



RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

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Healdsburg 1930 - 1959: An Overview

by Marie Shobe • Page 3



Also in this Issue:

Entertainment and Sports 1930-1959

*by Charlotte Anderson
Page 10*

Keeping Healdsburg Safe from the Reds: Civil Defense in the 1950's

by Courtney Clements • Page 8

Healdsburg Community Leaders, 1930-1959

by Holly Hoods • Page 15



IN THIS ISSUE

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RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

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

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Summer 2003. Continuing with our theme of covering the years 1900-1999, in this issue we are focusing on the years 1930 to 1959, years in which we saw a Great Depression, a second World War plus the Korean Conflict. It was during this time that the Healdsburg Community went all out in adopting a battalion in Korea. And there were so many significant and important changes during these 29 years.

Our very talented curator Marie Shobe gives an overview of these years in her feature article touching on all phases of life in Healdsburg chronicled so carefully in the newspapers of that era.

And we welcome a new contributor to the *Recorder*, Courtney Clements, who offers a very interesting and well-written account of how Healdsburg dealt with Civil Defense in the 1950s. Courtney, a former curator of the Sonoma County Museum, is using the topic of Civil Defense for her masters thesis at Sonoma State University. Having lived through those days in Healdsburg I know that she has captured the essence of those times.

Charlotte Anderson, in her assignment to cover entertainment and sports, has come up with some very interesting anecdotes and stories "gleaned", as she says, from the pages of the *Healdsburg Tribune*. Jo Osborn's reminiscences of little theater in Healdsburg is most interesting and entertaining.

And Holly Hoods, our research curator, brings capsule biographies of four men who were leaders of that era and very influential in the well being of the community. There were many other leaders but these four men exemplify the leadership abilities of the many others who served the community so well.

Please share with us your reaction to this issue. We hope that we have been able to accomplish our goal — give you a glimpse of what life was like in Healdsburg 1930-1959.

Arnold Santucci,
Editor

CONTENTS

Page 3 Healdsburg 1930-1959:

An Overview

by Marie Shobe

Page 8 Keeping Healdsburg Safe from the Reds: Civil Defense in the 1950's

by Courtney Clements

Page 11 Entertainment and Sports 1930-1959

by Charlotte Anderson

Page 13 Healdsburg Community Leaders 1930-1959

by Holly Hoods

HISTORIC



Picking Hops

OVERVIEW

HEALDSBURG 1930-1959: AN OVERVIEW

by Marie Shobe

Introduction

The first thirty years of the 20th century can be characterized as a time of growth for Healdsburg. Municipally, the city developed its infrastructure - modern electricity, water and sewer all became part of the City's responsibility. Agriculturally, grapes, hops and prunes became established, and while grape and hop production were affected by Prohibition, prunes became one of Healdsburg's biggest cash crops. The railroad offered new opportunities for market growth, and as farming and ranching expanded and outgrew local markets, the railroad provided a way to send products greater distances. The railroad also brought people to Healdsburg. While the population of Healdsburg remained fairly steady, the summer and tourist population increased greatly, as Healdsburg and its resorts became hugely popular vacation destinations.

In spite of things like Prohibition and World War I, which effected Healdsburg especially in agriculture, the first thirty years of the 20th century concerning Healdsburg can be characterized as municipally oriented. The second thirty years of the 20th century should be considered as more nationally and globally influenced. These second thirty years were very much affected by both the Depression and World War II.

The Great Depression

With the stock market crash in 1929 America entered the throes of a great economic depression. Sonoma County and Healdsburg were greatly affected by the Depression: "It was inevitable that a county already damaged by the effects of Prohibition on vineyard, hopyard, winery, and brewery would be dealt a second blow by the general economic collapse. Sonoma County's pockets, already empty when the crash came, could only become emptier" (LeBaron & Mitchell, 1993).

All across the country farmers were hit hard by the Depression. Healdsburg was no exception: Healdsburg's small farms suffered greatly. Many farmers either lost, or almost lost their farms. Low

crop prices wiped out potential profits. The County's farm income fell drastically. As a result, "the scarcity of cash, the loss of buying power, had a disastrous effect on the business community" (LeBaron & Mitchell, 1993).

Stores closed, businesses failed. The number of employed people fell. Jobs were scarce for all people, and employment matters were at the forefront of people's thoughts. People of all ages tried to work to make a living wage. Not all business suffered - Maher's saddle repair shop for instance saw business increase because more people patched up old saddles and leather goods - though many bartered goods and products for their services. Thriftiness became a way of life.

In Healdsburg, citizens rallied to help themselves and those even less fortunate. Paper was used multiple times; fabric was recycled into new clothes, into quilts, into rags; textbooks were shared between schools; electricity was conserved. People with gardens and livestock shared their food and products with others, including the "tramps" that came to town looking for work.

The 1932 presidential election was essentially a debate over the causes and solutions to the Depression. Republican incumbent Herbert Hoover lost to Democratic challenger Franklin D. Roosevelt, who campaigned on using the federal government's authority for experimental remedies. Roosevelt called his program the New Deal, which was characterized by federal regulation. These government relief programs read like what has been called an "alphabet soup": CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps.), AAA (Agricultural Adjustment Administration), NRA (National Recovery Administration), CWA (Civil Works Administration), and WPA (Work Projects Administration).

The CWA and the WPA were the two that were important to Healdsburg. While they pulled workers from a large surrounding area (including San Francisco) and not just local people, the benefits to the city were great. Some of the projects that the CWA and WPA provided Healdsburg with included: the first cast iron sewer pipe system on Healdsburg Avenue; major improvements to the City

Continued page 4

Continued from page 3

reservoir system; new buildings at the City electrical substation; a new system of City water mains and concrete culverts; a rebuilt Boy Scout clubhouse on Center Street; new sidewalks in downtown and residential districts; a new Healdsburg Elementary School building; a new high school playing field and auditorium; a Chamber of Commerce building; and an improved road from Healdsburg to the Geysers. (Clayborn, 1992). The federal government supplied labor wages and some materials for these projects.

