



RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

WINTER 2005 • ISSUE 91

An Official Publication of the Healdsburg Museum and Historical Society



Joseph Downing with his intended, Matilda Burlingame, picnicking on Fitch Mountain.

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IN THIS ISSUE

Our fourth issue of the Russian River Recorder in 2005 brings articles of Healdsburg history covering the late 1800s to the 1950s and such diverse topics as our Oak Mound cemetery, a photographer who chronicled early Healdsburg and left a legacy of photographic images, and an interesting account of the development of the telephone, from 1884 to the "Hello Girls" to direct dialing.

Dan Murley, our versatile curator who wears many "hats" in his job, has been concentrating on our extensive collection of photo images not only from professional photographers but also from photos donated to the Museum by area families. In this issue Dan brings us an interesting account of Joseph Downing, whom he terms the "Photographic Chronicler of Early Healdsburg." The photos Dan picked from the Downing collection to illustrate this article gives us a fascinating look into the past.

We know that Charlotte Anderson had fun researching the material for her article about the history of the telephone in Healdsburg. I happened to be in the office when volunteer Meredith Dreisback brought in a photo loaned to us by her mother, Eleanor Hicks Leoni, a photo showing a group of telephone employees in 1956 who were on hand to help in the "cut over" i.e. going from the "hello girls" to direct dialing, a major step in modern technology. I was able to point out to Charlotte and Meredith how simple the telephone system was in 1950 when I took over as publisher and editor of The Tribune. I recall that the office phone number had only two digits and that if you wanted to make a call you merely picked up the phone and asked operator for that number. Many times she could tell you that there was no one home or that they would be back shortly. A far cry from what goes on today!

And Whitney Hopkins, our collection clerk, again has come up with some treasured archives, a brief history of our Oak Mound Cemetery. Using material from the 25 books kept by members of the Luce and Matheson families (fortunately given to the Museum by Sarah Lee Calhoun, the niece of Jirah and Maragret Luce in 1992), Whitney, in her fine fashion, gives us an interesting account of the cemetery's history from when it was first established in 1859 to the present time. We know you'll enjoy this account and the photos which enhance the article.

At this time I would like to offer my thanks to the staff of the Recorder - Dan, Holly, Charlotte and Whitney - for their many fine articles and their willingness to assist; to Steve Perkins, the printer and graphic artist, for his invaluable help; and to Fran Lescalleet and her mailing crew. Thank you for helping me to continue in my capacity as editor of The Recorder.

Thank you also to our readers for their constant support and encouragement.

Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for the New Year.

Arnold Santucci

Editor

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by Whitney Hopkins

Delving once again in the extensive archives at the Healdsburg Museum, Whitney Hopkins, in this issue, chose to write about Healdsburg's historic cemetery. She tells us that "one of the unique collection in the archives is the Oak Mound cemetery records kept from 1884 to 1959 by several generations of Matheson and Luce families." In the collection are 25 books ranging from canvas-bound ledgers to spiral bound books. In recent years a number of organizations, including Museum volunteers, took time to clean-up the old historic part of Oak Mound. You'll enjoy Whitney's brief and well written account of the history of the cemetery. We suggest that some day you take the time to visit this historic area, especially at the top of the hill where the landmark fountain is located.



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6. Joseph H. Downing: Photographic Chronicler of Early Healdsburg

by Daniel F. Murley

Our cover story by Curator Daniel Murley this time features another photographer who preceded by many years the well known S.E. Langhart, spotlighted in our Autumn issue. Joseph Downing, Dan tells us, started his career as a professional photographer in Healdsburg in 1871, the first professional photographer in Healdsburg. His studio was located on Center Street across from the Plaza Square. Although his equipment was bulky and cumbersome Joseph Downing "left behind a legacy of photographic images which expose and document a bygone era in the history of Healdsburg."



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10. From "Hello Girls" to Direct Dialing, The Telephone in Healdsburg

by Charlotte Anderson

In her well researched article Charlotte Anderson gives us an interesting and informative history of communications by telephone in Healdsburg and how it developed. We think you will find her account of the operators and how they served the Healdsburg area particularly noteworthy. her photos, especially of the "Hello Girls" we found extremely nostalgic.



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14. East Street Quietly Exists with Noted Historical Influence

by Barbara Tuscany

East Street is still historic in nature with many homes and churches dating back to the 1880's.

MATHESON'S OAK MOUND: A BRIEF HISTORY OF HEALDSBURG'S CEMETERY

by Whitney Hopkins

The Healdsburg Museum's archives contain a variety of documentary items that contribute to our knowledge of Healdsburg's history. One unique collection in the archives is the Oak Mound Cemetery records kept from 1884 to 1959 by several generations of the Matheson and Luce families. These records take up approximately 25 books ranging from large canvas-bound ledger books at the turn of the century to small spiral notebooks in the 1950s. The books were donated to the Healdsburg Museum in 1992 by Sarah Lee Calboun, the niece of Jirah and Margaret (Grove) Luce. In 2005, many of these records were carefully transcribed by museum volunteer Jenny Allen. While the majority of the books purely record burials and cemetery plots sold, several of the earlier books kept by Jirah and Nina (Matheson) Luce were multi-purpose. In addition to cemetery accounts the books used from 1900 through 1910 also include ranch, orchard and vineyard accounts, as well as the rent collected for each baseball game played on the Matheson ballpark. While the Luce record books could inspire any number of topics for investigation, the following is an examination of the history of Healdsburg's Oak Mound Cemetery.

