



RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

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The Angelo Puccioni family, circa 1926

Italia in the North Bay: Wine, Work And Song

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RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

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

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IN THIS ISSUE

Have you ever wondered how or why streets are named? If so, our Research Curator Holly Hoods digs deep into the Museum's archives to give us a fascinating account of this topic in her article *Hidden History: How Street Names Reveal Healdsburg in the 1800s*. As Holly points out in her opening paragraphs "The street names of Healdsburg offer clues to the community's growth, since the names of numerous important landmarks and landowners are commemorated in the streets". Check the 1898 map which accompanies the article.

The stories of two pioneer families, a history of a lumber business with deep roots in the community and a description and use of baskets by the Pomos are included in this issue of the *Recorder*.

Whitney Hopkins gives us a beautifully detailed history of the Asa Arnold Reniff family who were important members of the Geyserville community for 90 years. As Whitney explains, when a family member donated a collection of photographs and other items to the Museum she also provided a written account of the family's history.

Our Curator Daniel Murley has supplied us with another fascinating account of an immigrant family who came to Sonoma County and "lived the American dream" in his cover article *Italia in the North Bay: Wine, Work and Song*. With this article he continues his series featuring the Museum's photographs from the early photographer, S.E. Langhart.

Perhaps these two articles might spur on other residents of the area to donate photos and written histories of their families.

Charlotte Anderson, an enthusiastic contributor to the *Recorder*, has come up with two very interesting subjects. In her *Dream Weavers: Pomo Basketmakers* she gives a detailed account of how the baskets were made, the material used and how the baskets were utilized in everyday life. You can see these baskets by visiting the Museum's main gallery.

In her other article about the Healdsburg Lumber Company, Charlotte takes on the task of giving a history of a Healdsburg business still providing important services to the community today.

We hope that you find this issue of the *Recorder* interesting and informative. Suggestions are always welcomed.

Arnold Santucci

Editor

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HISTORIC



ARTIFACTS

THE DREAM WEAVERS: POMO BASKETWEAVERS

Text by Charlotte Anderson

When asked if her grandmother taught her "this art" (basket weaving), basket weaver Mabel McKay replied, "It's no such a thing. It's spirit. Only the spirit trained me. Spirit show me everything. Each basket has a dream" and the basket maker "weaves the dream." As dream weavers, the Pomos are unparalleled.



The lovely "gift basket" pictured above is one of many baskets in the Healdsburg Museum and Historical Society's treasured collection. This "gift basket" is described as being coiled, sedge with redbud design in "X" crosses. The dark spots on the upper sides indicate there were probably quail topknots decorating the basket.

Utilitarian baskets were part of a Pomo's every day life from his birth to his death: his home was a great thatched "basket"; he was cradled and carried in a baby basket; his toys were baskets modeled from what he saw; he ate from a "dala" (flat basket); he drank from a round "tci-ma"; the seeds that made up his meal were ground in a "mu-tci," a mortar basket; the meal was winnowed in winnow-

ing baskets and screened in a "pa-se" or sieve basket; his fish and meat were cooked in large mush bowls; a large "tci-ma" was his water bucket; his fish was caught in a "baiyat-au," or fish net basket; when he traveled, his belongings were carried in a "bu-gi," the conical burden basket which answered for many purposes; and he trapped birds and game in long cylindrical baskets.



Baby Carrier

LOCAL MATERIALS AND THE MAKING OF THE BASKETS

All Pomo baskets were woven on a framework of slender willow shoots which were peeled and cured carefully.

The Pomos called them "bam" and from them several baskets were named as "bam-tush," meaning evenly woven. The

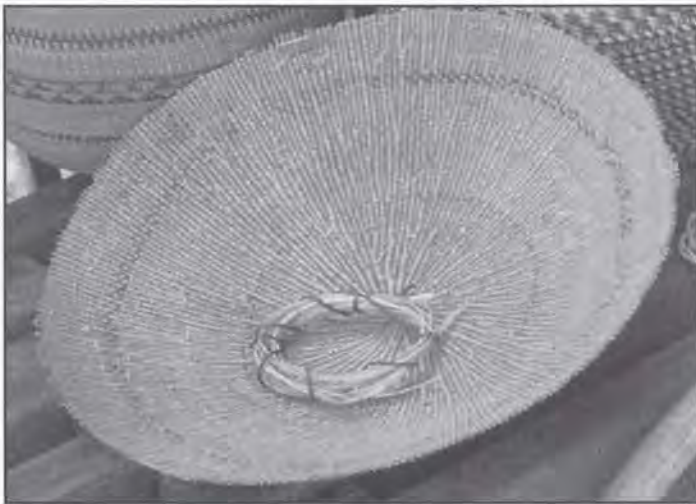
"bams" were the frame work; the thread was obtained from the bark of shrubs and the roots of trees and grasses. The most important of these fibers was "ka-hum," which is the root of a sedge which grows in deep moist soil in most sections of the Pomo country. This sedge has long, slender, grassy leaves and a very long running root which was quite tough. The Indian women split these roots with their teeth and coiled them in bundles which were dried ready for use. When cured, "ka-hum" is of a light cream color, but deepens with age into the rich, creamy brown so much admired in old Pomo baskets.