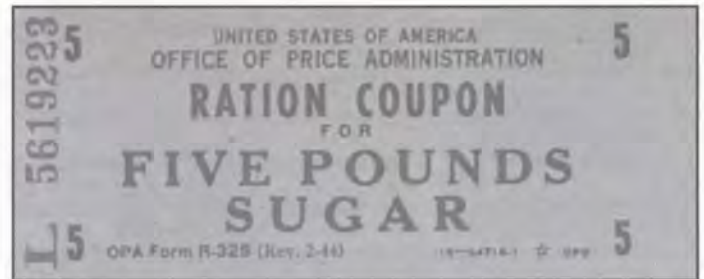


*The Chamber of Commerce Building
built by the WPA.*

The Great Depression lasted until about 1939. By that time, much of the world was caught up in chaos and war. In 1931 Japan invaded Manchuria and stopped Chinese resistance; Italy (under the rule of fascism) enlarged its Libyan boundaries and in 1935 attacked Ethiopia; and Germany, under the leadership of Adolf Hitler reoccupied the Rhineland and undertook large-scale rearmament. America took an isolationist stance. When the German Nazi assault on Poland in 1939 occurred, as did the outbreak of World War II, American isolationist sentiment increased. With the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, America entered the war, first with a declaration of war against Japan, and then with both Germany and Italy declaring war on the United States.

World War II

World War II deeply affected the Healdsburg community. All people were touched in some way by the war. "We were all affected by the War. My brother was gone, my husband... fellow classmates - some of them didn't come back. It hit home! You've never seen anybody more patriotic than the people. It was just magnificent! Everybody went all out!" (Gladys (Richards) Engelke in Hoods, 1997)



Many people enlisted, were drafted or had family members that served. Boys as young as 17 years, still in high school, left school to volunteer in all military branches. "Boys of draft age didn't wait to be called. They left school and volunteered" (Vellutini, 1997). The *Healdsburg Tribune* ran advertisements for the military to encourage enlistment.

As an agricultural region, Healdsburg was expected to step up production. Farming and ranching were characterized as vital war industries. Lack of laborers threatened these war crops: many men had left to join the war effort, and many others had left to find work in the bigger cities. Steps were taken to mitigate this shortage. The Chamber of Commerce voted to open businesses later (1 p.m.) so that merchants and employees could help with the harvesting. The Federal Government started up the Bracero program, in which Mexican agricultural workers were brought into the western states on contract. In June of 1943, 693 braceros came to work on Healdsburg ranches. The ranchers had to provide food, housing and a standard wage.

"Victory" gardens were encouraged to ease food shortages. Canning of fruits and vegetables was encouraged. People could attend classes at Healdsburg High School to learn how to can. Many items were rationed, including food items like butter, sugar, and meat. Recipes were developed to help women learn how to cook meals without these food staples. Gasoline was also rationed. Each family received a Ration Book. Most received an "A" book; those people whose work was



Continued page 5

deemed essential to the war effort were given "B" rations, which gave them a larger gasoline allotment.

Salvage drives to collect scarce war materials were common. Those unable to fight in the war or contribute in other ways felt like they were contributing to the war effort through these drives. Healdsburg residents conducted scrap metal and rubber drives. Children were encouraged to participate in the salvage drives, and could be seen pulling small wagonloads of metal and rubber to school.

Some people not eligible for service became block wardens, walking the neighborhood streets at night to make sure lights were out during blackouts. Armed civilian guards volunteered to watch the Railroad Bridge and Russian River Bridge; women and teenaged girls volunteered to be airplane spotters. Defense drills and blackouts were common, and Healdsburg children wore metal nametags for identification. "I remember in high school, during the War, they had blackouts. At times you had to have shades on the windows. And if they had the blackouts, then you couldn't drive with your lights on..." (Gloria (Nicoletti) Christensen in Hoods, 1997).

On August 17, 1945 the *Healdsburg Tribune* listed the names of the men and women who served during 1941-1945. 843 names were listed, which constituted about 26% of the total population of Healdsburg, Windsor and Geyserville (Vellutini, 1997).

Agriculture

After World War II Healdsburg entered a time of transition. Some of the earliest indications of this could be seen in the area of agriculture, in the hop and prune industries.

Until 1950 hops were one of the major cash crops in the area. From 1880 to 1950 Sonoma County produced about one third of the



Picking Prunes, circa 1954

hops grown in California. By 1960 all hop yards were closed.

WWII had brought a boom in hop production, both because beer was considered essential to the GIs, and because major European hop growing countries could not export their products. After the war these European countries began re-establishing their hop production, and demand for Sonoma County hops fell. Also, after WWII, the public assumed a growing taste for light beer (a large part of this was attributed to women), and this too quelled the demand for hops.

Another reason for hop failure was due to the Downey Mildew, a hop plant disease, that flourished in the moist soil propagated by ammonia fertilizer put into use after WWII. Finally, the invention of the hop-picking machine made larger tracts of land feasible for hop farming, putting the small Sonoma County farms out of business.

Another agricultural change starting to affect Healdsburg at this time was the start of the demise of the prune industry. Healdsburg and prunes had been synonymous since at least the turn of the century. By 1924, Healdsburg was the "Buckle of the Prune Belt", and prunes remained Healdsburg's most important and ubiquitous cash crop until the 1960s. A combination of consumer apathy, bad marketing, increasing production costs, and the eventual emergence of grapes and wine took its toll on the prune business.

Resorts

As Healdsburg and the nation dealt with the Depression and world chaos in the years before the war, things were not all doom and gloom. Healdsburg's resorts were still going strong, fueled by the Big Band and dance craze.

Del Rio Woods on Fitch Mountain became a popular summer resort in the 1930s due to the draw of the dances held at the dance pavilion. In 1927 a large dance platform was constructed. By the next year the Del Rio dance pavilion was quite popular. But it was in 1937 that things really started to swing on Fitch Mountain. In 1937 Earl Frampton purchased part of the Del Rio Woods. Besides setting aside a tract of land for a public beach - which became a very popular spot for swimmer and boaters - he created a large, airy dance hall that he called Palomar. In its heyday Palomar was one of the most popular dance places in Healdsburg, if not the county. Lanterns were hung in the interior of the dance hall to give it a festive air. Name bands played at Palomar, including the popular Saunders King and Red Plummer.

Where did these visitors come from? They came from all over the Bay Area and Redwood Empire, traveling to "vacationland", as the

Continued page 6

Continued from page 5

Russian River region from Healdsburg down to the ocean had become known. Many people rode the train, but as the automobile became more prevalent in people's lives, they began driving themselves to the area. The advent of the automobile changed things. With more and more cars, the roads became better. But the water barrier between San Francisco and Sonoma County remained. The freight ferries could not keep up with the increasing demand - long lines of cars waited both in San Francisco and Sausalito to be shuttled across the bay. Weekends and holidays were especially bad.

A movement to bridge the bay started in the early 1920s by leaders in San Francisco, Marin, Sonoma, Mendocino and Humboldt counties. There was more than one mile of water rushing in and out of the bay as the tide changed. No suspension bridge of that length had ever been built. Joseph B. Strauss, an engineering intellectual, said it could be done.

