



RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

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Early Photography in Healdsburg at the Turn of the 20th Century

by Marie Shobe

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RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

*The Official Publication of the Healdsburg
Museum and Historical Society*

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IN THIS ISSUE

In this final issue of the year 2002 we cover the gamut from historic buildings, to photography, to a motor trip up Fitch Mountain, an oral history with one of our community leaders and the recollection of a choir boy's days spent in summer camp at the Bishop's Ranch.

June Maher Smith recounts the fascinating history of the building now being lovingly restored by its owner, Eric Ziedrich, located at 420 Hudson Street. The transformation has been tremendous for this structure which has served many owners and tenants over the years - from a winery to a cannery to a storage unit.

Our curator, Marie Shobe, has researched the history of photography and in her well written featured article brings to life what photography in early 20th century meant to Healdsburg and how the profession evolved.

Charlotte Anderson, Healdsburg Museum Volunteer Association president, in her article about "The Road to the Top of Fitch Mountain" asks about the whereabouts of an historical artifact pertaining to the first motor trip up Fitch Mountain Road. From time to time Charlotte has contributed to the RRR, always coming up with some very interesting historical side bars.

Milt Brandt, an outstanding community leader, is the subject of our oral history article for this

issue. Edited by our Research Curator Holly Hoods, the article reveals how Milt overcame adversity, became a very successful insurance agent and, despite his handicap due to polio contracted while he was in his early thirties, took on the task of seeing that the Warm Springs Dam was constructed in spite of the many blocks that were tossed in his way. The Visitor's Center was dedicated to him (named the Milt Brandt Center) for his untiring efforts to bring the Warm Spring Dam/Lake Sonoma project to completion. He will be the recipient in March of the Healdsburg Museum's History Lives/Pioneer Award. And much deserved.

Our newest contributing writer, Stephen Cohen, former educator and now a financial consultant, of Santa Rosa, read the article about the Bishop's Ranch in the summer edition of the *Russian River Recorder* prompting him to write about the summer days he spent at the Bishop's Ranch as a choir boy of San Francisco's Grace Cathedral. It's a nostalgic recalling of a special time in his life. Welcome, Steve, to the pages of the RRR.

The staff of the *Russian River Recorder* wishes you a very Happy and Healthy New Year.

Arnold Santucci

Editor

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HISTORIC



BUILDING

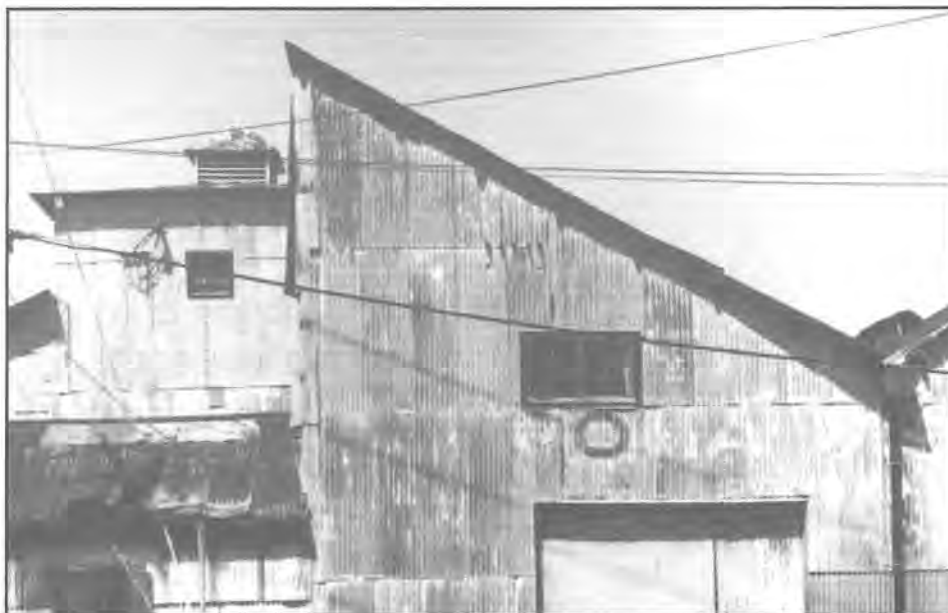
420 HUDSON STREET: AN HISTORIC BUILDING

by June Maher Smith

420 Hudson Street

The old building that stood for so many years on the southwest corner of Front and Hudson Streets, with the painted name "Roma Wine Co." barely visible, has been transformed into an elegant new structure by owner Eric Ziedrich. This metamorphosis maintained the original lines of the old winery/cannery/storage building and at the same time gave it a fresh new look.

The recorded history of this old corrugated iron and brick building starts just before the 20th century when the 1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the California Cream of Tartar Co. at the site with settling tanks in another building across Front Street bordering the river. The American Concentrated Must Co.'s smaller storage buildings were just to the south of the cream of tartar building and the railroad spur track ran in between them and across Front Street. The *Healdsburg Enterprise* reported in December of 1903 that the French-American Wine Company had purchased the building and was going to build an addition. A. DeHay was president of the company and Georges de LaTour, and others from the French colony at Icaria, were involved in this venture. A few months later the company added a large amount of storage space to the original building. In 1906 the French-American Wine Co. was charged with polluting the waters of the Russian River with pomace and paid a \$250 fine. Also in 1906 their ad in the *Pacific Wine & Spirit Review* tells us they had cellars and vineyards at Icaria, Healdsburg, Cloverdale and Madrone in Sonoma County and at Rutherford and St. Helena in Napa County.