Although Oak Mound Cemetery was established early in Healdsburg's history, it was not Healdsburg's first cemetery. Harmon Heald, an unsuccessful gold miner from Ohio and Healdsburg's namesake, arrived at the present site of the town in 1851, and the following year opened a store with his younger brother, George. At that time the pair were squatting on the Rancho Sotoyome owned by the Fitch family. It was not long after the Healds' arrival that "the first death and funeral" occurred. George Heald died early in 1853. Since no cemetery was yet established, Heald was buried beside a cluster of madrone trees in an area that was "thought to be sufficiently out of town." The site of this burial was located on the city block where St. John's Church and School now stand, in the center of East Street bounded by Matheson and Tucker Streets. (Today the cemetery is marked by a metal sign.) This location served as the graveyard for only six years. When Harmon Heald laid out and subdivided the town in



Oak Mound Cemetery, circa 1910

1857 after purchasing land, he donated lots for a school, four churches, the Plaza, and a cemetery. The land donated for the cemetery had already been in use for this purpose for four years. Burials in this early graveyard included Harmon Heald's wife in 1857 and Harmon Heald himself in 1858. However, as early as 1857 city leaders already realized that the town was encroaching on the cemetery, and began to discuss ideas for relocating the cemetery.

After Harmon Heald died, Healdsburg residents Roderick Matheson, William Macy, and Ransom Powell united to select a new location for the cemetery. In 1859 they chose an oak-studded knoll, a small piece of Roderick Matheson's 300-acre farm that was "situated one-fourth of a mile northeast" of town. (Today the address is 601 Piper Street.) The cemetery rested on a "spur from the low wooded foothills" with an avenue extending east and west the full length of its crest, from which the smaller alleys branched in opposite directions down its sloping sides. In addition to oaks, the cemetery had many manzanita and madrone trees. It was surrounded by a fence. Although not without complaints on the part of some citizens, those individuals previously buried in the East Street cemetery were disinterred and reburied in the new cemetery. In August, 1859, following the reburials, "Oak Mound Cemetery" was dedicated.

Not long after Oak Mound's inauguration, Matheson (who had donated the land himself) was buried there. While his wife and children remained in Healdsburg, Matheson, who had grown up in New York, was swept up in the Civil War. He volunteered, and was named Colonel of the "First California Regiment," 32nd New York State Volunteers. He died in 1862 at the age of 38 as a result of wounds received in battle while leading Union troops at Crampton's Gap, Maryland. His body was transported from the battlefield back to Healdsburg with much fanfare. His wife, Marie Antoinette, or Nettie, lived the rest of her life in Healdsburg on a widow's pension and died in 1884.

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While there is less information available on who was managing Oak Mound during its first two decades, the ownership and operation of the graveyard had reverted to Col. Matheson's heirs by the 1880s - probably following the death of Matheson's wife. Unfortunately, five of Matheson's six children died before the age of 30. This left his daughter, Marie Antoinette or "Nina", born in 1855, as his only direct heir. In 1886, Nina Matheson married a prominent local rancher's son, Jirah Luce. Born in Massachusetts, Jirah came to California with his parents when he was still a boy. The Luce family had settled on a ranch near Healdsburg. Following their marriage, Nina and Jirah Luce moved into the Matheson family home at 751 South Fitch Mountain Road, and took on the management of Oak Mound Cemetery, in addition to the Matheson farm and baseball field. The Matheson and Luce family continued to make additions to the cemetery over the years as the cemetery filled up. The first addition known as "Matheson's Addition" was made in 1889. This was followed by a number of successive Luce additions in 1912, 1915, and 1923. Nina Matheson Luce died in 1920, and Jirah Luce in 1921, leaving three children.

One of their children, Jirah Luce, born in 1890 and named for his father and grandfather, took over management of Oak Mound Cemetery. Luce, a graduate of Healdsburg High School, operated the cemetery for forty years. In 1959 when he was ready to retire, Luce finally sold the cemetery to John Galeazzi, gravestone producer and owner of North Bay Monument company. Galeazzi operated Oak Mound for over thirty years until his retirement. The cemetery was annexed into the city of Healdsburg in 1987. In 1991, when The Greens housing development was being built, the cemetery was sold by Galeazzi to Scott Robbins and Victor Bacci, who continue to privately own and operate Oak Mound Cemetery, Inc.

Since its inception the citizens of Healdsburg have taken an interest in the cemetery's appearance. As early as 1870, it was reported in the newspaper that hogs and cattle were roaming through the graveyard and destroying the plants and shrubs set out to decorate graves. Shortly after the cemetery's dedication, a group of women decided that the cemetery should have water pipes installed so that they could keep the plants surrounding their loved ones' graves green. They organized themselves into a society known as "The Ladies Industrial Society of Healdsburg," and after "a series of sewing circles" raised enough money so that in 1876 the Healdsburg Water Company installed pipes and hydrants along the main avenue of the cemetery. At that time there was also enough money raised for the purchase of a bronze fountain to decorate the center of the main avenue (on top of the hill). Local clubs erected memorials, such as the G.A.R. who put up a monument for unknown Civil War veterans in 1922. Individuals

spearheaded projects, including Julius Myron Alexander who advocated improvements to the entrance of the cemetery such as a new redwood gateway arch in 1932. At several points in time associations were formed to take charge of improvements and beautification of Oak Mound. In 1926, for instance, it was reported that Oak Mound Cemetery Association had 150 members. It is hoped that today, as in the past, Healdsburg residents will continue to take pride in their picturesque and historic "City of Eternal Sleep."

Note: If you have old photographs of Oak Mound cemetery or the Luce family that you would allow the Museum to copy for our archives, this would be greatly appreciated.