A district was formed behind a bond issue of \$35,000,000. On November 17, 1932 the first \$3,000,000 in bonds were sold, and the construction work began. Five years later, on May 28, 1937, the bridge was finished. All this was accomplished while the nation was in the midst of the Great Depression. With the opening of the bridge, the path to Sonoma County - and Healdsburg's resorts - was now wide open.

Merryland/Memorial Beach

Merryland - on the Russian River at Healdsburg - was one of the best-known recreation spots in this part of California. From 1935 to 1943 John and Clara Naber managed the Merryland property. It had a grocery store, a gas station, and sixteen cabins



Merryland Auto Camp at what is now Memorial Beach, 1935-1943

with kitchen facilities. In the summer "the cabins were rented year after year by families from the San Francisco Bay Area. In the winter, the cabins were rented by WPA workers who worked on projects in town" (John Naber in Naber, 1993). Merryland also had a campground. The campground was a large open field. Water was available from nearby faucets, but there were no electricity hook-ups. Electric lights were provided throughout the trees, and the Nabers shared free kerosene with the campers (Naber, 1993).

In 1946 the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to carry out the County Planning Commission's recommendation to establish a veterans' memorial beach along the Russian River in south Healdsburg. The American Legion Post No. 111 and the Healdsburg Kiwanis Club worked together to create the living memorial. Healdsburg Veterans' Memorial Beach is situated where Merryland Auto Camp was located.

Adopted Battalion

Despite the fact that WWII was over and that Veterans' Memorial Beach had opened, Healdsburg was not done with war yet. In June of 1950 North Korea invaded South Korea which brought about a United Nations' action against the aggressors. This produced heavy military and naval involvement by the United States. The conflict lasted for three years.

Some Healdsburg residents fought in this war, but it was the adoption of a battalion by the town that defined this period. Lt. Col. Fred Weyand of Healdsburg was stationed in Korea as the commander of the Seventh Infantry Regiment's First Battalion. Non-military items were scarce, so he and his wife Arline (Langhart) asked Smith "Smitty" Robinson to help "adopt" the battalion.

Robinson was not in the military due to a heart condition. During WWII, Robinson "had contributed to the war effort by keeping up morale. He wrote letters (up to 300 a month) and mailed "Smitty's Scoops", his own hometown newsletter, to every serviceman" (Hoods, 1999).

Robinson agreed to adopt the battalion, and recognized that the entire Healdsburg community would have to offer support and participation. The community did not disappoint: "The project became a major community effort" (Hoods, 1999). Between March 19 and April 9, 1951 Healdsburg shipped more than 53 cartons of magazines, candles, battery radios, note paper, sewing kits and toilet articles. Care packages included snacks, dried fruit, tobacco and cookies.

Please see page 7

Every service club and volunteer organization contributed time, labor, gifts and money. Schools and churches also participated. Students raised money, popped popcorn and packed cookies for the care packages. "Cookie bakes were held regularly, and hundreds of cookies were packed in coffee cans and shipped to Korea. Grocery stores had "snack" boxes set up to collect contributions. Yakima Bears charity baseball games took place at Recreation Park. Fundraising dances and variety shows were also held in town" (Hoods, 1999).

Healdsburg's generosity received much publicity. An article appeared in the *Associated Press* about Healdsburg's battalion in May 1951. *Reader's Digest* published an article called "The Town that Adopted a Battalion" in December 1953. The "This is Your Life" television program did a show about Smith Robinson, his leadership, and the battalion adoption. "The town was elated" (Hoods, 1999). Other cities were inspired by Healdsburg's example, and adopted similar battalions. The First Battalion was appreciative of Healdsburg's generosity. In turn, they donated \$175 to the 4-H Club, \$700 as a trust fund for needy children, and \$1,400 to buy school playground equipment and a new radio system at Healdsburg General Hospital (Hoods, 1999).

Conclusion

Healdsburg between 1930 and 1959 faced two great challenges - the Great Depression and World War II - as well as started a period of transition, beginning in agriculture with the demise of the hop and prune industries. In spite of these factors, the resort and tourist business was still going strong, fueled by the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge and the Big Band dance craze.

Throughout these years one thing remains consistent - the generosity of the Healdsburg citizens, and the pride that they all shared in their hometown. During the Depression they shared whatever possible with those less fortunate than they. During World War II they participated in salvage drives, victory gardens, and civil defense. Many citizens gave their lives. During the Korean War the citizens once again showed their generosity when they adopted a Battalion and sent much needed supplies and support to U.S. troops overseas. The outside world may have encroached on little Healdsburg, but Healdsburg was strong and stayed an active and supportive community.



Smith "Smitty" Robinson and crew from the Federated Church making chocolate covered prunes for the adopted battalion. Front row, left to right: Eibel Marie Oakleaf, Eve Brookings, Irene Archer, Hazel Saylor. Second row: Edith Ridings, Jean Black, Tillie Bledsoe, Smith Robinson, Marian Osborn, Al Archer, Dr. D. Oakleaf, Ervald Strom. Back row: Wilma Chadwell Thomas, Margaret Rutz, Pat Bledsoe, Florence Wasson, Hilda Strom, Dan Saylor.

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Speech made at the dedication of the bronze memorial statue in the Healdsburg Plaza, December 7, 1997; in Healdsburg Museum Archives

www.english.uiuc.edu

www.history.navy.mil



Fire Chief Harold Sullivan, left, and Assistant Civil Defense Coordinator Louis Luciani inspect the equipment on the Sonoma County Civil Defense Rescue Truck, circa 1952

Keeping Healdsburg Safe from the Reds: Civil Defense in the 1950's

By Courtney Clements

The recently rediscovered film, *Life in Healdsburg*, captures the idyllic existence enjoyed by local residents in the 1950s. Tree-lined streets lead to neat homes and prosperous businesses. Neighbors enjoy each others company in civic groups, at church or at social gatherings. However, early in the film is a scene which alludes to the international tensions which dominated the news during that decade. Smiling civil defense personnel are shown in their city hall office preparing to send out the booklet *Survival Under Atomic Attack*. The residents of Healdsburg would have done well to read it for on February 20, 1952, Healdsburg was attacked. Fighter jets from Hamilton Field flew over the town bombing it with leaflets which read, "This might have been an atomic attack, an incendiary bomb, lethal gas or biological attack. What would YOU do if it were any of these things? If you do not know, check with your local Civil Defense Office." [1] The town's fire and police services as well as a committed group of civil defense volunteers did know what to

do - the police halted traffic and evacuated the streets. After the all clear was sounded, rescue workers descended upon the "bombed" section on North Street between West and Center Streets to carry out search, rescue, and repair operations. The success of this drill, however, masked the discouragement felt by local civil defense authorities who struggled throughout the decade to maintain public interest in the program. An effort that promised to preserve life and property in Healdsburg became for local officials an exercise in frustration and ultimately, futility. Why did some Healdsburg residents answer the call to serve their communities while others did not? Not surprisingly, there is no simple answer.