*420 Hudson Street Building, Robert Conover, Photographer.
Courtesy of Sonoma County Wine Library*

This winery was dismantled before Prohibition and the building was taken over by Passarino Bros. Cannery. In 1923 the cannery won a world gold medal for "canning excellence." After the repeal of Prohibition, the building again housed a winery—the Prima Vista Winery.

In 1933 Aaron Jaffe, president of the Prima Vista Wine Co., announced that a distillery and sherry making plant would be built just south of the winery building and just north of the railroad track. In addition, they would build a four-room office building with a laboratory and living quarters for a

full-time chemist. The chemist who was hired was Ben Cummings, a Healdsburg native who had graduated from UC Berkeley in 1932. He started work in 1934 and brought the old winery building up to speed. They made fortified wines—port, sherry, muscatel, angelica and tokay. All the wine was shipped to San Francisco to be bottled. Other Healdsburg men who worked at Prima Vista Winery were Sam Passarino, Elwood Heitz and Gene Ricci.

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The next owners of the property were Lawrence Rosasco and his sister Louise. They leased space to the Roma Wine Co., which by 1940 operated wineries not only in Healdsburg but also in Lodi, Fresno and San Francisco. The Roma Wine Co. was originally started by Martino Scatena in Healdsburg back in 1890. It was sold about 1915 to the Cella Wine Co. in Lodi. The Cella brothers guided its growth and by 1940 Roma Wine Company was the largest independent winery in the world.

The Healdsburg Roma Winery was winding down in 1946. The September 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map notes that the winery was "not in operation." In 1951 the property was sold to James Cuneo. The buildings included the large main plant, the smaller brandy storage building to the south and the distillery across Front Street on the river bank. The railroad spur track still ran between the two buildings and crossed Front Street to reach the distillery. Also about this time Abele Ferrari bought and removed all the tanks and other winery equipment. Jack Soracco remembers working to remove the cement piers, which had supported the tanks, from the building and dumping them on the river bank to stabilize it.

The large old building contained nine separate spaces which were rented to many diverse tenants during its later years. Among these were Denny Logging Co.; Al Hurst's paper board manufacturing company; Dr. Mollett's prune processing company; Harold Hanks, who took over the prune processing and added a garlic processing operation; Gary Finnin's business office; and several others. In addition, spaces were used for truck repair and storage, farm equipment storage, ski boat storage, wine barrel manufacturing and repair, and producing olive containers. Shoeffitt Gourmet Seasonings stayed the longest, renting its space for 28 years.

The 3200 square foot smaller building, which now houses the Sapphire Hill Winery

tasting room, was also occupied by various tenants over the years. These included Richard Cunningham who repaired and stored heavy tractors and equipment, Luciani Sheet Metal, P. G. & E. which stored their pickups and line trucks there in the 1960s. A manufacturer of wind generating towers rented it in the 1970s and William Somma used it for auto and truck storage for 11 years until 2000.

And now we can see that the old winery building has many years left, even though it was in sad shape and close to collapsing when the renovation began. The west wall still has its brickwork and those windows were retained. It is interesting to note that the old plant appeared to have been built by ordinary laborers—there was no evidence that craftsmen carpenters worked on it over the years. It has been rehabilitated with care and the hope is that another winery will occupy the building. It would certainly be in keeping with the history of this corner of Front and Hudson Streets.

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View of the west side of the Roma Wine Building, circa 1983.

ORAL



Milt Brandt

HISTORY

Milt Brandt: History Lives!

Excerpts from Oral History Interviews and Writings,
1999 - 2002

Edited by Holly Hoods

Family Background

I was born Frederick Milton Brandt to Gussie and Fred Brandt on January 31, 1923. I was raised by an iron-fisted German task master who worked seven days a week, year around, except for time out for hunting season, when it could be worked into a busy schedule. Times were tough, but Dad lived for the future and taught me that money wasn't everything, accomplishments in life were. He married Ellen Augusta "Gussie" Lambert in 1914. Gussie was a member of the Charles Lee Lambert family that had settled in Dry Creek Valley from Virginia in 1852.

My dad was born the second of three sons to Bertha and Frederick Otto Brandt. E.O., my grandfather, came from a settlement called Pomarania, which is now Poland. The E.O. Brandt family decided to move to California where E.O.'s brother August had already settled. The family arrived in 1888 or 1889. The E.O. Brandt Brewery and Bottling Works was in full swing sometime in the 1890s.

Brandt Brewery and Bottling Works

My dad was taken out of school upon completing the third grade and put to work in the brewery and bottling works. There were many menial chores such as washing bottles, replacing gaskets in the pop bottles and on the lightning stoppers that sealed the beer bottles prior to the clincher caps we see today. The manufacture of ice had become such an important function of the company by 1908, that its name was changed to Healdsburg Bottling and Ice Works.

Original Homesite of Fitch's Sotoyome Rancho

Dad was helped by family with seed money to buy the property we still live on [Brandt Road off of Bailhache Avenue]. This was purchased from the Bailhache Estate. This parcel was the last of the Original Sotoyome Rancho, the homesite that Captain Henry Fitch established. This was to be his future home on this vast Rancho. The parcel was 27 acres along with the old Fitch Bailhache Home. The original plan in 1911 was to develop the Old Home into a resort on the Russian River.

