Valley), granted to 14 year old Jose German Pina in 1843

In 1769 Spanish explorers arrived in lower California and proceeded to expand their colonial empire. Under a three-part expansionist plan - missions, presidios, pueblos - the Spanish advanced up the Pacific coast. The place we now call Sonoma County once formed the northern frontier of the Spanish colonial empire in the Americas. In 1822 the Spanish flag yielded to the Mexican in Monterey, California's capital city. With Mexican independence, life in California changed, both in land policies and economics.

Land Grants

The Mexican land grant policy was basically a continuation of the Spanish one with one important difference. The Spanish monarchs mainly issued grants for presidios, pueblos and missions. Only about twenty individual grants were made during the Spanish period, most likely because the missions had taken the best available grazing land, and also because settlers were not comfortable away from the proximity of the presidios or pueblos.

When Mexico won control of California, the granting of land continued; however, the policy was liberalized, and included the secularization of the mission lands, which made available acres and acres of prime grazing land. Between the years of 1833 and 1846 Mexico's governors dealt with over five hundred land grant applications, "with neither the territorial nor the Mexican government receiving any form of payment. Grantees were required only to build a house, settle on the land, and stock it with cattle" (Monroy, 1990).

Any person wanting a land grant first carried out a boundary survey of the land - done on horseback - then petitioned the governor, stating his name, age, country/proof of Mexican citizenship, the quantity and description of the land. A map, or *diseno*, had to be included. The governor notated the petition and sent it to the local *alcade* or *ayuntamiento* (official) of the district to examine the land to see if it was vacant. His affirmative reply was called the *informe*. The documents were given to the provincial secretary of state who made an official copy and a *borador* (blotter copy). The original papers were returned to the grantee, and copies of the petition, *informe*, *diseno*, and *borador* were collected and attached to form one document constituting the evidence of title - the *expiente* - which was filed in the archives. The Territorial Deputation or Departmental Assembly had to approve the grant, but in most cases this was routine.

A naturalized citizen had the same rights in regard to land as a native citizen. Becoming a Mexican citizen was a way for many prominent foreigners to achieve land ownership. There were many possible reasons why foreigners would settle permanently in California, including climate, the love of a California woman, the possibility of making a fortune, or any combination of these. These men often settled in towns, established a degree of social standing, married California women, became naturalized citizens, were granted land, and ultimately controlled a large segment of California's economy (Miller, 1972).

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Of Economic Importance

With the advent of Mexican independence from Spain, California's economic climate changed. While the Spanish had discouraged foreign contact, the Mexicans relaxed trade regulations. As a result, a flourishing trade was established with the Californians. Ships from America, England, Mexico and South America exchanged native and European goods for hides, tallow and other California products. The Americans and the Britains were extremely interested in trade with California because "the hides were especially desired for their use in the manufacture of shoes and boots. The Californians in return, eagerly sought the items of necessity and luxury of which they had been deprived or denied for so long" (Miller, 1972). These desired items included cloth, iron spoons, pots and dishes, gold and silver lace, silver spurs, tortoise shell combs, books and encyclopedias (Miller, 1972). Because of the trading established, throughout California's Mexican period the primary economic activity was cattle raising, and the main products exported were hides and tallow.

Because of the economic importance of hides and tallow, the main reason for a rancho was the cattle; therefore, life on the ranchos revolved around the livestock. A league of land could support one thousand head of cattle. After three years, with normal increase among the herd, three hundred head could be slaughtered for their hides and tallow. The annual slaughtering of cattle for the hides and tallow, the *matanza*, was one of the most important annual events on the California rancho. The *matanza* usually happened in September. The cattle herd was driven into a corral and specific ones were chosen for slaughter. After the hides were stripped from the carcasses and staked on the ground to dry, the fat was cut off, gathered into large piles, and beaten on by men with clubs. The beaten fat was then heated over a fire in large cooking kettles until liquefied. The tallow was poured into skin bags called *botas*.

It has been estimated that up to five hundred thousand hides were shipped out of California from 1835 to 1846 (Miller, 1972). Not only were the hides and tallow from cattle important to the currency of Mexican California, but rancheros often used cattle as a replacement for cash, bartering them for other goods, or using them to pay wages.

The End of the Rancho Era

Ironically, the flourishing California trade market was to be a player in the end of the rancho era. Because of the expanding hide and tallow trade, there was an influx of foreigners into California after 1841. The economic potential drew them, and the results prompted them to settle. Through their trading activities, they ended up controlling California's economy, and "the resident American merchants forced a slow but steady movement toward making California a part of the United States" (Miller, 1972).