Rarest and most valuable of all Pomo basket fibers is "tsu-wish," the root of a Scirpus, a grass-like plant growing among the tules on the border of marshy lands. When fresh, the root is a dark brown. The color is usually deepened by placing it in a mixture of mud, ashes and charcoal for a period of from one to three days. The best is then nearly black. The deeper the color, the more prized the "tsu-wish."

The rich, reddish brown in the coarser Pomo baskets is the bark of the red-bud bush. The red-bud bark is stripped in long bands and coiled to dry. The split, peeled stems are also used as basket fiber. The Pomo name is "Mille."

The staple fiber for the lighter color in coarse baskets is obtained by digging the roots of the digger pine, and tearing them into long strips. These are of rich creamy tint, exceedingly tough and pliable and

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Winnowing Basket with 5 angel coil bundle inside.

rich in pitch, and are an ideal basket fiber. The Pomo name is "ka-li-she."

"Ka-hum," "Tsu-wish," "Mille," and "Ka-li-she" for threads, and willow "bams" for framework are practically the only materials used in Pomo baskets. Each is collected at the proper time, and hung up to dry. The smoke and dust of the house began the process of deepening and enriching the color before the material found its way into the baskets.

Given these materials, a small, very sharp knife, an awl, and a dish to hold the water in which the fiber was kept soaking to render it pliable as use, and the Indian woman was ready for work. The knife was formerly of obsidian fastened to a handle with sinew, and the awl a small bone from the deer's leg.

THE POMOS ARE UNIQUE IN THAT THEY ADORN THEIR BASKETS WITH FEATHERS.

The Pomos ornamented their finer baskets with "kaia" or Indian

money, polished bits of abalone shells, and with various bird feathers. The favorite feathers were taken from the red head and yellow throat of the redheaded woodpecker and the green head of the mallard duck. The plumes of the valley quail were also held high in esteem.

Feathers were used in two ways on baskets by the Pomos. In the first way, they were secondary to the design and only gave a bit of color or a finishing touch to a basket with a pretty design. For this purpose the quail plume and the red feathers from the woodpecker's head were almost the only ones used. The red feathers were more often placed regularly but thinly on the lighter-colored fiber on the upper half of the basket, and the quail plumes scattered, or below three crests of "kaia" on the upper edge of the basket. These, the Indians did not consider feathered baskets at all.

In the feathered basket, there was little or no design in the fiber, and the basket was closely covered with feathers. The

Indians divide the fully-feathered baskets into two classes, the "ta-pi-ca" and the "e-pi-ca."

The "ta-pi-ca" (red basket) was always made in one pattern, a saucer-shaped basket closely covered with red feathers and profusely decorated with pendants of "kaia" and abalone. The "e-pi-ca" was a feathered basket of any other shape.

A sampling of the Healdsburg Museum's fine collection is on display in the gallery.



Photo of the common utilitarian carrying basket of larger weave.

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HISTORIC



Mary Flora Reniff Reynolds

FAMILY

90 YEARS IN GEYSERVILLE: THE ASA ARNOLD RENIFF FAMILY

by Whitney Hopkins

When the Reniff or Reynolds name is mentioned, long-time area residents may recall family members, the farm, or the canyon. According to Flora Elizabeth Reynolds, in 1874 her grandparents Asa Arnold and Mary (Diviny) Reniff purchased 90 acres of farm and wooded hill land located about one mile south of Geyserville on what had once been a small portion of Rancho Sotoyome. The western boundary of the property was in the hills; the eastern, the banks of the Russian River. To the south were fields now part of the Nervo Winery vineyards, and on the northwest a creek, wooded canyon and narrow road known for years as Reniff's Canyon (today Tzabaco Road). The farm was bisected both by the county road that became the Redwood Highway and later by the tracks of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad. The Reniff family owned the ranch for 90 years, until the mid-1960s.