Childhood Interests and Influences

In my boyhood days, I used to love to roam the hills and mountains east of our property, usually by myself. This terrain was owned by John Minaglia. There were approximately 380 acres owned by John Sr. They had Pomo Indian help who had a large campsite on their property. I used to hike with Old Emil Bachman, a brother-in-law to John Sr. He taught me how to graft one variety of prune to another, or bud new wood. I learned many species and varieties of trees, plants, etc.

The mountain area was where I really learned interesting facts of nature from Emil Bachman and from many of the Indian children who occupied Minaglia's property. And there was "Old Indian Mary" who lived with her husband Henry-he was part Mexican. She did the old fashioned basket weaving. She was blind, but she and Henry still ground their corn in old mortars. Henry carved a



E.M. (Milt) Brandt and Mary Wattles Brandt, 1944

lot. I had an unusual opportunity to learn all of these skills that were their life. They lived in a little one-room cabin by a small lake that filled during the winter months. A live spring trickled by their front door. Baskets hung on the walls. Indian Mary liked to have someone visit, especially young people interested in her skills. Henry used to work for the Minaglia Ranch, but was too old to work anymore.

World War II Service to Country and a Bride

By the age of 30 I had completed three years service in the Uncle Sam's Navy during World War II, including one year of duty in the South Pacific with Carrier Aircraft Service Units, aka C.A.S.U., or Fleet Air Base Units. I saw the results of progressive march up the Solomon chain of islands, visiting five islands of which three were history-making

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strongholds of the Japanese Empire. The last one bought me a ticket back to the States and 5 1/2 months of hospital time recovering from a coral infection that slowly healed with the change of climate. This also set the stage for Mary and I to marry in 1944.

By 1945, I was out of the service and returned to my family's chosen line of work which consisted of prune farming, commercial farm and ranch work along with crop spraying, dusting, prune dehydrating and some commercial cattle. The diversification made a full, year-round schedule to follow.

Life-Changing Polio

July 17, 1953 terminated my life as I had known it for 30 years. I was returning the stockyards in South San Francisco where I had delivered the cattle earlier in the morning. I didn't feel well when I left the coast earlier, but thought it was a touch of the flu. It was a struggle to get back to Healdsburg after falling down once when getting out of the truck in Petaluma for a cold drink. I checked with our family doctor. He was very concerned about what was taking place and suggested that I stay isolated from my four children.

Early Monday morning he moved me into isolation in the County Hospital where there were a number of polio patients. This began 5 1/2 months of painstakingly slow progress to get back to any type of normal lifestyle, which never did return, as I knew it. My faithful wife Mary was at my bedside every day with encouragement of getting back home.

Support of the Community

In those days children weren't allowed in the hospital, so now and then it was a quick glimpse from a second story window. After several months I had built enough seniority to rate a window bed. The local TV man, Herb Solem, kept telling Mary he would hook up a TV if they let him on the



Local Pomos with baskets, circa 1925. Rick Daniels Photo.

hospital roof to put up an antennae. The next thing I knew, Herb showed up with a first-class black and white TV set. This improved my stay 100%. I was allowed to go home for Christmas in 1953, but had to go back to the hospital for stages of transplants so I would be able to use crutches.

All our finances had been wiped out. We sold off all our equipment. The crop failure of 1953 along with the bottom dropping out of the livestock market brought about a forced sale and loss of leases in the cattle operation. In the fall of 1953, unknown to me, a group of friends had organized a benefit dinner attended by some 200 local men. This was planned and organized by my life-long friend Lee Engelke. This was sort of a kick off for many other benefits for other local citizens throughout the years. I was one of many, and chaired some, to help repay what I thought was one of the greatest contributions of friendship anyone could imagine.

Founding Brandt Insurance, April 1962

Things were not easy getting started since mostly all contacts had to be made by phone until the local citizens became acquainted with my new line of business. Local competition was well established with older and more experienced brokers. No one was interested in selling their Book of Business, so this had to be developed piece by piece. It wasn't too long to wait, both Jack and Joe graduated from college and took an immediate interest in insurance. This brought in an entirely new age of clientele which soon dried up the local agents' Books of Business. Long hours and hard work, Jack and Joe surged ahead to build one of the North County's largest producing agencies.

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Positive Outlook

Although I have been physically handicapped since 1953, I haven't really taken time to worry about it. I firmly believe that when the "Good Lord" gave me 30 years of a healthy body, he also gave me the ambition to use it to the fullest, and the results have been quite gratifying-especially experiences I can relive over and over.



Old Fitch Home (Fitch's Castle) Ranch House of Sotoyome Rancho, circa 1912



The Brandt Family pose for a family portrait, November 1996.

Back row, left, Ty Smith, Todd Brandt, Dale Conley, Joe Brandt, Jack Brandt, Barry Smith.

Second row, left, Lindsay Brandt, Casey Conley, Janice Brandt, Mary Brandt, Sally Brandt Smith, Amy Brandt Browning, Jane Brandt Conley.

Front row, left, Shannon Smith, Justin Brandt, F. M. Brandt, Rachel Brandt and Kari Conley.

HISTORIC



Mervyn Silberstein

PROFESSION

Early Photography in Healdsburg at the Turn of the 20th Century

By Marie Shobe

is that light sensitive material, exposed in the camera and then developed and fixed, was the end product (Weinstein and Booth). The daguerreotype, ambrotype and tintype had no negatives and could not be reproduced a second time.