Two events in the 1840s altered the California way of life. The first was a war between Mexico and the United States, which began in 1846, and ended in 1848 with California in the hands of the United States. The other was the discovery of gold in 1848, which brought a large influx of people looking to make their fortunes.



Henry Delano Fitch, owner of the Sotoyome Rancho (Healdsburg area). His primary occupation was that of merchant

Although the United States government was bound by treaty to honor the old grants as part of the negotiated settlement of the war with Mexico, many Americans - needing land to settle on - charged that these grants were fraudulent. On March 3, 1851 a land commission board was appointed to investigate the claims of all Mexican grant holders in California. The commission proceeded from the assumption that all titles were invalid until proven otherwise. Each claimant was required to present documents and other evidence in order to validate the title. The General Land Office would issue patents on approved titles, but these could be held up if an opposing action was filed. This complex legal process went on for years, and brought financial ruin to many grantees, who often had to sell land or cattle to pay for legal fees.

The rancho era, and therefore the hide and tallow trade, was over. The gold rush brought in a huge influx of people looking to make their fortunes, and resulted in new economic endeavors. People began to build towns, and also began to cultivate the land for agricultural purposes. By the time California was admitted to the union on September 9, 1850, it was moving rapidly away from its rancho past. ♦

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Keeping the Faith at St. John's Church

by Holly Hoods

Roots of Catholicism in Healdsburg

The Catholic Church has been active in California since 1769, when Spanish missionaries and soldiers established the first mission church in San Diego. Catholicism first reached Sonoma County in 1823, when Mission San Francisco Solano de Sonoma became the last link in Spain's collapsing chain of 21 Catholic missions.

When Healdsburg was officially laid out as a town by Harmon Heald in 1857, it came under the care of the Assumption parish in Tomales. Healdsburg's population that year numbered only 300. Three years later, the Healdsburg Catholic community--a handful of families, mostly Irish--had their first religious services in the home of the Mulgrew family on West Street (now "Healdsburg Avenue"). Until 1873, Healdsburg Catholics had no church. Father Burchard from the Tomales parish visited once a month. To promote the success of his town, Harmon Heald had donated a lot for a central plaza and lots for a school, cemetery, and churches. Social and economic support for erecting a Catholic Church in the community grew gradually. In April 1869, a writer to the Russian River Flag penned a rousing call to the patriotic citizens of Healdsburg to help build a Catholic Church, for the good of the town and the good of the state. The pro-growth, California "boosterism" and anti-Chinese sentiments of the writer well illustrate the prevailing outlook shared by most Californians in the late 1800s:

California needs immigration; Healdsburg needs immigration! We want Irishmen; we want French, Germans, Swiss, or any other manner of man (but Chinamen) that will pull his coat off and go to work. . . Let us stand with open arms to welcome those whose wealth and prosperity will be ours, who will aid to till the farms and build our houses, and help make Healdsburg what it deserves to be, and turn the wild hills around into smiling fields of vines and fig trees. So let us bid for



First Communion at St. John's Church, 1932

and encourage that most useful class of citizens, the industrious Catholics, as well as all others, to make their homes among us, by helping to erect their houses of worship.

Building a Parish

It was not until 1873, however, that the first church in Healdsburg was erected by and for "that most useful class of citizens." That fall, on November 3rd, a Romanesque, double-spired church was dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and opened as a house of worship. It was built to hold about 100 people, and fronted Matheson Street (then called "South") at East Street. At this time St. John's was still a mission of the Tomales parish, without a pastor of its own. Four years later, St. John the Baptist Church became a mission of the newly-created St. Rose de Lima parish, centered in Santa Rosa, whose boundaries also included Sebastopol and Guerneville.

The next major event in the life of St. John's Church occurred in 1884, eleven years later. The Most Rev. Joseph Sadoc Alemany, first Archbishop of San Francisco, promoted St. John's to the status of "parish." Local Catholics rejoiced. Centered in Healdsburg, the boundaries of the new parish extended south to Mark West Creek to about 15 miles north of Cloverdale. Father Patrick O'Connell was hired as St. John the Baptist's first pastor. In March 1885, Joseph Simi and Nicolette Casassa became the first couple to be married at St. John's. The Healdsburg air rang with celebration when the parish proudly added a

950-pound bell to their church in 1891.

Father John Meiler followed Fr. O'Connell as pastor in 1885, and built the first rectory. This rectory housed a succession of 12 pastors until it was replaced by the present building in 1959. St. John's Church membership grew steadily during Fr. Meiler's 20-year term, as it did in Catholic churches throughout California and the rest of the United States. Between 1860 and 1900, the total Catholic population of the U.S. increased from 3 million to over 12 million.