In December of 1995 when Flora Elizabeth, or "Elizabeth" as she is commonly known, donated a collection of photographs and other items pertaining to the Reniff family of Geyserville to the Healdsburg Museum, she thoughtfully provided a written account of nearly a century of family history in the Geyserville area. Much of the following information comes as it was told by 93 year old Elizabeth, written on paper and told in recent conversation over the telephone from her Oakland residence. Her account is verified and enhanced by a variety of sources, including census records, references in local newspapers, and conversations with those who knew the family.

Coming to California

Asa Arnold Reniff, born in 1828, was the son of a Massachusetts-born country doctor practicing in New York state. Asa worked as a blacksmith in Broome County, New York, until as a young man he sailed for California via Panama in 1853. After spending a short time in the goldfields, he became a "steamboat man," according to the 1860 Federal Census. On September 1, 1858, he married Mary Diviny in Sacramento. Mary, born in 1834 in County Galway, Ireland, had come to Philadelphia with her mother and younger brother during the Irish potato famine in 1847. Following the death of her mother she sailed to Panama, crossed the Isthmus on the first train, and arrived in California in 1855.



Asa Arnold Reniff, 1893 (1828 - 1913)

Arrival in Geyserville

After living in Sacramento for a period, in the late 1860's and early 1870's, as evidenced by Petaluma Public School certificates and census data, the Reniffs moved to Sonoma County where the climate was preferable. They lived in Petaluma for four years. During that time the couple lost their firstborn, Lucy (1859 -1870), to scarlet fever, and shortly afterward an infant boy and girl. (Because these children were buried in Petaluma, their parents and siblings would eventually claim Cypress Hill Cemetery in Petaluma as their final resting place.)

When the Reniffs moved to Geyserville, they had one son, Alvin Newton, born in Sacramento in 1861. Two additional children, Lewis Arnold (1874-1935) and Mary Flora (1877-1973), were born on the Geyserville farm and reared there. They attended the one-room Independence School, about a mile south on Independence Lane, and after graduation drove in a horse and buggy to high school in Healdsburg.

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Mary Diviny Reniff before she came to California in 1855.

The Reniff family had been living in an older house on the farm until they built their own home in 1893. The location of the Reniff house was planned with the view in mind. The house was situated on a hill overlooking Alexander Valley with Geyser Peak and Black Mountain in the distance. Mount St. Helena could be seen to the south. This was the family home for the rest of the time that the Reniffs spent in Geyserville.

Changes in Management

By the time Asa Arnold Reniff died in 1913, Lewis and Mary Flora were living elsewhere, so the management of the Geyserville farm was taken over by the Reniff's eldest son, Alvin. Mary Reniff survived her husband by five years. At that time the farm was planted chiefly in grapes, but phylloxera began to destroy the vines and Alvin soon converted the land to apples and prunes.

Alvin never married, and on his death in 1932, his sister Mary Flora bought the interest of her surviving brother Lewis so that she was the sole owner of the Geyserville farm. Mary Flora Reniff Reynolds had lived on the Geyserville farm until 1909, when she married Edwin Henry Reynolds, a railroad engineer whose family had strong English roots and was well-established in Santa

Rosa. The couple moved to Mill Valley shortly thereafter, but used the farm as a second home. They had one daughter, Flora "Elizabeth" Reynolds, born in 1911. Mary Flora Reynolds operated the farm largely as an absentee owner employing first Leland Anderson, then Mario Nervo, and later leasing to Frank Banti. In the mid-1960s, she and her daughter, both then residing in Berkeley, sold the property to Leroy Rasmussen. The house had been broken into several times, and the Reynolds felt that it was unsafe to stay there.

Lingering Memories

Although Elizabeth Reynolds grew up in Mill Valley, she reminisces of her time spent on the family farm during summers and vacations. While she has fewer memories of her grandparents who died when she was young, Elizabeth was quite close to her bachelor Uncle Alvin since he managed the Geyserville farm during her youth. She recalls how her uncle would take long walks around the farm after dinner each evening, and when she was visiting she would accompany him. Elizabeth particularly enjoyed hiking in Reniff's Canyon, and noted how guests to the farm would always be taken up the Canyon. At one point she even attended a burial in the Indian cemetery adjoining the Canyon. During the War, when farm help was scarce, Elizabeth remembers picking prunes.

Nearly forty years have passed since the Reynolds sold their Geyserville ranch, the farm has been divided into smaller parcels, and the still-standing 1893 Reniff house has been substantially renovated; however, memories of the family still linger. Sara Banti, of Dry Creek, described how her father-in-law, Frank Banti, leased the prune orchard from the Reynolds during the '40s and '50s. A 93-year old Geyserville native Harvey Rose, whose family's ranch was nearby, remembers leasing land from the Reynolds

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Mrs. Asa Arnold Reniff standing on porch of Reniff farmhouse, circa 1915.