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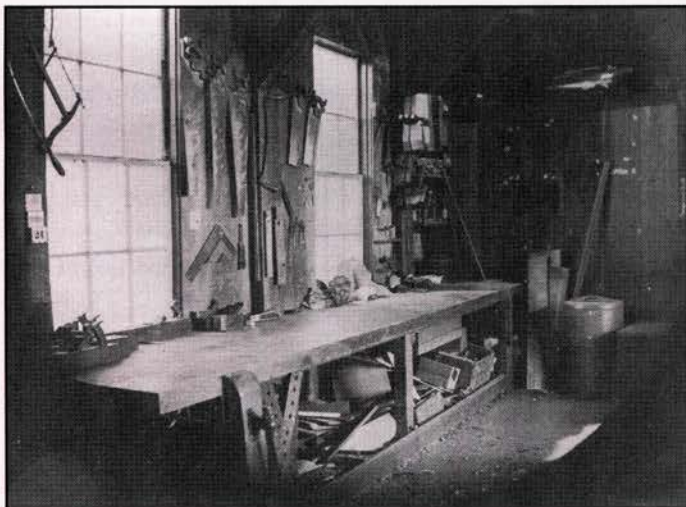
Oak Mound Fountain, circa 1876

JOSEPH H. DOWNING

Photographic Chronicler of Early Healdsburg

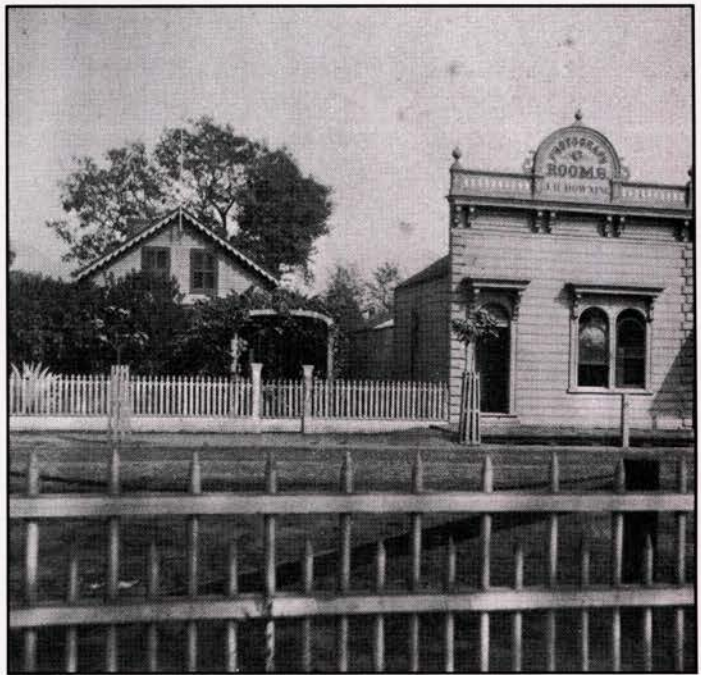
by Daniel F. Murley

Never was there a shortage of inquisitive eyes eager to observe the young man in the pursuit of his passion. Oftentimes packs of dirty faced little boys peered out from under floppy felt hats, and as dogs scurried about barking, the boys buzzed with childish talk of the magic happening under the black hood of the photographic practitioner, Joseph H. Downing. Joseph was the eldest son of John C. and Mary Downing who had brought their three children from Massachusetts to settle here in Healdsburg in 1857. John was a highly respected member of the community and was a rightfully trained furniture maker from New England and also served as the community's first undertaker. Young "Josie" followed in his father's lead and served with him at the carpentry bench in their workshop on South Street.

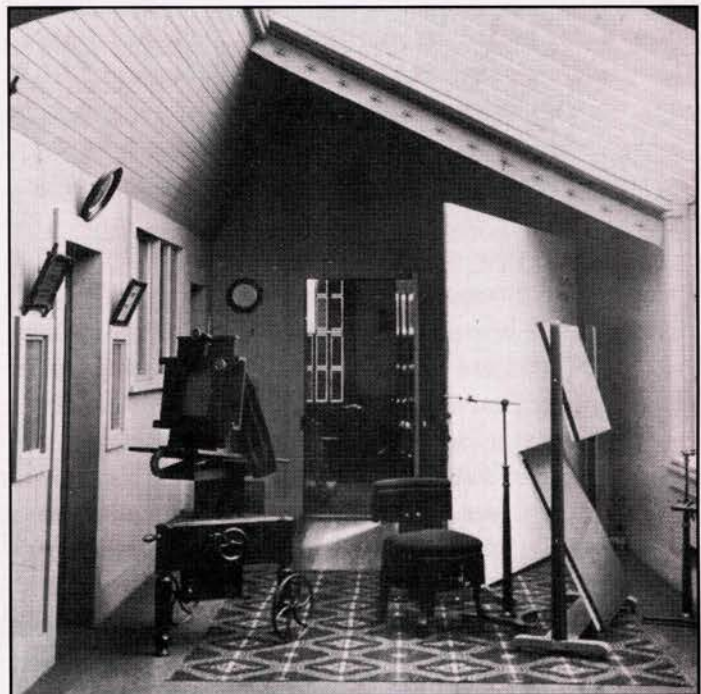


The quiet life in the rural shop soon began to weary or at least challenge the technical mind of Joseph, and in 1869 at the age of twenty eight he headed back to the east coast for a course of study in the up and coming art of photography. Once satisfied with his skills he returned to Healdsburg in 1871 to begin his practice as the first professional photographer in the growing northern California town. He chose to open his photographic studio next door to the Downing house on Center Street across from the newly fenced and landscaped plaza.

The *Russian River Flag* commented in 1873 that "The handsomest building on the plaza is a house completed by Mr.



Downing for a photograph gallery." It was from this studio that Joseph would sally forth with his enormous camera and equipment to capture scenes of daily life around the town. He had the finest and newest equipment and constructed the "Operating Room," his actual portrait studio with a large skylight and numerous reflecting panels to make use of all available ambient light.