A daguerreotype is a silver-mercury image on a thin sheet of silver-plated copper. Daguerre used silver iodide as the light-sensitive compound, developed the image with mercury vapors and fixed it with a bath of sodium thiosulfate (Weinstein and Booth). This new technology took off: "by 1845 every good-sized town and city in the United



An example of a daguerreotype. Image may be of Taboe McGlasbam and wife (William Burgett family), circa 1854-1870.

States had a daguerreotype studio and traveling photographers were taking their wagons and cameras through the countryside and villages" (Ritzenthaler, Munoff and Long, 1984). The daguerreotype was produced in standard sizes and sold in cases. It was matted with an ornamental brass mat, covered with clear glass, and was then encased in a wood or leather box. The daguerreotype was the dominant photo process used in America until 1860.

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Historians of the nearby past are likely to be interpreters of photographs as well as photographers, for photographs are used in reconstructing a story and in telling it (Kyvig and Marty, 1982).

Photographs are visual histories. They can help people to understand their world and the world that used to be. Photographs are an important link to and record of the past. They can illustrate different aspects of a written record, and therefore have documentary value as resource materials. Photographs offer us a fixed examining of life's aspects: they show us customs, preferences and styles; they allow us to observe celebrations; to watch people at work, at play, at home; to see how they courted, married, and raised children; coped with stress, hardship and the changes in their lives.

But what about the photographers? Who are the people behind the image, the ones who record the visual, posing the subject or spontaneously clicking a shot in time? The Museum has a large photo collection, the bulk of photos pertaining to 1880 -1920. Many are taken by photographers unknown. Others are stamped with photographers' marks, letting us know the man (and they were mainly men at the time) behind the photo. The following is a brief description on the history of photography in general, and some of the photographers who left their mark on Healdsburg at the turn of the 20th century.

Introduction to the History of Photography

"A photograph is a chemically fixed image holding a lens-produced pattern of light, an aggregate of space and a finite amount of time" (Weinstein and Booth).

The very first "photo" happened in France in 1826 when Nicephore Niepce put a camera loaded with a light-sensitive pewter plate in an attic window. After an eight-hour exposure to the sun, the plate contained an image of the courtyard below. It wasn't until 1839 when Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre discovered a practical method to achieve a sharp, clear, permanent image - called, obviously enough, a daguerreotype.

The three earliest kinds of pictures were daguerreotypes, ambrotypes and tintypes. A common characteristic of each of these

In the 1850s refinements of old photo processes and invention of new processes brought about the expansion of photography. Ambrotypes and tintypes, both collodion processes, were cheaper than the daguerreotype and therefore more people could partake and enjoy.

The ambrotype was made in America from 1854 until 1881. Almost all of them are portraits, not exterior shots. An ambrotype is a wet collodion negative on glass with a black paper, cloth or paint background (Weinstein and Booth). These images were made for popular sale. The tintype, which was popular starting in 1856, was made of black-enamelled iron. Tintypes were also used for portraiture.

The most important collodion invention was the wet plate negative, which allowed duplicate paper copies of a photograph. Different types of papers were used over the years. Albumen paper was introduced around 1855 and used until about 1890. A coating of egg whites containing salt was applied to a thin, smooth paper. Silver nitrite sensitized the coating. Printing-out papers (P.O.P) were introduced in 1891. They were sold ready for use, and came in tones of maroon, plum, brown and sepia. The paper was slightly thicker than that of albumen. P.O.P's were of two types: collodion chloride paper and gelatino-chloride paper (the difference in the two is the emulsion surface). Developing-out papers, introduced in 1880, and in widespread use by 1900, became the standard paper for black and white photographs. It only required a few seconds of light exposure, versus several minutes. It also took less time to process.

Local Photographers

"In looking over my collection of old photographs. I find many bearing the names of Albands, Price, and Piatt. These three seem to be the only ones that were stable, possessed families and became definite parts of the body politic. Albands, 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" (Shipley, 2000).

"Local history collections in historical societies, public libraries, and archives are enriched both by family photograph collections and by the works of local professional photographers... ..many photographers with business acumen recognized the potential for sales to townspeople, civic organizations, and local businesses interested in a town's growth and technical progress... ..Often it was a personal interest in a facet of town life that led to the creation of a valuable historic record of community history" (Ritzenthaler, Munoff and Long). Sometimes much is known about a single photographer - he settled



An outing at the Geysers, circa 1910. Notice the photographer's mark (Andrew Price) in the left corner.

in a town for a long while, created his own personal historical record in an area. Many times a photographer moved about the country settling in a town for a short while before moving on: "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" (Shipley, 2000). Oftentimes all that is gleaned about a photographer is small mentions in a newspaper about a new studio, a special photo price, a sale of a studio. Other records come in the form of a name imprinted on a photograph - "Price, Healdsburg, Cal."

Andrew Price

"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 hometown 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 those 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 spent 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

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Healdsburg's well-known and beloved citizens, remaining until 1900, when he and his family moved to Berkeley" (Shipley, 2000).

Andrew Price was born in Castlebar, Sligo County, Ireland. He came to California in 1873, and first came to Healdsburg in 1876. He eventually married local Laura Mulligan and had four children: a daughter who died in childhood, and three sons, Arthur, Alfred and Percy.