COVER



Enus Puccioni Wiggins

STORY

ITALIA IN THE NORTH BAY, WINE, WORK AND SONG

by Daniel F. Murley



The Angelo Puccioni family, circa 1926

"Yes... Yes... That is me in the white dress, in front. I was about six or seven when that picture was taken." Enthusiastically Enus Puccioni pointed out her smiling image in a family portrait taken at the Langhart Studio in downtown Healdsburg in 1926. Angelo Puccioni and his wife Dalia had assembled the seven children for a formal portrait, possibly to celebrate the successes of the family in the Healdsburg area or to send this image of the Puccionis back to family and friends near Lucca, Italy. Dressed in their finest, all the women were wearing remarkably long strands of pearls and the men were in three piece suits and ties. The immigrant family, once of modest means, had made their mark in America and had this formal portrait to show it. Angelo had arrived in San Francisco from the little town of Coselli in Tuscany in 1887 at the age of 18. He immediately relocated to the Healdsburg area and began work in the orchards and vineyards with many other countrymen and women. Like many immigrants from the Lucca area he worked first at the Italian Swiss Colony in Asti. In fine tradition of his lineage he also worked at many other ranches, saving as much money as he could to eventually buy a

"piece of America." There were so many Italians working in the fields and living in and around northern Healdsburg and Geyserville the area became affectionately know as "Little Lucca." In fact, Angelo married a woman from his hometown in Italy, Dalia Buchignani, who had come to California with her father Narciscio, who also worked in the vineyards. Dalia gave birth to seven children, Julia, Lena, John, Rose, Louis, Mary and Enus. "That's Venus without the 'V,'" Enus told me in a recent interview. "You see, my father was very good friends with the Scatena boys of Scatena Brothers Wine Co. and one of them had a daughter named Enus and both my parents liked it, so here I am 84 years later with a name everyone asks about."

Enus also commented that she was so much younger than her siblings because once her father ostensibly retired from his ranching duties, that left him with a little more time to spend at home with his wife. Enus was 12 years younger than her closest sister Mary.

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The Scatena Bros. Wine Co.

Angelo worked many ranching jobs to support his growing family and worked for both the Grays and the Nortons. He finally saved up enough money “buried in a tin can in the yard” to finance the purchase of about one hundred acres of timber and open land on Mill Creek. There he worked to clear the land and sell the lumber and plant a fine vineyard where he and his sons and daughters toiled to produce wine grapes. Angelo, it seemed, continued to work at other local ranches to keep up with the demands of running his own. He also raised chickens and rabbits, had a wonderful vegetable garden and baked his own fabulous bread in an oven on the ranch.

Enus noted that “we all worked all the time... that was just the way it was. We picked grapes, picked prunes, split pears and even when things seem to be going well I worked cleaning houses for some of the wealthier folks in town. We worked hard but we had a lot of fun.”

Music was one of those great givers of enjoyment, shared freely amongst Italian families. “I remember that during the picking and crushing time lots of friends would come up from the Bay Area to get grapes to make wine at their own homes and ‘boy-o-boy’, there were many late night parties. The accordions and the guitars and the wine and the singing and dancing went on ‘til all hours.” While we discussed music Enus reminisced about the beautiful voice of

her older sister Rosie. “My parents had to tell Rosie to stop all that singing while she worked because the lovely melodies would have such an effect on cousin Rico that he would pause in his labors and swoon over the beautiful ballads and arias Rosie sang.

Cousin Enrico was an example of how many immigrant families brought their relatives from the “old country” here to work in this land of boundless opportunity. Rico was the son of Angelo’s brother from Coselli and became a successful rancher in his own right.

Another integral part in this somewhat typical immigrant tale was the role of the Catholic Church in almost all aspects of their lives. The “old” Saint John’s in Healdsburg was a focal point of community and religion. “From birth to earth,” family members were baptized, received Holy Communion and were confirmed on confirmation. They were married, mourned and buried by the close-knit church community. According to many, some of their most joyous memories were of gatherings at Saint John’s Hall for dancing and wedding receptions and celebrations of the Holy Days.

No story of the movement of large numbers of immigrants to the United States or to the Healdsburg area was just filled by the simplistic daily routines of work or the frequent celebrations of joy.