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Though only a few images of Downing's portraiture remain, this image posed in the Center Street Studio in 1874. The assembled include Ellen Downing Bagley, Mrs. Mary Downing, Joseph's mother, his wife Matilda, her young son Anson Burlingame and two other female relatives.

Of note is that many of his early images were actually taken within easy walking distance of his studio. Not only was the equipment heavy and cumbersome, as demonstrated by this image of one of Downing's partners Mr. T.L. Rea in Guerneville in 1874, but the entire photographic process at the time required use of wet glass plate negatives coated with a sticky substance of col-



loidion of light sensitive silver salts which had to be processed immediately. The "lab" with the chemicals and darkness had to be either carried along into the field or was nearby. Therefore images of buildings around the plaza and their occupants were often fair game for the budding photographer. One example is the once prominent Healdsburg Flouring Mill which was destroyed by fire in August of 1880.

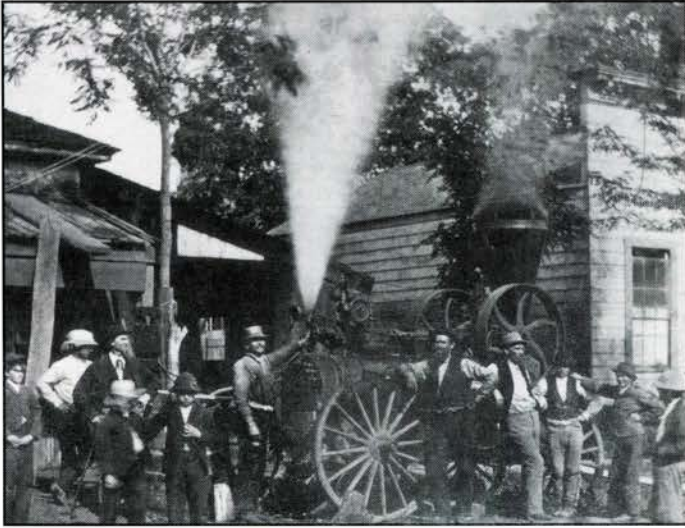


On one afternoon in the summer of 1873, Downing set out with the equestrian in mind. One must note that the horse, the farrier, the blacksmith and the carriage shop were of the highest import to pre-automobile rural America. So on June 11, 1873 Downing captured the fine art of horseshoeing as performed by the mustachioed Andy Skillman. Andy owned a blacksmith and wagon shop near what was the southern extremity of the town at the time South (now Matheson) and West Street (now Healdsburg

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Avenue.) Also pictured are Charley Douglas, holding one horse and George Mulligan the other. It is unclear whether they owned the horses being shod or if they just wanted to get their picture taken.



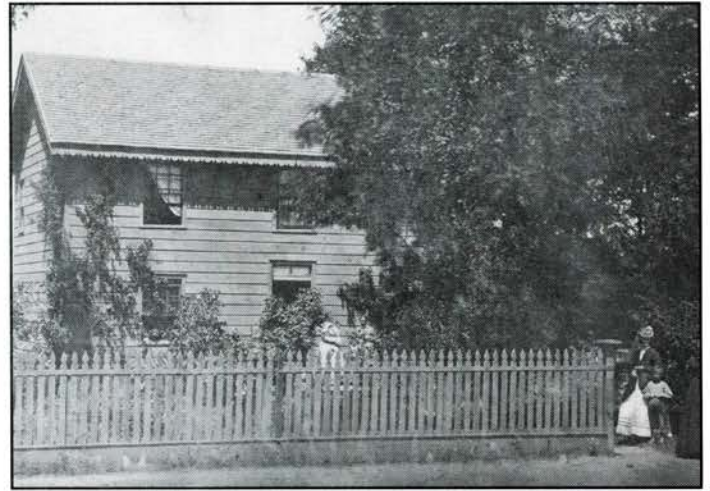
Just a year later the inevitability of the machine age coming to Healdsburg was depicted in this wonderful scene also on the south side of town where Clarence Downing, Joseph's brother was testing out a newly repaired steam-powered threshing engine. Grain and hay were important products of any small economy when livestock were of such great importance. Machines would take a half a century to finally rule the rural landscape but for the time they coexisted. Clarence is the man in the center turning the steam valve releasing the blast of vapor while in a Hitchcockesque appearance in the hat, jacket and tie, Joseph appears nonchalantly looking on with other townspeople.



While documenting the residences in the small town one par-

ticular home took on great importance, and this also was on the south side of town at the Northwest corner of Center and strangely appropriately, Mill Streets. That was the Healdsburg home of John C. Bagley. It was the bearded Mr. Bagley, though much his sister Ellen Antoinette's senior, who eventually married the young Downing girl and moved with her to the "wilds" of Guerneville. There Bagley, a surveyor by trade, set up one of the first saw mills to harvest the redwood giants which grew along the creeks of the Russian River Valley.

Another residence, which came into focus in front of Downing's lens, was the Prince house on the other side of town which soon became another side of the family. This fashionable residence was located north of Powell Street on West Street



It was here that Matilda Prince Burlingame, the widow of Joel Burlingame lived. Joel was the brother of Anson Burlingame the United States Ambassador to China and the diplomat for whom the northern California town of Burlingame was named. Anson was also the name of one of Matilda's sons. Joseph Downing would soon make Matilda Prince Burlingame his wife and adopt the young Anson.

When not near his studio in Healdsburg proper, Downing would carry all his equipment with him and use a portable tent as a darkroom. This photograph was taken on May 1, 1873, on Fitch Mountain where Joseph would often travel to photograph the expansive lands around the growing little town. The importance of this particular image is that "Josie" is picnicking with his intended, Mrs. Matilda Burlingame. He must have sprinted from behind the camera, struck the appropriate pose and quickly stuffed the morsel to his face, while Tillie sat demurely by the tent under the tree. Shade and regulated temperatures for the negative developing processes were of the greatest importance.