According to newspaper records, it seems like Andrew Price made Healdsburg his home sporadically in the 1870s and 80s. In 1879 he leased the Downing building on the east side of the Plaza. The *Tribune* stated "Mr. Price is one of the best photographers on the coast and our people will gladly welcome his return" (HE 1879). In 1889 local papers reported that Andrew Price, "the well-known photographer" will open a gallery in town on September 7th.

While Price is most known for his photographs, he was also involved in other activities. In 1889 he was appointed agent for several fire insurance companies. In 1891 he was elected Justice of the Peace. He was also a real estate agent. In February of 1900 Price moved his business (real estate and photography) to South Street (Matheson Street). He was going to construct a new building for his photo studio adjacent to the real estate office. However, in March Senator Perkins appointed him to the position of Supervisor of Forests in California, effective May 15.

In May Price left Healdsburg for San Francisco. At that time he had been in business in Healdsburg for 11 continuous years. He eventually moved to Oakland, where he died in 1920. He and his wife did not leave Healdsburg entirely. They visited every late summer, and upon his death, his funeral services were held at St. John's Church, and he was buried at Oak Mound cemetery. Many of Andrew Price's photographs survive today, leaving us a glimpse of Healdsburg life in the late 1800s.

Stereographs

The stereograph has the longest history of popularity of any form of photograph, creating a tremendous business affecting photographers in all areas (Weinstein and Booth).

Stereographs were popular from 1858 until 1920. A stereograph is a pair of prints of the same scene mounted next to each other on a 3 1/2 x 7 card. The stereograph is viewed through a stereoscope, and the scene is transformed into a single three-dimensional photograph "with the realistic effect of depth and distance that binocular vision



A stereograph. The Union Hotel on West Street (Healdsburg Avenue), June 14, 1873

gives the viewer" (Weinstein and Booth). These photos were taken by a special camera - a stereoscopic camera - which had two lenses that were mounted 2 1/2 inches apart. "It is like two cameras with a single common back, each lens forming an image equivalent to what would be seen by one eye" (Weinstein and Booth). Through stereograph collections, which are oftentimes quite large, we can get a good idea of what a town was like in a given time period.

Joseph Henry Downing

One of Healdsburg's earliest and most prolific photographers was J.H. Downing. Downing was born in Bristol, New Hampshire in 1840. Six months later his parents moved to Massachusetts, and in 1857 they came to Healdsburg via the Isthmus of Panama. Joseph assisted his father in an undertaking business before heading east to study photography in 1869.

Joseph returned to Healdsburg and opened a gallery on Center Street: "The handsomest building on the plaza is the house completed by Mr. Downing for a photograph gallery" (RRF, 1873). Downing completed much portrait work; however, he also traveled around the county, taking pictures of local events, scenes and people. Professionally he also traveled throughout Mexico, Central America and the Pacific Coast states. Later, he became a photographic printer for Risdon Iron Works in San Francisco, a job that lasted for 15 years. During that time he and his family lived in Oakland. In 1905 he returned to Healdsburg. Through the photographs of Joseph Downing we can see Healdsburg as it was when it was young and growing. Thanks to Downing, the early visual record of the area is strong.

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Anatomy of a Photograph Portrait

"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 family album along with those of bygone, and 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 was indeed an ordeal for parents, photographer, and the small subjects of artistic preservation" (Shipley, 2000).

"The fact that most early daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, tintypes and card photographs are portraits reflects the high demand for personal likenesses and the relative immobility of the picture taking process" (Ritzenthaler, Munoff, and Long).

The advent of the photograph changed the way in which Americans related. People were able to see a wider slice of the world and life through images. The photo portrait became popular with members of the middle class as a way to imitate the upper class painting portrait, and the immortalization that came with it. People could travel with small lifelike portraits of their loved ones, and they could send images of themselves home or to relatives.

One of the most frequently asked questions about older photo portraits is, "Why is/are s/he/they so serious (or not smiling)? The answer lies in the photo taking process at the time. Exposures were long, and the subject had to sit very still for a long time. Open smiles were difficult to maintain during these long exposures. Also, teeth were not as well taken care of as they are today, and people did not want to expose their teeth to the camera and therefore the world (no matter how small). People in 19th century photo portraits are sometimes shown with their head in their hands, to help steady the head during the long exposures. Sometimes a studio had a cast-iron stand with a headrest to hold up the head.

In terms of attire, women wore their very best and sported neatly coiled or curled hair. Men wore their best suits. "The subjects were photographed in the way they wanted to be seen, and their photographs reveal many of the fashionable affectations of the times" (Ritzenthaler, Munoff and Long).



An example of a portrait taken by Andrew Price. Wilfred Moody, age 19 and Nina Baily, age 17, circa 1883.

Small Gleanings

- Maxwell, Darrow and Co.'s Photographs are "the best this side of the Bay!" - the earliest photographers mentioned in the papers. 12/1865
- W.B. Monmonier opened a new gallery on Center Street, north plaza. 10/1870
- Mr. H. Anderson, "thoroughly versed in all the late improvements in the art [of photography]" took possession of Maxwell's old stand. 12/1870
- Thomas Ley bought the photo gallery of H. Anderson. 11/1871
- Fayette Kelley from Iowa to open a photo gallery. 10/1878
- Frank Kuykendall, who "comes well recommended" is fixing up rooms on the east side of the plaza for a photo business. 11/1878
- A.J. Allhands "has fitted up a large and handsome gallery. In his new quarters he is prepared to make first-class pictures. Call and see him, and take the baby." 4/1879
- George May has located permanently on Powell Street. "...his work speaks for itself." 11/1879
- Charles Piatt completed a photo studio in the rooms back of Prince's grocery store. "He is now prepared to do all kinds of photographic work of the very best kind." 4/1889
- G.B. Easterly "the famous photographer" settled in Healdsburg and opened a gallery on South Street. 12/1891
- B.S. Williams opened a gallery on Matheson Street. 2/1891
- W.A. Mooers, for the past seven years, "has done photographic work here that is a credit to the city and the exquisite shading, tinting, etc. of his work shows his knowledge of light effect in producing a picture true to life." 12/1904
- Mrs. M.A. Oliver (the only woman photographer mentioned in those times!) bought the photo business of Mr. Wright. 11/1911
- Mr. Ellis Pollock took over the Wright Studio. He has twenty