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St. John's Catholic Church, circa 1912

Tragedy and misfortune tainted most. In the case of the Puccioni family, they were not spared. As epidemic illness spread it touched all. Young Mary Puccioni at the age of 8 was stricken with infantile paralysis, what is now known as polio. However, with true determination and family support, Mary battled her ailment and the lovely woman graduated from Santa Rosa Business College in 1927. She also never lost that work ethic which pervaded the family. Enus noted that when working in the fields despite the brace on her leg, Mary would "even beat me picking prunes and I was fast." One concession Angelo made for Mary, was that once it became a great difficulty for her to walk to Junction School with her brothers and sisters, he allowed them all to go to school in a horse and buggy, much to the delight of all concerned. Mary also became a



Geyserville School Band - 1937

1. Top Row: Alexander Biagini, Mr. Rice, Mr. Winters (principal), Eugene Domenicelli
2. unk, unk, Jobm Marchetti, Elenor McAllistor, unk, unk
3. Martin Hoffman, Mary Buchignani, Betty Whitbro, Merl Absbire, Harriet Boster, unk, Nello Baiocchi, Olivia Martinelli, Fred Columbano
4. Ray Rimmel, Rita Holz, Jean Irwin, Grace Winters, unk, May Holz, unk, "Dint" Rose
5. Jura Hoffman, Bob Cake, Ada Rimmel, unk, Lawrence Smith, Sutton Boster, Jean Ross, Evan Ross, Billy Branson
6. Bottom Row: "Bud" Cake, Paul Marcucci (music teacher), unk

NOTE: All the Italian names

well-known seamstress in the area and many still remember the fine detail of the artistry she stitched from her parent's home. She did however pass away at the age of 51 in 1962. She was preceded in death by her father in 1961, and her brother John who died of leukemia in 1957. The Puccioni Ranch and Vineyard has been in continuous operation since 1904 and just recently received an award and induction into the California Agricultural Heritage Club.

The legacy of the early immigrant families (Irish, Italian, Mexican, etc.) into the North Bay and particularly into the Healdsburg area is etched onto the faces of the diligent workers of the land, such as Angelo Puccioni, pictured here. Through their persistence and perseverance they kept a community together and helped others to achieve their dreams. Though many of the faces from old images, like these found at the Langhart Studio, are no longer seen, their names and tradition still remain. All of us -save our Native American neighbors- are immigrants or the descendants of immigrants.

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HISTORIC



Jacob Heald

STREETS

The fascinating history of Healdsburg can be discovered in many ways. The street names of Healdsburg offer clues to the community's growth, since the names of numerous important early landmarks and landowners are commemorated in the streets. Time has obscured many of the meanings and original associations, so this article made extensive use of the Healdsburg Museum's research archives to reveal their stories. The historical maps, photographs, deeds, tax assessment records, newspapers, County history books, directories and census records that are preserved in the Museum's (newly-named) Roberta Alexander Research Library enable us to delve into the past through primary documents.

Records show that before there was a town of Healdsburg, the first wagon road through northern Sonoma County was the well-worn dirt road, leading from San Francisco to the northern gold mines. Ohio native, Harmon Heald, who came to the area with his brothers in 1850 after a failed gold mining attempt, saw this location as an ideal place to establish a store. In 1851, Heald built a small clapboard cabin on this main road to Mendocino and counties to the north. It is now



Healdsburg 1898.

known as **Healdsburg Avenue**.

Heald gambled that the Sotoyome Rancho grant, owned by the Fitch family, would become government property, available for preemption. If not, he figured that he could purchase it from the owner. Heald opened a small store the next year, and by 1854 established a post office at the 300 block of **Healdsburg Avenue**. Heald also began unofficially selling off lots near the store. As soon as Josefa Fitch received official

title to the land in 1856, Harmon Heald was able to legally purchase the property. He hired County Surveyor William Mock to survey the first town plat in 1857.

The original town of Healdsburg had only seven streets, extending out from a central plaza. The public-spirited Harmon Heald donated the lot for the Plaza, as well as lots for a district school, cemetery, and four churches. The first five streets in town were named for their proximity to

the Plaza: **North, West, South, Center and East Streets**.

Two of these original streets have been renamed. City Leaders changed **West Street** to **Healdsburg Avenue** for clarity's sake when the **101 Highway** passed the city in 1960. **South Street** became **Matheson Street** much earlier, by 1898. It was named for Roderick Matheson, who bought 300 acres on the east side of Heald's town in 1856. Appointed Colonel of the First California Regiment, 32nd New York State Volunteers, at the outbreak of the Civil War, Matheson traveled east to fight, and died of battle wounds in 1862. Matheson had envisioned a broad residential street running to his farm at the base of Fitch Mountain. After his death, the Matheson Addition was added by his wife to the east side of the original town at **Fitch Street**. The Matheson Addition offered 21 prime residential lots between **Matheson** and **Tucker Streets**, and added **University, First, and Second Streets** to the eastern city limits before 1870.