After Fr. Meiler resigned in 1905 due to poor health, Fr. Maurice Barry took over as pastor of St. John's. It became his goal to raise funds to build a new church to serve the needs of the growing parish. The second St. John's Church was begun in September of 1907, and completed in 1910, during Fr. Barry's 13-year tenure. The new church held nearly 300 people, and was oriented facing East Street, on Matheson, in the same location as the present church. Smith O'Brien, a Santa Rosa architect, designed the building and Frank Sullivan built it at a cost of \$12,500. This church served the parishioners for more than 50 years. In 1955, the building was remodeled at a cost of \$20,000. Eleven new stained-glass windows were installed, donated by parish families.

Founding a School

Ever since the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884, Catholic parents in the United States had been urged to send their

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children, if at all possible, to Catholic schools. At the same time priests had been ordered to build at least one elementary school per parish. In 1934, Father Leo Coghlan and the Healdsburg parish bought the gymnasium of the Healdsburg Elementary School on Fitch Street. This building became the parish hall, and was soon used to hold religious education classes. In 1936, sisters from the Holy Family order arrived to teach a religious summer school to the youth of St. John's parish. They returned to Healdsburg to teach catechism classes every summer for the next eleven years. Mae Schwab worked with the sisters as the parish's first lay catechist.

Father Michael Galvin became pastor of St. John's in 1946. He found several members of the parish--particularly Francis Passalacqua--enthusiastic about establishing a parochial school in Healdsburg. In 1949, Fr. Galvin obtained permission from Archbishop John J. Mitty to buy property for a school. Fortunately, one half of the elementary school parcel at Fitch and Tucker was available for sale. The parish already owned the other half of the parcel, bought in 1934 when Fr. Coghlan purchased the auditorium.

Archbishop Mitty told Fr. Galvin and Mr. Passalacqua that he would not give the necessary permission to open the school, however, unless they had at least 85 families committed to enroll in it. A few weeks later, Fr. Galvin and Mr. Passalacqua held sign-ups for the potential school. They were dismayed to register only 35 definite commitments from parish families. They returned to the Archbishop, saying, "We haven't got the full 85, but we're pretty close." Despite his earlier stance, the Archbishop approved the school without the guarantee of full enrollment. He even arranged for six nuns to come to Healdsburg from Ireland to staff the new school.

The sisters who came to Healdsburg were members of the order Sisters of the Holy Infant Jesus, headed by the Reverend Mother St. Thomas Aquinas. Founded in 1622, the Mother House of their order was based in Paris. The sisters came from the Drishane Convent in County Cork, Ireland, and moved into a large Transitional Queen Anne house at 321 Haydon Street. Today this house is the

Haydon Street Inn.

When St. John's School opened on September 18, 1950, five sisters taught grades 1-6 to a student body of 87. The school's first graduating class included: Beverly Chiapuzzo, Phillip Conran, Barbara Coffey, Dave Dale, Linda Dutton, Louise Heck, Don McNulty, Thomas Passalacqua, Noel Smith, and Dennis Tillotson. The school grew to provide education for 320 students, grades pre-kindergarten through 8th. The sisters dedicated their service to the children of the parish for over 30 years.

When the nuns left Healdsburg in the early 1980s, it was a tumultuous time for the parish. At first, no one could conceive of a school without sisters. Despite the initial upheaval, the school did recover from the loss of the sisters, and has again achieved full enrollment. Father Thomas Devereaux, St. John's pastor since 1989, particularly attributes the renewed success of St. John's school to the efforts of Sandie and Bob Blasser, the principal and assistant principal. Today the fully accredited school has a staff of 30 and a projected yearly budget of \$845,000. Rosemary Woodruff is Director of Religious Education. The school is supported by tuition, fundraising, and some contributions from the parish. There are presently several grades with waiting lists.

The Changing Face of the Catholic Church

Some of the most radical changes in American culture, the larger Catholic Church, and the Healdsburg Catholic church took place during the 1960s. The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) brought sweeping reforms to the American Catholic Church. The most profound transformation was the difference in attitude. Some church discipline was relaxed, and the roles of pastor, parish, and lay person were expanded. Catholic involvement in the life of the larger community was encouraged, as well as greater lay involvement in the life of the parish. Closer ties with other denominations and with Jews were promoted. The liturgy was revised and Masses were translated from Latin into the language of the parish: English, in the case of Healdsburg. The changes were difficult for many traditional Catholics to accept. In some areas of the country, unrest and decline over-

shadowed the religious renewal intended by the Vatican Council. In the Healdsburg parish, some grumbled at signs of modernization, but the majority accepted or welcomed the changes.