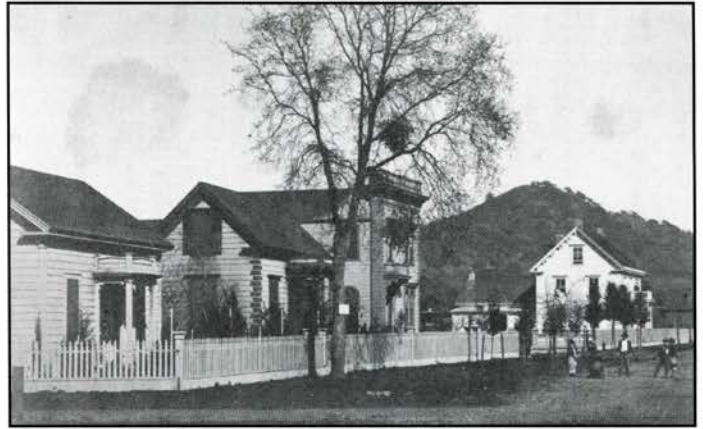
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The married couple stayed in Healdsburg until Joseph became employed as draftsman of blueprints for ships built by the Risdon Iron Works in San Francisco. The Downings lived in Oakland and Joseph was an early commuter making his way from Oakland across the bay to the company's offices in San Francisco. He also kept busy pursuing his photographic interests as may be evidenced by this image of his developing tent in Grass Valley in 1894. At this time he was a partner in Ormsby and Downing, Photographers and traveled from location to location bringing their skills and equipment with them.



In 1905 Joseph returned to his beloved Healdsburg where he passed away and is buried with his family at Oak Mound Cemetery. Joseph H. Downing the reluctant casket maker left behind a legacy of photographic images which expose and document a bygone era in history of Healdsburg.



*North Street with Fitch Mountain in background.
The houses are still standing today.*



C. E. Proctor's team in front of Russian River Flag office, circa 1872.



St. John's Catholic Church, on Matbeson Street, view southwest, August 1874.

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FROM "HELLO GIRLS" TO DIRECT DIALING

The Telephone in Healdsburg

by Charlotte Anderson

Telephone is derived from two Greek words, tele and phone, meaning far off voice or sound. (tele, far off and phone voice or sound) The now famous phrase "Come here, Watson, I need you" was uttered in 1876 from "a distance" while Alexander Graham Bell was working on devices to help the hearing impaired. The first actual greeting between Bell and Watson was "Ahoy! Ahoy!" until Thomas Edison first shouted "Hello!" which then became the way to answer the telephone all over America.

Even as Alexander Graham Bell was developing, patenting, and exhibiting his telephonic device, Professor Gilbert Butler in 1877 in Healdsburg was showing citizens examples of sending conversations and music over short distances.

In 1877 the first switchboard was installed by a druggist in Connecticut to connect seven doctors to his store. Many switchboards then followed in the telephone central offices. At first, boys of 12-16 years were hired to operate the boards as they had to haul huge cables across the room. Because of a lack of discipline, boys were soon replaced by young women who set a far higher standard. The telephone company even provided women the training. Women soon moved into the business office to handle billing and customer complaints, or they even worked on the production line at the plants which manufactured equipment.

Miss Emma M. Nutt of Boston became the first central switchboard operator in 1878 and was the first to be addressed as "Central." Emma, earning ten dollars a month, set the stage for many a respectable young woman eager to make a living as something other than "schoolmarm," shop girl or nurse.

The Healdsburg exchange was established by the Sunset Telephone and Telegraph Company in September 1884. [On August 26, 1884, Santa Rosa established telephonic communication with San Francisco, Sebastopol, Guerneville, and Healdsburg (Sonoma Democrat)] Healdsburg service in 1884 represented the northernmost extreme of a spindly line of poles extending from San Francisco through San Rafael, Petaluma, and Santa Rosa. Early agents for the telephone service included Bledsoe Brothers, W.S. Dudley, and Thornton's Stationery Store. J.J.



*Healdsburg Exchange telephone operators, left to right, Evelyn Lowden, Evelyn Patapoff, Betty May, circa 1950's.
Photo courtesy of Carolyn Ramos.*

Thornton was the Healdsburg manager of Sunset Tel & Tel.

In 1890 W.S. Dudley "fitted up a room to the rear of his store on Powell Street for use as a telephone office. You can now say 'Hello there' amidst comfortable surroundings." At this time, of course, one had to go to an "office" to make a telephone call.

Tribune articles from 1893 indicate that in that year "A.W. Garrett strung a line from his hardware store to his home, a distance of four blocks. He found this a mixed blessing as neighbors would call him at work to have him bring home meat and groceries!" Also in 1893, it was noted that Dr. J.R. Swisher installed a private phone between his home and office.

Miss Nora Terry (later Mrs. J.A. McMinn) was Healdsburg's first telephone operator in 1896 when, after graduating from Healdsburg High School in 1895, she ran a small switchboard in the Thornton Stationery Store. "Working the board was just one of my duties. I had to tend the store, too, and for all of this I got \$15 a month.....which was pretty good money in those days."

A telephone book issued by the Sunset Telephone and Telegraph Company and the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company in 1898 lists thirteen Healdsburg subscribers: Alberigi & Rovai,

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Italian hotel; California Tartar Works, G. de Latour, manager; Gunn & Ferguson, hardware; J.C. Ingalls, city marshal and constable; J. McDonough; T.S. Merchant & Co., meat market; S. Meyer, general merchandise; Miller & Hotchkiss, H.H. Paxton, C.H. Pond, city clerk, recorder and attorney; Russian River Packing Company; Ed Smith, grocery store; Union Hotel.