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years experience, and the studio is "equipped with every modern appliances." 11/1912

- Herman Riether bought the Hardy photo studio on West Street. (Mr. Hardy spent the last 18 years working in Healdsburg). 10/1913

- Mr. White opens a studio on the Plaza. He has a "complete new outfit for his studio in Healdsburg, including a panoramic camera and modern view cameras." 7/1914

- J.H. White bought a photo studio from Mr. Pollock, and the rooms are "being repapered and renovated by James Madeira and put in attractive shape." 7/1914

- The Western Photo Co. opened a new studio, and they will "turn out high grade photographs at unusually low prices." 2/1916

- J.W. Hunter bought the photo gallery once owned by H. Reither, but recently owned by O.M. Ward. 2/1918

Amateur Photography

Since the beginning of photography, there have been amateur contributors. The development of the Kodak camera in 1888 gave people the ease taking a photo at the press of a button. Roll film (continuous belts of cellulose nitrite film with light sensitive emulsions) was produced in many shapes and sizes. This flexibility paved the way for small hand-held cameras (Weinstein and Booth). Many people now had a way to shoot their own photos: "No longer were personal photographic records infrequent, stiffly posed professional photographs taken only on special occasions. They became frequent, casually snapped images that recorded people engaged in everyday activities as well as at special events" (Ritzenthaler, Munoff and Long).

Mervyn Silberstein

Mervyn Silberstein was born in January 1885 in San Francisco. Mervyn moved to Healdsburg in 1896 when his father bought a dry goods store, which was located on the corner of Healdsburg



Mervyn Silberstein, 1903

Avenue and North Street. The family lived above the store. Silberstein attended Healdsburg High School and Pacific Union College in Santa Rosa. In 1910 Silberstein and his family moved back to San Francisco where he worked as a graphic designer and a freelance photographer. He often returned to Healdsburg where he took numerous photographs of the area. He also was involved in the planning of former Healdsburg residents' reunions. He married Lillian Swanson, and they had a daughter, Gloria. Mervyn

Silberstein died in 1957.

Silberstein was a very artistic and creative person. He kept journals and scrapbooks that are filled with amusing stories and line drawings. He must have fallen in love with photography at some point, and learned how to do it. Between 1903 and 1913 Silberstein took hundreds of photos of Healdsburg, the surrounding area, and his friends. The photos encompass numerous categories such as agriculture, athletics, transportation, residences, the Russian River and downtown scenes. Most of these photos were taken while Silberstein was an amateur photographer, and they are some of the best chronicles of scenes in Healdsburg just after the turn of the century.

Conclusion

"To these able men and their good work, we who survive owe a debt of gratitude" (Shipley, 2000).

Photographs are visual documents that help us to explore and understand the past. Photography was a relatively new process at the turn of the 20th century, and the photographers who set up studios and/or traveled and explored their nearby and far away worlds were pioneers. These men (and few women) were able to visually record the world around them, and leave for us a valuable record of times past.

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Road To The Top of Fitch Mountain

by Charlotte Anderson

*"Up and Up to the Blue of the Sky,
Climbing the mountain rugged and high;
The way of the road leads up to a star,
While below the valleys stretch wide and
afar;
The gleam of the river with soft purling
song
Steals in and away for all the day long;
Oh mountain of beauty ... almost Divine,
For thee forever our love we enshrine! "*

The flowery tribute to Fitch Mountain penned in 1928 by Julius Meyer Alexander was written when a "wonderful road winding up the northeastern slopes" was completed, made possible by then owners of the mountain and the Del Rio Woods subdivision, Thos. J. Scoble owner.

The first automobile on the summit of the mountain reached there on Wednesday, October 3, 1928. "The car was driven by Ralph Gray of the Graham-Paige Agency of Healdsburg. The passengers were S.E. Langhart, photographer, J.M. Carr, agent for the Del Rio Woods Co., S.P. Brownlee, the road builder, Miss Mildred Corbit of the *Tribune* staff, Allinea M. Carr, private secretary, and Julius Myron Alexander. Following came William A. Hill of the Plaza Hotel, with Attorney Herman Boos, Editor R.E. Baer, Realtor Harl Sacry and A. W. Garrett, pioneer hardware merchant. Closely following came Guy Rose, the hardware man, with Ray Lattin, vineyardist of the Cloverdale section. Then came Mr. and Mrs. Oresta Rosa of the White House Grill. From somewhere came Mike Serifem of the New Louvre Restaurant, with "Buster" Roehm of the Healdsburg Market, and Glenn Lampson, the garage man."