University Street was named for Healdsburg's first

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school house, the Russian River Institute. Erected by Erastus A. Scott on the east side of **University Street** south of **Tucker Street**, on land donated by Rod Matheson, the Russian River Institute opened in 1858 with an enrollment of 103. Matheson was one of the teachers. In 1859, the school was taken over by a group of local citizens, led by Matheson, and reopened under the name "The Agricultural and Mechanical University of California." The university continued under a series of owners and principals under various names: the Sotoyome Institute, the Alexander Academy, and the Healdsburg Institute.

In 1877, a new building was built at (what is now) **Plaza Court**. The Seventh-Day Adventists purchased the Healdsburg Institute in 1882, and continued to operate it as the Healdsburg College until 1908. A large College Boarding Hall was built in 1882 west of **Fitch Street**. This dormitory building lent its name to **College Street**.

The main business block of early Healdsburg developed on **West Street** between **North** and **South Streets**. **Center Street** attracted several dwellings that faced the Plaza. "**Mill Road**" formed the southern boundary of the original 1857 town. Its name derived from being the route that led out to William March's sawmill on Mill Creek.



Top photos, left, Harmon Heald, right, Jacob Heald.
Bottom photo, The Russian River Institute Alexander Academy on University Street below Tucker Street, circa 1865.

March's mill was the only source of sawn lumber for many miles. Dry Creek was bridged at Mill Street in 1875.

Fitch Street was the only original street to be named after a person. Harmon Heald named this street in honor of Henry Fitch, owner of the Sotoyome Rancho, the 48,800-acre Mexican land grant upon which Healdsburg was founded.

By 1854, Heald was joined by a handful of settlers, including Thomas and Martha Hudson of Virginia, German immigrant August Knaack, Joseph Dow of New Hampshire, and H.M. Wilson. These individuals bought

property adjoining Heald's holdings, which they soon subdivided to sell to incoming settlers.

The town grew on all sides in the next decade, before it was officially incorporated in 1867. In 1860, S.C. Haydon, a well-to-do Pennsylvania bookseller, developed an addition at the southeastern edge of the town along **Haydon Street**. The 32 year old Haydon had at that time \$10,000 worth of real estate and an 18 year old, pregnant bride, Charlotte. Haydon's Addition included 25 lots between **Tucker** and **Mason Streets**, with an alley running between **Haydon** and **Tucker Streets**. By 1870, the

Haydons were the parents of four children, and had moved to Monterey County where S.C. Haydon opened a drug store.

Jacob Heald added 20 lots southwest of **Mason Street** in 1872. Heald's Addition honored his brother, town founder, Harmon Heald, with a **Harmon Street**. Thomas Hudson offered Hudson's Addition two years later in 1874, 13 small lots and six large ones on both sides of the railroad tracks. **Railroad Avenue** became **Hudson Street**. **Front** and **Bridge Streets** were also added with Hudson's Addition.

Tucker Street got its name from Ben F. Tucker, a pioneer merchant who owned a large lot on that street in 1860. The Maryland-born Tucker opened another store on **West Street** with partner G.H. Peterson, a native of Sweden. B.F. Tucker died in 1878 and is buried in Oak Mound Cemetery. Coincidentally, Mary and John Tucker, a popular blind couple who ran a thriving candy and variety store in town, lived at 411 **Tucker Street** from 1872-1932. Many later residents assumed that the "Blind Tuckers" (as they were affectionately known), named the street. Though John and Mary were longtime residents of **Tucker Street**, they were not related to the B.F. Tucker for whom the street is named.

Piper Street is named for John J. Piper of Indiana, the town's second doctor, who moved to Healdsburg in 1862,

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shortly after Dr. B.B. Bonham, Healdsburg's first physician. During the 1860s, Dr. Piper owned the entire block bounded by **Piper Street, Fitch, North and Center Streets**. After losing his wife in 1868, J.J. Piper moved to Spokane, Washington in 1878 to establish a new medical practice. When he died there in 1908, his body was shipped to Healdsburg from Spokane. Dr. Piper is buried with his wife in Oak Mound Cemetery.

Joseph Dow purchased property from J.J. Piper before he moved to Washington. Dow was farmer from New Hampshire, with a wife and six children. Filed in 1877, Dow's Addition added 12 new residential lots between **North and Piper Streets**.