In April 1899, the Tribune reported that "Mr. J.A. Thornton has secured the following subscribers to the telephone service: Rosenberg & Bush, Cnopius & Co., J.W. Bond, R.K. Truitt, Oak Lawn House, Dr. C.W. Weaver, H.M. Keyes, Moore & Seawell, Farmers and Mechanics Bank, J.T. Coffman, F.O. Brandt, W.B. Whitney, Moreland & Norton, Miller & Prince, L. Bledsoe, J.H. Matthews, Carl Muller, Dr. J.E. Huffman, Dr. J.R. Swisher, C.T. Byington & Co., John Young & Sons, A.W. Garrett (store and residence), Bank of Healdsburg, and the railroad station."

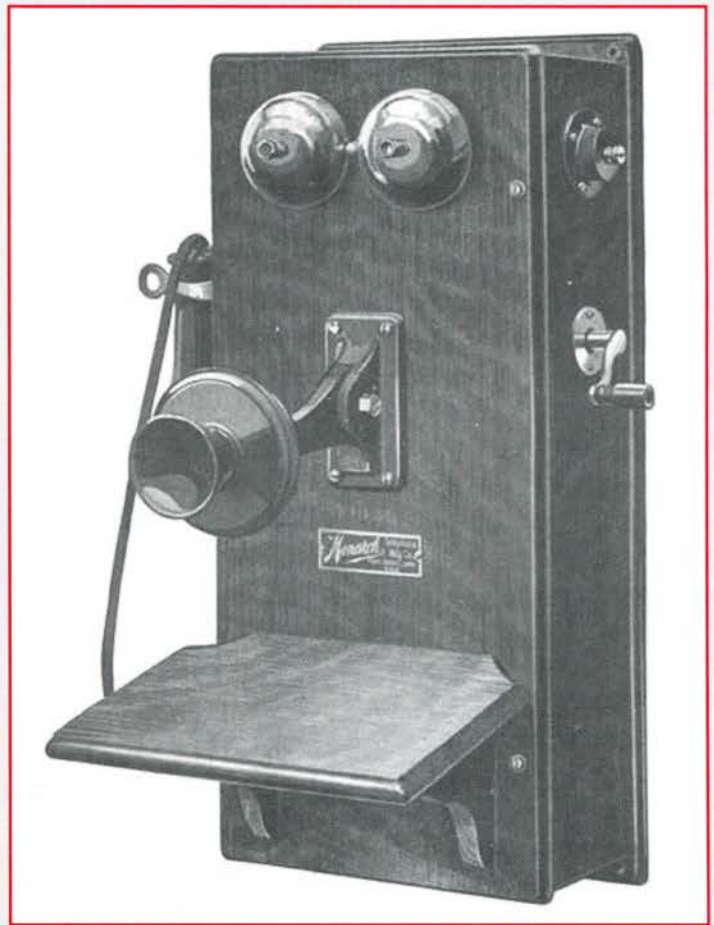
Between 1903 and 1905, residents of Healdsburg's outlying valleys began clamoring for the new devices. This led to the forming of independent "companies" for their connection. Each "company" connected with "Central" in Healdsburg, but members could also call each other by way of the "party line." Engineers had figured out a way to tell another party someone wanted to speak with him by installing a ringing generator on the line. A caller would crank a device to make a voltage which went down the line and rang a bell at the other end. A different set of rings was necessary for each person. For example a phone number might be 8F23, but if one was ringing this number on his party line it would be "two long, three short" rings.

The Sotoyome Sun reported in 1903 that "O.J. LeBaron, in behalf of the Dry Creek & Healdsburg Telephone Association, appeared before the Board of Supervisors to ask for a franchise for the association in Dry Creek Valley. This is the co-operative telephone company that the enterprising Dry Creek farmers are promoting. The object is to provide every one in the valley who wants it with telephone communication with the outside world." Often the farmers had to provide the poles and string the wires themselves. Access to market prices, weather reports, and emergency aid was the practical reason for getting a phone, but many of the families used it for relief from loneliness and isolation. C.N. Blazer and George Thayer were the prime movers in getting families to subscribe, thus bringing in sufficient money for the enterprise. Each subscriber would have, in his home, a phone rented from Bell telephone at a charge of six dollars a year. Public stations were established at Cozzens and Lamberts where a fee was charged. On the 6th of January 1904, the Tribune received one of the first messages over the Healdsburg and Dry Creek Valley telephone line.

Also in 1903, "commencing November 1, Healdsburg will have an all night telephone service. Gilbert Fitch will be the night operator. This convenience will be greatly appreciated by persons in the surrounding country who have business with Healdsburg people after nightfall."

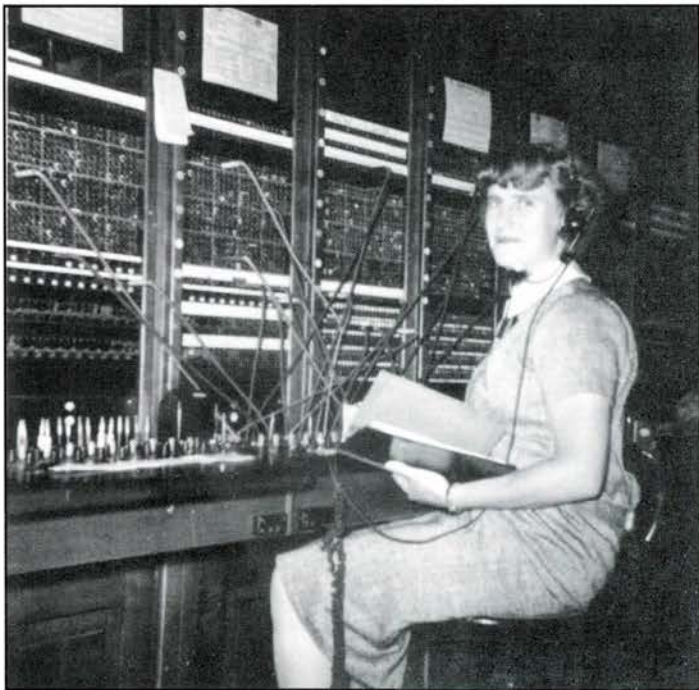
In the middle of 1904, a number of residents of Dry Creek and Russian River Valley incorporated under the name of the West Side Telephone Company of Healdsburg for the purpose of constructing and operating a telephone line west from Healdsburg across Dry Creek, southerly along the west side of Dry Creek and Russian River. The officers and directors were listed as John McClish, president; M.V. Frost, vice-president; S.L. Wattles, secretary and treasurer; J.L. McClish, J.B. Wattles, D.N. Goddard and A.D. Goddard.