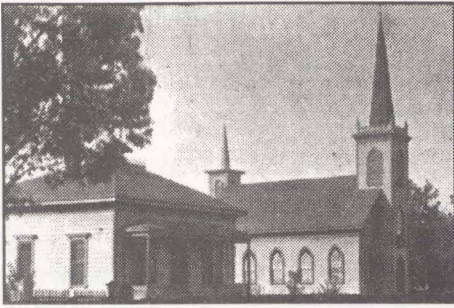
Despite the renovation of the second church in 1954, it was clear by 1960 that St. John's had again outgrown its facilities. The church offered five Masses a day on Sundays, but still could not seat everyone. In 1963, Father Arthur Adamski secured permission from the Rev. Leo T. Maher, bishop of Santa Rosa, to build a big, new church: the third and present St. John's Church building. According to an interview with the Healdsburg Tribune, Fr. Adamski's goal was to erect an 800-seat church that would not only reflect, but encourage worship. "We don't want to build a box," he declared. The church was completed and opened for worship in 1965. Today St. John the Baptist is one of 43 parishes in the diocese, which includes Sonoma, Napa, Mendocino, Lake, Humboldt, and Del Norte counties. With a seating capacity of 1,000, St. John's is the second-largest church in the diocese.

St. John's Church Today

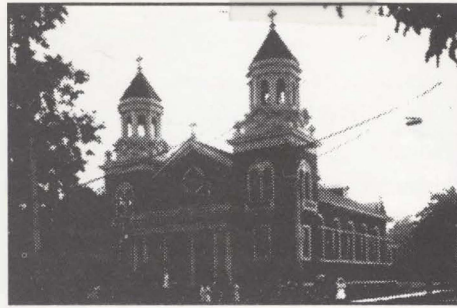
In response to the growth of the local Hispanic population, St. John the Baptist Church added a noon Mass in Spanish during the 1970s. This addition was in keeping with the Second Vatican Council's order to offer Mass in the language of the parish. In St. John's case, there were two dominant languages. The parish presently includes about 1,400 English-speaking families and 600-800 Spanish-speaking families. Despite their shared faith, the different languages do create a barrier: the two groups essentially function as two parishes. The English-speaking parish is served by Pastor Thomas Devereaux, with the assistance of Youth Minister Jonathan Jones. Associate Pastor Jose Gonzalez takes care of the Hispanic parishioners, with the assistance of Youth Minister Antonio Valencia.

There are a number of active organizations at St. John's. Besides the English and Spanish-speaking youth groups, parish organizations include: the Italian-Catholic Federation, the Young Ladies Institute, the Knights of Columbus, the Altar Society, the Spanish choir

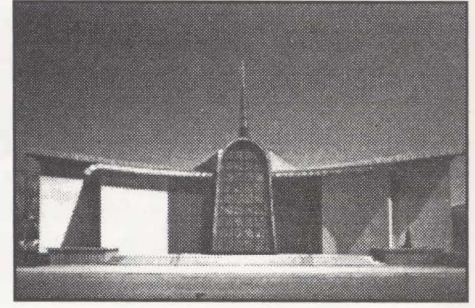
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The original church building



Second building, built in 1909



Present day building, 1967

and folk group, the Children's Choir, the Finance Committee, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Parents' Guild, and the Dad's Club. Fr. Devereaux, one of the founders of the Faith-Based Community Organizing Project, is especially proud of the \$20 million worth of affordable housing that this group has erected in town and the nearly \$80 million worth of affordable housing it has created in the county to benefit the working poor. In conjunction with other local churches (Healdsburg Shared Ministries), St. John's also operates a food pantry. The same building houses St. John's Used Treasures store. The goal is to provide direct help to the poor in ways that preserve their dignity.

Under the direction of Bishop G. Patrick Ziemann, the present emphasis of the diocese is the revitalization of the Catholic faith. St.

John's admits 4-12 people a year to the Catholic church through a process known as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.). Along with 40 other parishes in the diocese, St. John's is participating in a program called "Renew." Renew is designed to promote personal growth, spiritual development and clarification, while offering an opportunity for members to experience community and parish in a brand new way, according to Fr. Devereaux. He views the program as a chance for folks who have been away from the practice of their faith to "gently find their way back in." To the pastors of St. John the Baptist parish, the people are the church. ♦

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