During the 1950s, Americans from Washington, DC to Healdsburg, CA feared that war with the Soviet Union was likely. Civil defense offered a way to channel that fear into positive action. In December 1950, Louis Luciani was appointed by the city council to lead Healdsburg's civil defense effort. An office was established in city hall (though it resided briefly in late 1951 at the Luciani Pump and Metal Company in order to accommodate the director), Audrey Harmon was hired to be the secretary, and ground observer posts (to look out for incoming enemy aircraft) were established on top of city hall and in Tayman Park. Mr. Luciani faced the same daunting task as every other local civil defense authority in the U.S. - to recruit enough volunteers to carry out rescue, evacuation, mass care, communication, engineering, and transportation duties that might arise in the wake of an atomic attack. In February 1951, he called a meeting at the American Legion Hall to discuss the status of civil defense and encourage citizens to register. Approximately 5% of the population - over 150 residents attended. This initial burst of enthusiasm, however, was short-lived. One month after the meeting, the *Healdsburg Tribune* issued a plea for more block wardens (who were responsible for disseminating information in their neighborhoods). Less than half the number needed had signed up for these crucial positions. Requests for

more Ground Observer Corps volunteers frequently appeared in the paper. By June 1951 the *Healdsburg Tribune* reported that "a number of volunteers had dropped out" of the corps and more were needed. [2] The Tayman Park post was shut down frequently over the course of the decade due to staffing shortages.

Why the lack of interest in civil defense during a time when the news was dominated by the latest communist atrocities in Asia, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe? One explanation may be that people had other more pressing concerns. A series of letters from Mr. Luciani asking for assistance from local farmers began with the qualification, "Seeing as the harvest season is now coming to a close..." and went on to request help with the defense effort. [3] These letters suggest that while the threat of war was uncertain, bringing in the harvest was not and thus took precedence over volunteering for civil defense. Seeking other explanations, I posed this same question to Mr. Jack Relyea, who was a Healdsburg fireman during this period (although not technically a civil defense volunteer, Mr. Relyea was involved with the effort). He explained that while everyone was frightened of the seemingly imminent war, no one believed that Healdsburg, so far from the likely Bay Area targets, was immediately threatened. [4] This belief was confirmed by Mr. Luciani who told the *Healdsburg Tribune* that "the principal concern...is not the event of a disaster but rather the taking care of any large exodus of peoples from larger cities to decentralized communities." [5] In making such a statement, Mr. Luciani appeared to have been compromising his own efforts. He was essentially telling his constituency that a conflict would not necessarily be catastrophic for Healdsburg. Perhaps this statement led some citizens to believe that civil defense was not urgent.

Although recruiting efforts did not fulfill officials' expectations, Healdsburg was not left completely unprotected. There were hun-

Please see page 9



Alta Mae Zanoline, left, Louis Luciani and Mayor Art Ruonavaara look over the display advising what local residents should have in the way of supplies in case of a disaster. Circa 1957

dreds of dedicated citizens who participated in drills, staffed the observer posts, and took first aid courses to prepare for a disaster. In a series of reports to the County Office of Civil Defense in 1956, Mr. Luciani reported that 450 of 555 volunteers needed consistently enrolled in civil defense. That same year, he reported that most of the churches in Healdsburg had formed civil defense units, primarily dedicated to caring for evacuees from the Bay Area. Although it was unlikely that Healdsburg would suffer a direct attack, there were other reasons for becoming involved in the defense effort. Civil defense offered citizens an opportunity to serve their communities and contribute to national defense. Members of the Ground Observer Corps were recognized for their service with such tangible rewards as silver wing insignias and certificates. Healdsburg resident Gladys McKinley writing to the civil defense office in 1954 to offer her isolated rural home as an observation post, gave as her reason for wanting to volunteer, "I would very much like to get the silver wings...." [6] When I asked Mr. Relyea to account for the commitment of some volunteers in an atmosphere of apathy, he replied, "it was a lodge thing," referring to the social aspect of civic participation. Indeed, camaraderie may have been as strong an inducement as the desire to serve the community and the nation.

A survey of Healdsburg schools, conducted by the civil defense office in April 1956 provides a snapshot of the status of the program in the community from the mid- to late-1950s. Schools were asked "if the children are still being trained in disaster or air raid drills." While Healdsburg Union Elementary and Healdsburg Junior High were continuing to hold drills, St. John's and Healdsburg Senior High had ceased them. The Alexander Valley Union Elementary School and Windsor Union district reported that they were holding drills periodically, with Windsor adding that "There is great need for a uniform disaster drill state wide." J.W. Small of the West Side Union School District informed the civil defense office that this district was holding disaster drills but had ceased air raid drills, noting, "We give some instruction on what to do in case of earth quake [sic], and of course fire..... [sic] We feel that due to our location and the present color of international circumstances there would be little point. Our greatest danger would be from radioactive fallout..... [sic] for which there seems little we could do." [7] For the most part, the Healdsburg schools' survey responses echoed general feelings in the public. Some soldiered on with civil defense preparations, others attended to it "periodically," and still others accepted with some degree of fatalism that civil defense was futile.

As the decade wore on, interest in civil defense waned. The war that seemed imminent in 1950 failed to materialize, improvements in radar technology rendered the Ground Observer Corps obsolete, and improvements in nuclear technology decreased the chance for survival. Although there was some renewed interest during the early 1960s in the wake of the Berlin and Cuban Missile Crises, civil defense ultimately faded from public consciousness.



Master Sergeant Robert Mascherini, right, showing Civilian Defense Ground observers post volunteers the new acoustic detector being tested at the Tayman Park Post. Looking on, left to right, Mrs. Charles Scalone, Mrs. Waldo Iversen, Mrs. W. A. Archer, Mrs. Mel Wood and W. A. Archer. Circa 1954.

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[1] *Press Democrat*, 16 March 1952.

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[3] Louis Luciani to various farmers, 10 October 1951, Collection of Healdsburg Museum.

[4] Jack Relyea, interview by author, 15 April 2003, tape recording, collection of the author.

[5] *Healdsburg Tribune*, 20 July 1950.

[6] Gladys McKinley to Miss Mascherini, 21 November 1954, Collection of Healdsburg Museum.

[7] Louis Luciani to Healdsburg school principals, 16 April 1956, Collection of Healdsburg Museum. Healdsburg school principals to Louis Luciani, April-May 1956, Collection of Healdsburg Museum.