For many years in early Healdsburg, the area on **West Street** north of **Piper Street** was known as North Healdsburg. This area boasted the two earliest hotels, a brewery, a general store, a livery stable, a tannery and three saloons. North Healdsburg also had Healdsburg's first houses of ill-repute. The so-called "denizens of the bagnios" of West Street openly flouted their decadent lifestyle in early Healdsburg. The newspapers of the 1870s through the 1890s deplored the scandalous behavior of the prostitutes of North Healdsburg, but wrote about it in great detail. A typical *Russian River Flag* article of 1876 described an incident



Top photo, Healdsburg Avenue, 1864; center photo, Adventist Home at the corner of College Street and Grant Street, circa 1882; bottom photo, the Healdsburg Plaza before it was fenced and with few remaining native trees in 1872, wagons used the Plaza as a parking lot.

("Worse than Chinese Lepers"), featuring a public drunken street brawl in North Healdsburg between a "Healdsburg hag" and a "visiting San Francisco virago."

Wagon and chair maker August Knaak, a German immigrant, arrived in Healdsburg in 1854. Knaak built the third house in town and amassed a great deal of property. In 1865, he record-

ed a large subdivision of land lying north of **Piper Street** to **Powell Avenue**, between **Healdsburg Avenue** and **College Street**. Knaak's addition added 73 large residential lots to the north of **Piper Street**. At the end of the Civil War, Knaak, a patriotic republican, named the new streets for Civil War leaders: prominent Union generals **Ulysses S. Grant, W.T. Sherman, P.H. Sheridan,**

and U.S. presidents **Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson**.

Sheridan Street joined the north end of **Fitch Street**, north of **Piper Street**. During the mid 1890s, **Sheridan Street** - which actually merged into Fitch - was renamed **Fitch Street** all the way from **Powell Avenue** to the Railroad. Despite his seeming good fortune, Knaak shocked his wife and the whole town when he committed suicide at age 50 in 1876.

Beyond **Sherman Street**, the south side of **Powell Avenue** formed the northern city limits from 1867 through the mid-1900s.

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HISTORIC



BUSINESS

HEALDSBURG LUMBER COMPANY: A PROUD HERITAGE AND A LONG RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY

by Charlotte Anderson

Like a phoenix, the Healdsburg Mill and Lumber Company, established in 1875, literally rose from the ashes, having suffered both fire and economic disaster, when it was bought by Amos F. Stevens in 1907. The Stevens Lumber Company soon became a first-rate business in Healdsburg. Expanding to meet the demands of the building of vacation homes in the next 15 to 20 years, the machinery and planing mills were constantly upgraded.

Russell Stevens took over the company on A.F.'s death in 1928, continuing to expand the company which he ultimately sold to Pacific Lumber in 1963.

In 1973, the company was acquired by the David Ziedrich Family, and today (2004) it is run by Eric Ziedrich under the name of Healdsburg Lumber Company.

David Ziedrich was a general contractor in Santa Rosa in the 1960's. As he did some building in the Healdsburg area, he used the Healdsburg Lumber Co. "yard" for his materials. At that time Gunnar Johnson of Pacific Lumber Co. was not only the General Manager at Scotia but also in charge of the "yards" at Healdsburg, Cloverdale, and Clear Lake and store manager at Healdsburg. One day while in the store, Dave said he'd "like to buy a little business!" Gunnar contacted Pacific Lumber and the wheels were in motion. Dave bought the business in 1973 and Gunnar helped with the retail business, running the "yard" with Dave. When the sale became official, May 25, 1973, David W. Ziedrich announced that the name, perhaps referring back to the original 1875 company, would be Healdsburg Lumber Company.

In 1974, in an advertisement in the *Healdsburg Tribune* (29 Aug. 1974) "Business Directory," the company was referred to as the "Complete Home Improvement Center, having just added a plumbing department." Two years later a *Tribune* "local business" feature listed "Healdsburg Lumber — Home Center," and quoted owner David W. Ziedrich as saying, "We have everything needed to complete a home, including expertise to advise "do-it-yourselfers.""

Gunnar Johnson stayed on until he retired in 1976 and was



Russell Stevens, left, in front of the A. F. Stevens Lumber Company.

then replaced by Marty Bauman who took over the management of the company. Bauman, whose specialty was building materials, fit right in with Dave's emphasis on hardware and building materials.