In 1904, the Enterprise reported that "Healdsburg is becoming quite a center for rural telephone lines, and now it is possible to talk to any part of this section within a radius of six to eight miles."



Magneto hand cranked telephone.
Photo courtesy of Jack Withington

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*Carolyn Lowell Ramos, Healdsburg's Exchange, circa 1950's.
Photo courtesy of Carolyn Ramos*

Alexander Valley had fallen into line shortly after Dry Creek, but early in 1905 the Healdsburg and Alexander Valley Telephone Company filed its articles of incorporation with the county clerk to expand. "The line was twenty-five miles in length and ran from Healdsburg to Alexander Valley with an intermediate line running from the main line near Lytton's to Geyserville and a branch line running from Alexander Valley to Franz Creek." The directors were C.W. Matthews, president; W.F. Young, secretary; William H. McCutchan, Thomas Alexander and C.C. Hall. Other stockholders included L.J. Hall, Shriver & Co., H.P. Warren, James Patrick, Hiram Briggs, A.L. Ferguson, Henry Sonnicksen, P.C. Peterson and William A. Allenden. The company was to exist for fifty years and the principal place of business was in Healdsburg.

In 1910, the Sunset Company, the local exchange of the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company was purchased by the Healdsburg Telephone Company who engaged Fred L. Wright as manager. Mr. Eli Bush was elected president of the new company. One of its first moves was to purchase the Kinslow lot on the corner of Matheson and East streets for "the erection of an artistic concrete building for occupancy of the Telephone Company." In April 1911, the Tribune wrote "The Healdsburg Telephone Company accepted the handsome new building just completed. The structure is reinforced concrete, 30x60 feet, one story, and of

mission architecture..... The new switchboards are in, the giant cables are all set up, the connections to the switchboard are all made, and the local business houses will soon be equipped with the new flash signal telephones, after which Healdsburg will be served by one of the finest telephone systems anywhere to be found. The board which the Healdsburg Co. is putting in is one of the latest 'unit' systems and will permit the addition of 500 more telephones."

The 1915 telephone book listed three telephone operators: George E. Gilbride, Winifred Sawtelle, and Josie I. Tenney. Edith Tenney had also been an operator, but she had resigned to go to Sweet's Business College.

This often used interior photo of the telephone office and switchboard at the corner of Matheson and East Streets includes from left to right: Edward Elliott, Lucille Bowers Wright, Lillian Pordon Clement, Thessel Garrett, Pearl Newland, Josephine Matthews, Cleone Briggs Kels, and Olive Long Stone.

Telephone exchanges in Healdsburg went through several phases. As mentioned earlier, on August 8, 1910, the Sunset Telephone and Telegraph Company sold the exchange to the Healdsburg Telephone Company. Later this was sold to the California Telephone and Light Co. This firm in turn sold it to the Sacramento Valley Co. which in 1927 changed its name to the Northern California Telephone Co. It was acquired by Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Co. on December 31, 1929. As of January 3, 1930, the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company took over the entire Northern California Telephone Company. The Healdsburg manager was William N. Rumbold.

In September of 1936, "many Healdsburg residents were privileged to witness the unique feat of moving the switchboard of the Healdsburg telephone exchange to its location in the new building about 22 feet west at 137 Matheson Street." A section of the east wall of the new structure was left open to accommodate the transfer after which it was sealed up properly. The new headquarters were a "modern, pressed brick, single story building. It is 26 by 49 feet over all. On the street frontage a business office is located with a phone booth in the room. The operating room, where the switchboard is located, is on the east side, approximately 10 feet by 21 feet. Adjoining it on the west side is the apparatus room, 11 feet by 29 feet. An employees' rest room 10 feet by 12 feet is in the back. (It truly was for "rest" as it even had bunk beds!) The old building was wrecked and a fence was temporarily built around the property.

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Some of the "hello" girls from this era included Elsie Ferrari Karr, Doris Ferrari, Ann Vanoni, Gladys Schallock, Clarice Sullivan, Norma Freidenberg Maffei, Teresa Densler, Carolyn Ramos, and Madge Linebaugh. Stories from this time include such things as an operator's child lifting the receiver at home and asking for "Mommy." Mary Wattles Brandt said her brother "Woody" (age 6) several times lifted the receiver and asked, "What time is it?" After a few evening calls, operator Clarice Sullivan said, "It's your bed time, Woody!" In the 1940s, it was evidently hard to get a phone and Fern Naber commented, "If 'the world' could run without you, you didn't get a phone." She also mentioned that on their party line, one neighbor would pick up the phone and begin calling even if someone was already talking on the line. Darla Williams Budworth said the Williams family was on a list to get a phone for six years!