ENTERTAINMENT AND SPORTS

by Charlotte Anderson



"LEGION LOT" TO SHOPPING CENTER

The property framed by North, Center, Piper, and West (Healdsburg Ave.) Streets was used for years for many and varied events. On the property were, among others, the American Legion Hall, the Women's Improvement Club (known also as the Scout Hall), and (later) the Firehouse.

"The Old Oaken Bucket," a "midget golf course" on the north side of North Street between Center and West, was opened August 8, 1930, by owners Ross Pool and S. Catelli. The first play over the course was by "Healdsburg's 'Four Horsemen,' Bill Hill, Al Garrett, Chas. Sheriffs, and Ira Rosenberg." (TRIBUNE 12 Aug 1930, p.1:6) There were prizes offered by the Sunshine Beauty Shop and the General Drug store for the best low scores the first week by a woman and a man. Closing for the winter, the course again opened in May of 1931 with new felt "greens" and several remodeled "fairways." Unfortunately, the enterprise only lasted these two years, and the "course" was dismantled with several locals taking home "souvenirs" for their garden!

The corner of Center and North Streets, then known as the Strehlow lot and previously used as the miniature golf course, was leveled and cleaned for use as an addition to the Twilight League baseball grounds. Added lights were installed. There was room enough on the property, eventually bought by the city, for a proper baseball diamond, where people either played or sat and watched games of twilight baseball for several years. The space also was home to circuses coming to town and to various fairs.

During WW II, the Legion Hall and Hospitality House were used for dances, entertainment, and recreation for service men and locals. One such event, in 1943, was a dance for the men from the Fulton "Airdrome" with music provided by a military band from Vallejo.

In 1944, there was a "Night in Monte Carlo" where Russ Colwell's orchestra provided dance music and the men of the community presented short skits for floor show entertainment. Feminine parts were taken by Louis Galeazzi, James Athey, Chris Decker, Ed Barry, and Joe Cuneo. Others in the cast were Rene Revel, J.A. Ratchford, Bill Stine, Herb Solem, Frank Sillano, John Morgan, Earl Osborn, A.M. Anderson, Syl Borel, Ralph Wright, and Kenneth Conley.

After the war, the "Center Street complex" continued hosting softball, recreation, fairs, and the like. The 1st Future Farmer Fair was held in that location. In August of 1955, however, the city accepted a bid from Mitchell L. Mitchell to purchase the property to put up a "shopping center." (TRIBUNE, 23 Aug 1955, p.1:1-4) The American Legion Hall was razed with the Legionnaires moving to the Villa property. A new firehouse was built on Center Street just south of Matheson, and the Boys' Club moved to a Lions Club property located between Recreation Park and Oak Mound Cemetery. Healdsburg was entering the big time!



Property bounded by North, Center, Piper and West streets; showing Legion Hall in center.

Please see page 11



Healdsburg Fiesta 1941. In the rear can be seen the traveling amplifying station. It was the Standard Oil Announcer, a car with its announcer Niles Bentley who described all events to the "assembled multitudes."

THE HEALDSBURG BOAT CLUB

In the fall of 1941, a meeting was held to form the Healdsburg Boat Club. The purpose of the club "will be to promote and encourage interest in the Russian River at Healdsburg, to aid and supervise all activities intending to popularize the natural beauties of our river, to patrol and keep the river clear of debris, rocks, and other obstructions which will hinder safe and enjoyable boating." It was also planned to provide adequate facilities for the launching and removing of all sizes from the river. 30 charter members were among the local enthusiasts.

On February 6 and 7, 1942, the Healdsburg Boat Club presented a three-act musical comedy, "Swing Out" as a fund raiser. The leads, taking both men's and women's parts, were Francis Passalacqua, Leo Frediani, Hal Walls, "Babe" Foppiano, Charlie Guerrazzi, Joe Cuneo, Jim Athey, Paul Shwabe, Leroy Meisner, and George Kramer.

Since the river could not be used for boats during WW II, the Boat Club leased their land to Sam Passarino who plowed it and planted it in tomatoes. Commodore Wolking, tongue in cheek, warned everyone to look out for anchors, outboard motor parts, or even stray parts of the old dam!

In 1944, the Club purchased riverfront property on the east side of the Russian River between the highway and railroad bridges. The land, purchased from the John Grant estate, was filled in accordance with post-war plans to build a clubhouse and facilities for launching boats.

Although the Boat Club officially disbanded at the end of 1941, Bill Wolking kept "working in the wings" and kept the idea of the Club alive. Thus, in 1955, the Healdsburg Boat Club was reorga-

nized and new officers elected: Bill Wolking, commodore; Lenard Avilla, vice commodore; Clyde Cook, rear commodore; Bob Stevens, secretary; Len Williams, treasurer; Bob Trowbridge, port captain; and Ralph Sandborn, fleet commander. They added to their purposes "cooperation with the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors in supervising all activities of boating, including safety, speed limits, and the protection of the rights of navigation."

In preparation for the 1957 boating season, club members constructed floats and solid piers to tie up to. They had to wait for the dam to go in and the water to level off to install them. The launching ramp was widened to accommodate two boats at the same time, and the surface was blacktopped, courtesy of Basalt. Wednesday nights were set aside as boating picnic nights for the summer. Summer fun was enjoyed by all!

CAR RACING

In the years between 1950 and 1960, car racing was coming into its own. In 1950, at the Santa Rosa speedway, Redwood Empire racing fans were enjoying nights filled with "thrills and spills" while watching the new "harem-scarem" sport of hard top racing. In August of 1950, among the more than 30 hard top entrants were two well-known Healdsburg men, Rod Zanoline and Bob Rogers. In their first race of the night, the Healdsburgers finished one two.

Rod Zanoline, from Alexander Valley, had been making the annual tour with the racing men of Northern California for three seasons, and in 1950 moved to the top as one of the aces in the field. He drove his own car, one he designed and built, and raced in Santa Rosa, Oakland, Fresno, and San Jose. Bob Rogers made his debut in the 1950 Santa Rosa races driving "car 202 built and owned by Ernie and Frank Palmieri of Healdsburg, a '37 Ford coupe with a modified engine." In the semi-final 10-round lap, Rogers came back from the ninth starting position to finish far ahead of his opponents to capture his first win in his racing career.

Del Kron joined Zanoline and Rogers for a "destruction derby" at the Speedway, late July of 1955. Zanoline went on to win many events and become a top driver.

BAG 'EM WHERE YOU CAN!