It was all financed and built by Thomas J. Scoble, the owner of Del Rio Woods, who "could not have found a better road builder than S.P. Brownlee. Just a plain everyday man with his bundle of laths and his wonderful eye, he sighted the way and the lever of the old steam shovel held by the guiding hand of Otto Bortfield, assisted by A.L. Ward, oiler, cut through all obstacles. Not a pound of powder was used on all of the two miles of construction.

"The summit of the mountain has been cleared of underbrush and a saucer-shaped turn made for automobiles and parking. The old stump of the great live oak with its hundreds of carved initials has been lifted out by the steam shovel and thrown over the bank into the discard."

"Many photographs of the party were taken for a matter of record."

On Sunday, October 7, 1928, it "being an unusually clear day, many local people were inspired with a desire to try out the new road to the summit of Fitch Mountain." According to T.M. Carr, resident manager of Del Rio Woods subdivision, "the register at the summit of the mountain was signed by 109 people during the day."

Three months later, Julius Myron Alexander wrote in the *Healdsburg Enterprise*, January 3, 1929, that "the big register on the summit shows 750 registrations since the opening of the road on the middle of October. Thousands of names of visitors from all over the world will be registered there by the close of another season. Old Fitch Mountain, Russian River and the Redwood Highway - three scenic attractions unsurpassed in California - and they are all of Healdsburg."

Where did this register go? If anyone knows anything about the register or the disposition, please contact the Healdsburg Museum. We should have this historical artifact.



Julius Myron Alexander



Del Rio Woods

Sources:

The Healdsburg Enterprise, Thursday, September 13, 1928, p/1:2

The Healdsburg Enterprise. Thursday, October 11, 1928, p. 1:5

The Healdsburg Enterprise, Thursday, January 3, 1929, p.1:3

Recollections of a Choir Boy at El Rancho del Obispo

by Stephen W. Cohen

(The following recollections were prompted by the author's reading of an article about the Bishop's Ranch, written by curator Marie Shobe, in the Summer, 2002 issue of the Russian River Recorder. This is a personal observation of a Grace Cathedral Choir boy who spent summers at El Rancho del Obispo in the 1940's and 1950's - Editor.)

It all started one 1947 day in San Francisco when I, an independent 7 year old, climbed up Golden Gate Heights in the inner Sunset from Jefferson Elementary School. My parents decided to have a chat with me. They had apparently arranged without consulting with me, an audition with Richard Purvis, the organist and master of choristers at Grace Cathedral.

Despite my whining and temper tantrums, I went to the audition and was accepted as a treble in the Grace Cathedral Choir in 1947.

As a former choir boy Ted Worth stated: "Mr. Purvis was a magnetic and powerful person. He ran the choir -indeed the whole Cathedral - in an autocratic and strict fashion. He brooked interference with no one and led the choir like an Army drill sergeant." You had to address him as "sir." He, in turn referred even to the youngest 7-8 year old as "Mr. Cohen" or just "mister."

He could be harsh and sometimes cruel, but the boys in the choir respected him because he obtained incomparable results. And we were all very proud of those results.

We came from all over the city on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons for rehearsals and on Thursday evenings for rehearsals with the men. We were not exactly the most pristine, angelical choir boys, including reading comic books which we snuck into the Cathedral chancel during the services in many devious ways and playing "hangman" during the sermon, always under the watchful eyes of Mr. Purvis.

Mr. Purvis' extreme musicality and vitality shone through his sternness. When he achieved the sound effect that he wanted a look of love and approval would come over his face, completely erasing the terrible scowls and frequent rages into which he flew when someone sang the wrong note or committed some other "grevious sin." His words were harsh, but he had an uncanny sense of what would make people mad enough to work hard for him and give him what he wanted. He knew the people who needed strong words (which definitely included me) and those who needed gentle prodding. It always worked.

Sometime in 1948 Mr. Purvis mentioned that the choirboys would go to the Bishop's Ranch for two weeks in August. Apparently, this had been done only once before. And it was free! Those of us who were new in the choir experienced a bit of trepidation of the unknown.

My father was a band teacher in the San Francisco United School District



The Choir Boys enjoy the swimming pool.

and as such had the entire summer devoted to my mother and myself. We explored the Sierra and the desert. Camped on the floor of Yosemite Valley on Camp Seven, right on the Merced River, for almost three months.

We left the Sierra early so I could attend Choir Camp. Came the fateful day. With anticipation and butterflies in my stomach I climbed into the sea foam green 1937 Pontiac and off we went on another adventure. This was quite a trip as Highway 101 was not a freeway. We wound through Sausalito, Mill Valley, over the hill to Corte Madera, over more hills to San Rafael and after several hours we approached Healdsburg through the apple orchards on a two lane concrete highway. We finally got to Healdsburg and turned on Westside Road. We turned on a little road leading to a dairy. The road consisted of two concrete strips, each about a foot in width. We came around a corner and there was the main ranch house, It was beautiful. Ivy covered brick with a portico.

There were several of my fellow choir members running and shouting on the lawn in front and they showed me the swimming pool and wading pool at the end of the wisteria and grape arbor. All of which still exists, all except the wading pool.

I was shown over to two long huts complete with concrete floors, with drains, where we would spend our two weeks. There was just barely room enough, height wise, for our U.S. Army surplus double-decker bunks with white and blue stripe mattresses. The pillows matched the mattresses. We were given two sheets, and a pillowcase and an olive drab blanket which said U.S. Army across it. These huts were the former dog kennels that the previous owners, the Osbourne Whites, used to raise their Great Danes. All the bunks had to be made to military precision. Following breakfast in the main ranch house, there was choir rehearsal in the main room of the ranch house with Mr Purvis at the grand piano, until lunch. From the living room we could look out over the Russian River Valley and wonder why we were rehearsing Magnifacts, Nunc Dimitai, Psalms, descants and Anthems when we could be playing in the pool.