In keeping with his involvement in the community, Dave sponsored a slow-pitch baseball team in 1976 and 1977. The team was in the "A" league with Maherajah Water Skis, Hogue Construction, Healdsburg Merchants, International Systems, Pacific Natural Wood, and Boise Cascade. With four teams having something to do with wood, the sports writer of the time had lots of fun with his verbs; for example, instead of saying "beat" or "bested" he would say "chopped down," "debarked," or "splintered!" Some of the "lumbermen" included John Ware, Pat Farrell, Jim Myers (a pitcher!), Jack Tapparo, Dave Sutton, Mike Sutton, Bob Baumunk, Rudy Navarro, Mark Anello, Tom Greene, Mike Perinoli, Manuel Garcia, Roger Hollingsworth, Rick Larsen, Mike O'Toole and Greg Rennoli. The company, under Dave's son Eric, has also bid annually on Future Farmer County Fair stock

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and provided coaches for the Boys and Girls Club teams. Eric himself has been a member of the school board and the City Council.

Dave almost sold the business in 1982, but then in 1983 offered a two-year contract to his son Eric to work together—to “try” and then buy! On January 1, 1985, Eric Ziedrich became owner of the Healdsburg Lumber Company. In addition to Eric, the company is managed by Dan Weaver who began working for Dave in 1978.

According to Eric, the changes in the timber industry in the past 30 years “have been phenomenal.” From the inventory of redwood and fir and the less efficient harvest practices of the past to the cedar, fir, and engineered woods and wood products and no waste of the present, the industry has become global. In the past the lumber mills and companies never imported lumber, but now there are very few mills left in California.

A great deal of the lumber comes from “abroad,” including South America, New Zealand, Asia, and Canada. For example, Healdsburg Lumber has siding from Sweden and Australia, decking from Brazil, molding from New Zealand, Argentina, and Russia, and a large inventory of cedar (Western red cedar), fir, and spruce from Canada as well as many species of exotic hardwoods.

Known in Northern Sonoma County, and from Las Vegas to Seattle, for wood sidings and moldings to match or be “the same as” 19th Century and early 20th Century building materials, Healdsburg Lumber Company, as the only retail lumber yard in Healdsburg, continues to uphold its proud heritage and its continuing role in the Healdsburg community.

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Dolores and David Ziedrich



A. E. Stevens, circa 1910.

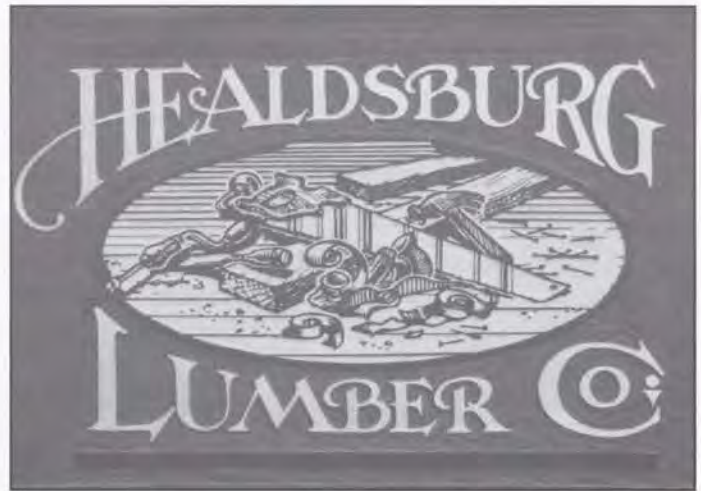


Photo of ad for Healdsburg Lumber Company.



Present entrance to Healdsburg Lumber Company.



Mary Flora Reniff with her husband Edwin Henry Reynolds, circa 1909

during the Depression to grow potatoes. Leah Andrews grew up during the 1930s-1950s on a ranch that bordered the Reniff farm. She recalled the "lovely, tall and slender" Elizabeth and Mary Flora. After the Andrews sold their farm, Leah and her mother, Minerva, rented the Reniff house from 1965-1969 from Leroy Rasmussen, and "loved the old place." Marie Giammona, Leroy Rasmussen's daughter, recalled all of the Victorian furniture which was in the Reniff house when her father purchased it. Louise Bosworth Davis, a graduate of Geyserville schools, enjoyed going on elementary school picnics in Reniff's Canyon. The Reniffs and Reynolds have not been, nor will be, forgotten. Many thanks to those who took the time to share their memories of the Reniff and Reynolds families: Flora

Elizabeth Reynolds, Sara Banti, Leah Andrews, Marie Giammona, Leroy Rasmussen, Harvey Rose, Louise Bosworth Davis, and Harry Bosworth.

Flora Elizabeth Reynolds

Flora Elizabeth Reynolds was an influential librarian in various public and academic libraries in Northern California for over forty years, including 20 years as librarian at Mills College. For more on Flora Elizabeth Reynolds, an oral history conducted in 1999 by Laura McCreery at the Regional Oral History Office in University of California Berkeley's Bancroft Library is available from the Online Archive of California at <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/kt0s2000zj>

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