Local sportsmen in Healdsburg opened the 1945 deer season by vying for the distinction of bringing in the first deer. Among those who tried their luck were Quinto and Al Barbieri in Franz Valley, E.I. Beeson and Pat Dennes at the Briggs' Ranch in Knights Valley, and Clem Auradou and others at the Horn Ranch near Cloverdale. The first deer validated by Chief Del Simpson of the police department was brought in at 11 a.m. by Joe Puccinelli who

Continued on page 12



Barclay Nally

shot it on Pineflat. While this was occurring in Healdsburg, Barclay Nalley, hospital apprentice 1-c on US Sanctuary, a hospital ship, bagged his first deer while on a three-day leave in Honolulu. He was visiting friends, the Earl Thackers, who flew Barclay and other friends to Molokai for a hunting trip. (HEALDSBURG TRIBUNE, 1931-1957).

THEATER IN HEALDSBURG

Theater productions in Healdsburg have been plentiful and varied throughout the years. In 1931, a big community play, "Aunt Lucia," played for two nights to the delight of theater-goers, with Byron Gibbs in the title role. Twenty-eight of "our most prominent business men" played the parts of college girls.

In 1931 and 1932, the Kiwanis had two "hits" with the community. The first, "The Pasha, or in a Turkish Harem" featured Dr. & Mrs. W.B. Towle, Mr. & Mrs. Byron Gibbs, James Bowen, and Lucille Kunz.

On April 16 and 17, 1936, the American Legion put on a benefit play, "When Men Marry." Eighty local business men consented to take part. "All men! Not a woman in it! These men will cast aside their sombre business suits and will assume the apparel of matrons, vampires, and fashion plates for the entertainment." (TRIBUNE 13 APR 1935, p.1:4)

In 1940, Healdsburg's Little Theater group gave its first performance, "The Drunkard," for the Harvest Festival. It was directed by Sanford Wheeler with Miss Doris Petty, also of HHS, bringing together the "olio" show. Taking the parts of old time vaudeville singers included Jeanne Mascherini, Betty Eschen, Clare Ballard, Ernestine Balbi, Jeanne Thompson, Harold Wallsand, Bill Wendt, Charles Cuerrazzi, Ed Gaspar, Jr., Leonard Green, Elmer Sandborn, Wendt LaVere Cood, Carl Young, and Felix Lafon. Mrs. R.R. Dennes was the pianist.

It was a howling success with "posies for acting" going to Harold Walls, Carol Norton, Bill Rosenberg, Jeannette Templeton, Betty Bauman, and Elmer Sandborn. "Bill Rosenberg and Mary Wattles in their Apache dance left the crowd screaming for more long after Bill had shot Mary dead with a blank cartridge." (TRIBUNE 1 SEP 1941, p.1:2-3)

In December of 1941, Mary Uboldi directed "Wrong Number" with Betty Bauman, Harold Walls, and Billie Cootes in the juvenile

roles.

In the years that followed, there were various productions—but let Jo Osborn, an old-time resident and "actress" tell "My Theatre Memories" (as related to her son Don Osborn): "When I first moved to Healdsburg shortly after my marriage to Earl in 1934, most of the theater in town was provided by a variety of local clubs and organizations — Kiwanis, 20-30, American Legion, etc.—as well as occasional productions provided by the schools and their PTA's. Variety and minstrel shows were very popular, and a lot of the humor in those days seemed to be provided by local businessmen dressed up like women. Byron Gibbs and Elmer Sandborn were frequent performers, and even Smith Robinson got involved from time to time, years before he was involved with "Smitty's Scoops" and our adopted battalion in Korea.

"Sanford Wheeler was hired as a drama and English teacher by Healdsburg High in 1935 and began directing memorable productions at the school, many of them classical Greek and Shakespearean dramas. Soon he originated the Little Theater Group, which presented popular plays of the era such as "Hay Fever" and "You Can't Take It with You." At the time it was the only amateur theater body in the county. Sanford became our close friend, and I had a wonderful time acting in some of his productions. The Little Theater group lasted until 1941, when Sanford left to pursue an advanced degree in drama at Cornell.

"Local music and theater were especially important between 1941 and 1945 because entertainment too far away from Healdsburg was limited by war's gas and rubber rationing. Owen Sweeten and the city band entertained us on summer Saturday nights on the Plaza. There were always performances connected with the Harvest Festival and lots of events at the American Legion Hall. Yearly variety shows combining the talents of students, teachers, and local citizens soon became the hottest ticket in town. The year Mary Uboldi directed "Varieties of 1944," more than 1300 of us crowded into the high school auditorium during the run—pretty impressive attendance for a town of little more than 3000 at the time.

The Little Theater group took on new life in 1949 with lots of its energy supplied by Bonnie Craver and Leonard Green. "Claudia" and "Blithe Spirit" got them going.

The following year, the group was renamed "The Footlighters," with Mary Uboldi directing a June 1950 production of "Arsenic and Old Lace." Marilyn Leonasio and I played the two elderly spinsters who provided the demise of so many old men with their deadly elderberry wine. The comedy was a terrific hit that sold out every night. Almost all of the cast is gone now, with Mary passing away a few months ago too. More than fifty years have gone by, but every now and then I fondly remember Spence Weart, Bob Izzett, Bob Brady, Elmer, and so many of the other cast members as friends who shared my favorite theatrical experience."

Continued on page 13



Bob Brady and Floramae Cootes Caletti

The Footlighters had about 25 active members in 1950 when they produced "Arsenic." Others in the cast were Johnny Cooper, Floramae Cootes, Bob Plasberg, Dan Raymond, Ernie Frandsen, Roely Robinson, Leland Stanford, and Ralph Wright.

Early in 1956, the Footlighters voted to suspend their activities "due to the pending program for the demolishing of the American Legion Hall." (TRIBUNE, 23 Feb 1956, p2:4) However, the legacy of little theater and lavish stage productions involving those in the schools and in the community was carried on for a number of years by Mary Uboldi at Healdsburg High School with reviews, benefits, and plays. (HEALDSBURG TRIBUNE, 1931-1956)

AVIATION

On the day in June of 1941 that the 1300 foot runway of the Healdsburg Air Field opened for business, several "large" planes and their pilots took advantage by landing there. Burnett Bidwell took the flyers into town for lunch! Later in the afternoon, Paul Rued of Healdsburg and Chas. Cassini of Santa Rosa came in with Piper Cubs. Local men who amassed many hours in the air are Lew Norton, Ed R. Norton, Jim Athey, Paul Rued, Eddie Burns, Adeline Passarino, Geno Buffi, Everett Beeson, Dr. E. I. Meyer, Ken Cook, Chas. King, Erwin Lowery, Albert Kelly, Walter Gagliardo, Wilbur Cake, Douglas Holmes, Louis Cazaux, Burnett Bidwell, Bob Kramer, Alma Merriam, Ray Grant and Francis Itarnern. In July, the field was named "Athey Field," and at that time Paul Rued was instructing Erwin Lowrey, Burnett Bidwell, Douglas Holmes, and Kenneth Cook. Rued flew the students to his Alexander Valley field for preliminary taking-off and landing practice. And then came WW II.