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If Mr. Purvis caught us day dreaming, the roof fell down. He was a taskmaster. But when we gave him the results he wanted he positively beamed and he knew and we knew that we had accomplished something on a grand scale.

I came into a little more verbal kidding than most other choir boys because of my musical training. My father had taught me to play clarinet and the oboe and English horn and piano. Five years later the previous Cathedral organist, Phoebe Cole, had been teaching me organ during my 8th and 9th grades. It was a honor to turn pages and assist Mr. Purvis at the console, either at the Cathedral or at the Legion of Honor, or even once to ride up with him on the mighty Wurlitzer at the old Fox Theatre to play for a teachers meeting. I thought I was in my form of heaven.

However, in 1954 he offered me a scholarship to learn how to really play an organ the way it should be played. My first lesson was not on the Chapel of Grace 2 manual, but on the 4 manual, 102 stop Aeollan Skinner organ in the chancel of the Cathedral.

Lunches at the Bishop's Ranch were like lunches in Boy Scout camps, Girl Scout camps, fraternity houses, sorority houses, the Navy. And yes, we had bug juice. Bug juice came in many different colors - yellow, red, purple and, of course, the ever popular orange.

After we had cleared the tables, we rehearsed for another hour and a half. Finally it was swimming time. The diving board was completely filled with a line of choir boys doing cannon balls, regular dives, lots of belly flops and dunking each other in the pool.

Then came the dreaded cry, out of the pool. Away we went to clean up for dinner.

After dinner, and in later years when rehearsals were cancelled in the afternoon, we would try our hand at archery. Only one choir boy ever had an arrow that went into his chest and bounced off a rib. (He is still alive and lives in Fresno). Other games were softball up in the corral on the hill, ping pong, or capture the flag where the flags were usually several hundred yards apart. Or the highlight of the camp - the treasure hunt. I'll never forget the clue that stumped all of us: "the flag that never waves." The next clue was, of course... in the ranch mail box.

Then came either movies in the living room of the ranch house ... travelogs, cartoons, or actually movies sponsored by "Chiquita Banana" or camp fires in the courtyard of the ranch.

The camp fires were where we were initiated into the rites of the camp and, in later years, we did the initiating of the younger members. Skits: "The Spit Around the World", "Stand-In" complete with fake movie camera and director.

In 1996 the "Old Choir Boys of Grace Cathedral" held a reunion. We thought it would be fun to stay a weekend at the modernized, rebuilt Bishop's Ranch. I invited the group first to my home on Friday for swimming and a BBQ. We then proceeded to the Ranch late that evening and

spent the weekend at "El Rancho del Obispo" with significant others.

We had a campfire, toured the wineries, sang in the living room of the ranch house and generally had a great time. In fact, we have this reunion every other year. The last reunion was held this year in June. Sadly, we have lost two of our members during this period of renewing friendships.

Two years ago we "Old Grace Cathedral Choir Boys" wanted to contribute something for the ranch that would add to the ambiance at the ranch and would be a remembrance of all our good and bad times at the ranch. We decided to build a campfire circle. It took us almost a year to jackhammer out the side of a hill an area for the campfire. We dedicated it to our camp director we had when we attended camp in the '40's and '50's.

I have taken many close friends up to the Ranch over the years and shown them what I have talked about for so long. They always came away in awe that such a place does exist.

All of us will carry these fond remembrances of those wonderful and not so wonderful childhood times and friendships that have held true through these years while participating in the Choir Camp at El Rancho del Obispo.

ADDENDUM The last Monday of August 2002 I again journeyed to El Rancho del Obispo. The summer Choir Camp for Grace Cathedral was in progress.

A little before eight in the evening we took our seats in the Chapel of St. George. At eight the doors to the chapel swung open and the procession of the choir entered the chapel. What followed was a delightful, meditative time as they sang Evensong.

I found myself looking at each of the choir boys who ranged in age from 7-8 to young adults. Suddenly I could see myself at various ages in



Taking aim at archery.

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the choir. What remembrances of experiences that were brought back to my mind's eye. From the hesitant first year treble to the confident know it all 9th grader, to the graduating high school senior to young adult.

After Evensong we went into the courtyard for refreshments (bug juice and cookies) and more importantly to meet the choir boys and choir master.

A Canon of the Cathedral introduced me to many of the boys as a choir member from the '40' and '50's. Many were interested in what it was like back then. Some of them were there last year when we, the Grace Cathedral Old Boys Choir, spent an evening with them at camp fire, introducing to them the skits and camp fire songs they had no reason to think even existed.

I chatted with Christopher Putnam, Canon of Music, at the Cathedral. We discussed how our group of Choir Boys/Men could participate with the present choir. I also chatted with the ranch manager, Sean Swift, and discussed our next improvement our group would make to the camp fire circle.

As we drove down the hill away from the ranch house and out to Westside Road, I was struck by happiness and sadness: glad that I had come for Evensong and that I could share the experience with a very special person and also wondering how many more times I would travel up and down the road to the ranch house of El Rancho del Obispo that was such an important part of my life.