GOLF

In 1946, an article in the TRIBUNE stated: "Golf Course Makes Record; Income Exceeds Expenditures." (5 Apr 1946, p1:4) This was in the month of March, and it was the first time Tayman Park had made money since the City took it over!

During WW II, there was very little play. The locals were too busy trying to keep business and farming going with the shortage of help. However, with the return of service men, "the picture changed," and people, relieved of "nose to the grindstone slaving," began enjoying the exercise and fresh air recreation provided by golf. There was a reorganization of the Golf Club with the initial meeting having 75 members. Officers were elected: Byron Gibbs, pres; O.H. Price, vp; Warren Bronner, sec/treas; Vincent Rafanelli, golf captain; and Owen Sweeten, entertainment. Clem Auradou and committee prepared the dinner!

As many as 70 or 80 golfers "have been digging divots in one day, especially during the fine weather of the last few weeks," was stated in the 26 April 1946 (p.5:3) TRIBUNE. There were two local tournaments in April, a mixed foursome on April 7 in which 28 persons participated. The winners were Perce Williams and Phyllis Stuart, with Elmer Rogers and Alyce Bidwell, second, and Dr. Andrews and Marge Farris, third. A flag tournament on April 21 was won by Byron Gibbs. In May, the Women's Golf Club hosted members of the Northbay Women's Golf Association at an all-day session. Among local winners were Jo Wright, Marge Farris, Georgia Stine, Christine Williams, and Ethel Howard. The women had organized themselves into a grand Thursday group with golf in the morning, a luncheon and meeting, and then bridge in the afternoon.

In 1950, the position of "Golf Pro" at Tayman Park was taken over by Bill Hanger. One of the first things he did was request old golf clubs from local golfers for the purpose of giving youngsters a chance to get started in the game. Hanger cut down the clubs to fit young ones of all ages, and kept the clubs permanently at the course. He had these clubs in readiness for his first golf class offered free of charge to any and all local young golfing enthusiasts. In November of 1950, a Junior Golf Club was formed with the first officers being Don Osborn, pres; Barbara Howard, vp; Billy Auradou, golf captain; Merle Roberts, sec; and Darla Zunino, treas. On various committees were Ted Vogt, Nina Galeazzi, John Reynolds, T.A. Clark, Dennis Williams, Fern Bidwell, Merle Osborn, and Paul Vogt. The advisory committee for the Junior Golf Club included Mrs. Marge Reynolds, Mrs. Marge Farris, Chris Williams, and Bill Hanger. The new club met every Saturday at 8 a.m. for lessons followed by chocolate and doughnuts.

Throughout the following years, golf played a prominent part in Healdsburg's recreation activities. Different specialty tournaments were staged by both the Men's and Women's Clubs such as "3 blind

Continued on page 14

mice," "birdie tourney," "flag tourney," "string tourney," "hearts and flowers," and "turkey shoot." Other regular tournaments have been the Finny Frisch Trophy, men vs. women (won in 1953 by the men), and the annual Reynolds' Husband and Wife tourney. That same year the Women's Championship was won by Marge Reynolds for the 6th year in a row! Ken Hoernlein, another consistent winner, won the Men's Championship.

Keeping things going in 1957 were Dorothy and R.J. Daniel who won the Reynolds' Trophy. R.W. Daniel who won the Farris tourney, Ken Hornlein who won the men's title, and Jeannette Beeson who defeated Addie Marie Meyer for the women's championship. It seemed as if golf was really here to stay and be enjoyed in Healdsburg. (HEALDSBURG TRIBUNE 1946-1957)

FIESTAS, FAIRS, PARADES

In 1931, a date was fixed for the Russian River Pageant and Fiesta at Healdsburg by the Chamber of Commerce. The Fiesta was set for three days, June 19-21, and a queen contest was held. Two games of Twilight baseball preceded the coronation. In the first game, the Healdsburg Red Devils girls' team defeated the Alexander Valley girls, 3-2 in a 5-inning game. The men's 7-inning contest was won by the American Legion, defeating the College St. Grocers 7-3.

The queen's coronation and costume ball was held June 19. Lena Massoni was crowned Queen of the Fiesta, with her "court" being Leontine Mane, Margaret Buchignani, Evelyn Cerialle, Erell Partin, Bernice Neely, and Ann Johnson. Two solos by local operatic tenor Henry Passalacqua, accompanied by Mrs. Chas. McCord followed. Street dancing and "merry making" came after the formal ceremony with music by Roy Jewett's Russian River orchestra until midnight. A carnival crowd visited the merry-go-round, ferris wheel, and other attractions until early Saturday morning.

Spurred on by the 1931 success, the Harvest Festival continued on, each year adding, subtracting, or rearranging events. In 1937, a bathing beauty contest was held at River Garden, a boys' bicycle race in town, and extra field events at the Carnival lot such as greased pig, slippery pole, sack race, three-legged race, pie eating, melon eating and a blind race.

1938 found a Kiddies Pet Parade, exhibits, a cake baking contest, a home coming dinner, a donkey baseball game, a snake derby, and for the finales an electrical parade and fireworks courtesy of Shell Oil Company. Exhibits included dolls and agricultural, including a cactus garden. The queen that year was Alta Badger.

The Harvest Festival of 1941 was held on August 30, 31, and September 1. However, the week before, the American Legion had a Monte Carlo party with a buffet supper (prepared by Clem Auradou), entertainment, and surprises. The entertainment was "under the direction of Owen 'Sugar' Sweeten who stated, 'Come for fun, and you won't be sorry.'" (TRIBUNE, 21 Aug 1941, p.1:7) For this, the 5th annual Harvest Fair, a "rip-snorting" rodeo was added to the 15-plus major events.

Fairs and celebrations were "put on hold" during WW II, and it wasn't until 1949 that St. John's put on their first annual Country Fair. The four-day event included entertainment, food sales, games, and a ferris wheel and pony rides. A ravioli dinner on Sat., June 2, preceded the band concert in the Plaza where Owen Sweeten emceed quite a varied program with special guest Jone Pedersen of Santa Rosa who had been just recently crowned "Miss California."

1950 found the people of Healdsburg wrapped up in two "fairs." The Future Farmers of America held its first large fair in the Legion lot on Center St. including a live stock show, a band contest, and a variety of booths. A flower show, an art exhibit, a needlework display and a display of articles made by the high school students in the woodwork classes of John Uboldi (cedar chests, toys, inlaid coffee tables and lamps and other artistic odds and ends of furniture) were held in the Legion Hall. Bands from throughout the County played at different times and were judged. A Majorette contest included 2 local girls, Barbara Howard and Judy Trusler. A Majorette demonstration with 23 students from the Healdsburg Elementary school was held under the direction of Charles McCord.

The St. John's County Fair opened its 1950 4-day stint with an afternoon of games, booths, food, drinks, and rides followed by an evening band concert in the Plaza, under the direction of Vincent Trombley.

The Future Farmer Fair moved to a new site in 1956, Recreation Park. The move was hastened by the selling of the City's property on Center Street, and the razing of the buildings there to make way for a shopping center. This year local residents were encouraged to "go Western," that is, dress in western style for the fair.

The 1957 Future Farmers Country Fair began with a twilight parade consisting of 73 entries including bands, marching units, floats, decorated vehicles, business advertisements, novelty units, and mounted units. George Smith, president of the Chamber of Commerce, was the marshal. Following the parade, the Gayway at Rec Park and the exhibits at the Elementary School opened. On Friday, judging took place followed by showmanship classes and demonstrations. Saturday began with Kids Day Events and ended with the auction and awards presentations. Extra parking was provided at the new Boys' Club land east of the park. 1957 seemed to provide a well-set pattern for the years to come.

Healdsburg Community Leaders in the 1930s-1950s

by Holly Hoods

Background

Healdsburg has a long history of dedicated service from committed local residents. The four civic leaders profiled in this article helped shape the City of Healdsburg in a variety of ways, through participation in local government; involvement in service or community-oriented organizations; and especially through promotion of positive activities for local youth.



Waldo Iversen

Waldo Iversen, Longtime City Superintendent, Scouting Leader

Waldo Iversen was born in 1907 in Caspar, Mendocino County. The son of a sawmill operator, he moved to Healdsburg in the late 1920s after his graduation from college at the University of the Pacific at

Stockton. Iversen worked for Fred Brandt, drying prunes at his big dehydrator. He became City Superintendent in 1945. He worked as engineer and superintendent for the City of Healdsburg for 35 years. He was not only in charge of the Public Works Department, but also headed the Water and Electric Departments.

In 1933, Iversen married Evelyn Day, the daughter of local dairyman George F. Day, owner of the Home Dairy. Waldo and Evelyn raised two sons, Neil and Dale. In 1938, Iversen became involved with the Boy Scouts of America, first as an Assistant Scoutmaster with a group sponsored by the Federated Church; then with a group based at the Healdsburg Fire Department. He became Scoutmaster in 1940, a position he held for nine years. Many of his scouts became business and community leaders. Ira Rosenberg, former owner of the venerable Rosenberg and Bush Department Store, for example, was Iversen's first Eagle Scout. Involvement with youth and enthusiasm for scouting was passed on to his son Neil, who eventually helped purchase the Boy Scout Hut on First Street. Waldo Iversen died in April 1989 at the age of 81.

Al Barbieri, Boys Club Founder and Manager

Ambrose L. "Al" Barbieri is still remembered in Healdsburg for his tremendous



Al Barbieri

positive influence on local youth. Born in 1905, he came to Healdsburg from San Francisco in the mid-1940s, after jobs as an advertising salesman, bridge worker (during the Depression), truck driver, realtor and professional boxer. Byron Gibbs, then principal of Healdsburg Elementary School, approached Barbieri initially to start a Boy Scout program, but he preferred the idea of a Boys' Club where kids could come every day. Through Barbieri's efforts, Healdsburg became the home of the first sanctioned Boys' Club north of San Francisco in 1946.

Barbieri was assisted by local men in keeping the club in operation in the early years, soliciting funds from the local service organizations. During the day, he operated the Healdsburg Furniture and Appliance Store. By night, Barbieri taught boxing

and good sportsmanship to local youth. His brothers, Quinto, Elmo and Adolph "Zip", were also big supporters.

In 1948, Al Barbieri was elected to the City Council, but had to resign for business reasons in 1951. During this time, he lived in San Francisco for several years. He returned to Healdsburg and was reelected to City Council in 1968. Barbieri served on the City Council for a total of 11 years, including one year as Mayor in 1972. He remained active in the Boys' Club throughout his life and the clubhouse at the corner of Piper and First streets was named in his honor. He died in October 1989.

Russell B. Stevens, First Planning Commission Chair, Youth Program Fundraiser

By the 1950s, a number of lumber companies were operating in Healdsburg. Russell Stevens, the most prominent lumber yard owner, operated the Stevens Lumber Company. The firm was founded by his father, Amos F. Stevens, shortly after the family moved to Healdsburg in 1908. (Today's Healdsburg Lumber Company is the descendant of the Stevens Lumber Company).

Continued on page 16



Russell B. Stevens

R.B. Stevens married the popular Cleone Snook in 1927 and built a house for her on Tucker Street. Mr. and Mrs. Stevens participated extensively in civic affairs. In 1946, he became chair of the first Planning Commission. Stevens also became president of the Sonoma County Taxpayers Association. Active in Kiwanis, he championed local youth programs and became Governor of the California-Nevada-Hawaii District of Kiwanis International.

Russell Stevens retired in 1963, selling the Stevens Lumber Company to Pacific Lumber Company. After a long illness, he died at the age of 69 in 1967.



Al Giorgi

Al Giorgi, Former Police Chief, Mayor, City Councilman, Youth Advocate

Al Giorgi served Healdsburg for over 28 years, six in the fire department and 20 in the police department before retiring in 1967. The son of a Center

Street cobbler, Giorgi was born in Healdsburg in 1910. His long career with the city began with work as a groundskeeper at Tayman Park Golf Course with Jessie Robinson. As a young man, Giorgi joined the Healdsburg Volunteer Fire Department. When the volunteer department became a paid department in 1940, Giorgi became a full-time fireman.

He joined the Healdsburg Police Department in 1942, and except for a three-year stint with the U.S. Navy during World War II, worked for the Police force for the rest of his career. As Chief of Police, he patrolled the downtown area on foot twice a day, believing that it kept him in touch with what the community was thinking as well as doing. He knew everyone in town.

After his retirement from law enforcement, Giorgi ran for Healdsburg City Council in 1968. He served two terms on the City Council and as mayor of Healdsburg from 1971-1972. He died in February 1988 at age 77; his wife Lena survived him. Giorgi was known for his low-key style, sense of humor, and concern for and interest in kids. Giorgi Park is named in his honor.

Sources:
City of Healdsburg Centennial Edition, 1867-1967.

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1976 City Council Resolutions to honor Ambrose L. Barbieri and Al Giorgi for Public Service;
Healdsburg Museum family subject files and newspaper index
Interviews with descendants.



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