The Healdsburg "hello girls" were a tight knit group and very loyal to the company and to each other. (2005 note: As a matter of fact several of them still meet for lunch once a month.) One of their beloved trainers, supervisor, and assistant chief operator was Madge Briggs Linebaugh. Madge had been employed by the Pacific Telephone Company for 23 years. On the night of June 16, 1956, Madge, her mother Anne Briggs, and her husband Walter F. Linebaugh all died in a tragic fire in their home. The operators learned of this upon reporting to work the next day and needless to say were devastated.

In 1956, the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company purchased property at 247 East Street, formerly Mr. Perry's insurance office. The company erected a building to hold the new dial

system equipment. The "cut over" from "hello girls" to dials actually came about early in 1958. It provided Healdsburg citizens with nationwide direct distance dialing and permitted them to dial their own calls. It also required a telephone number change where all numbers began with the prefix Idlewood 3. Many of the Healdsburg "hello girls" chose this time to "retire" although Pacific Tel & Tel offered transfers to other "less modern" facilities. Another "institution" to fall by the wayside was the West Side Telephone Company which was sold to Pacific Tel & Tel (after 53 years of operation) for the sum of \$1.

Thus did an amazing telephonic chapter in the history of Healdsburg come to a close.

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June Smith, research help

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Eleanor Hicks Leoni, "Cut Over" photo

Jack Withington, old phone photo



The Pacific Tel and Tel "Cut Over" crew at the site of the proposed new office. Second from left, Ray Puccioni; woman in dark dress, center, Eleanor leoni; Second from right, Richard Derrick. Circa 1956. Photo courtesy of Eleanor Hicks Leoni.

EAST STREET QUIETLY EXISTS WITH NOTED HISTORICAL INFLUENCE

by Barbara Tuscany

East Street has had a quiet history of noted property owners dating back to Jacob Heald, (brother of town founder Harmon), who owned Lot 77 in the original town plat of 1857. Jacob Heald was gifted Lot 77 by Harmon and the 1857 tax records show that two structures then existed on the property. Jacob Heald and John Rainey built and opened the first Healdsburg hotel in 1858 as the Sotoyome House.

Jacob's former property is now 320 and 328 East Street, which was most recently owned by Manny Maciel of Apex Aviation and Manny's Restaurant at the Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport until his death in March 2005. East Street is still historic in nature with many homes and churches that date back to the 1880s and are still recognized by their architectural elements today.

In 1872, the then Powell Street (now Plaza Street) was added between East and Center Streets which was not only a convenience but would "improve the looks of the town and enhance the value of property in the neighborhood of the northeast corner of the plaza". It was not until November 1920 that Powell Street (Plaza Street) was opened up from East to Fitch Streets. Si Hilgerloh was a real town benefactor when it came to deeding land. He opened up Powell Street from Fitch Street to the east end of his property and dedicated the land to public uses thereafter.

Another noted businessman of old East Street was Henry Fried. Built in 1885 in the Gothic Revival style, the Henry Fried House is located at 316 East Street. Henry opened the locally famed "Bank Exchange Saloon" located just north of the old Bank of Healdsburg on the northeast corner of West Street (now Healdsburg Avenue) and Powell (now Plaza) Street. Fried, a prosperous and civically-active saloon keeper, served as volunteer Fire Chief before his death in 1894. Henry and Fredericka Fried had four daughters (Frieda, Emma, Lena, and Bertha) along with Julius, their only son. A grocer by trade, Julius discovered the Lakeview Gusher in the San Joaquin Valley which made him very wealthy and enabled him to support himself and many of his sisters and their families. The Fried home was lived in by his widow, Fredericka, until her death in 1910. The Fried home is currently owned by Lynn Bond.

Charles Henry Pond arrived in Healdsburg in 1886 and was highly respected as a civic leader in Healdsburg as owner of the Healdsburg Enterprise newspaper. He was also city recorder, judge, school trustee, and co-owned a grocery store with Julius Alexander. He also became the Sonoma County District Attorney. Charlie was called as a witness in the Laymance trial in 1895. Charlie married Frieda Fried (daughter of Henry and Fredericka Fried) December 1, 1892 and built the Italianate home that exists today at 328 East Street with a few later additions that have detracted from its day of glamour. With Charlie being the owner of the *Enterprise*, many articles appeared about him and his wife, but the most eloquent was his lengthy and poetically-written obituary by Julius Myron Alexander on September 26, 1895. (I loved researching Charlie Pond and his family as he was so well respected in our community and his dedication to Healdsburg was so evident.)



328 East Street

Charlie and Frieda Pond had one daughter Gladys who was born on January 15, 1896. She later married Floyd Burtchett in 1922. They had no children together. In searching for descendants of Gladys, I found a woman in England who is the granddaughter of Floyd Burtchett. While Floyd was in Europe during the Second World War he met an English woman working with the American forces in London, and a daughter was born as a result of their relationship. Floyd returned to the United States and Gladys, and they resided in Los Angeles until their deaths. The contact between Floyd and the Englishwoman diminished

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and it is unknown if Gladys ever knew about the relationship and child. Gladys received a substantial monthly stipend from the estate of her uncle Julius Fried until her death.

I was doing research on the 320, 328 and 332 East Street properties and was nicely surprised to find great family history and historical changes that occurred on the street also. I have had some wonderful correspondence with descendants of the Fried and Pond families of 316 and 328 East Street whom I was able to locate by searching the internet in genealogy web pages. These two ladies, who didn't know each other until I connected them, are now enjoying sharing family stories across the miles with one being in California and the other in England.

(I enjoyed doing the research about these families and working with Holly Hoods in the museum archives. If you have not had an opportunity to do research please take an opportunity to experience Healdsburg history by taking a trip to the museum or even walking the neighborhoods.)

Barbara Tuscany
(Resides in the Birdwell/Charlie Perry house built by Kruse in 1900)

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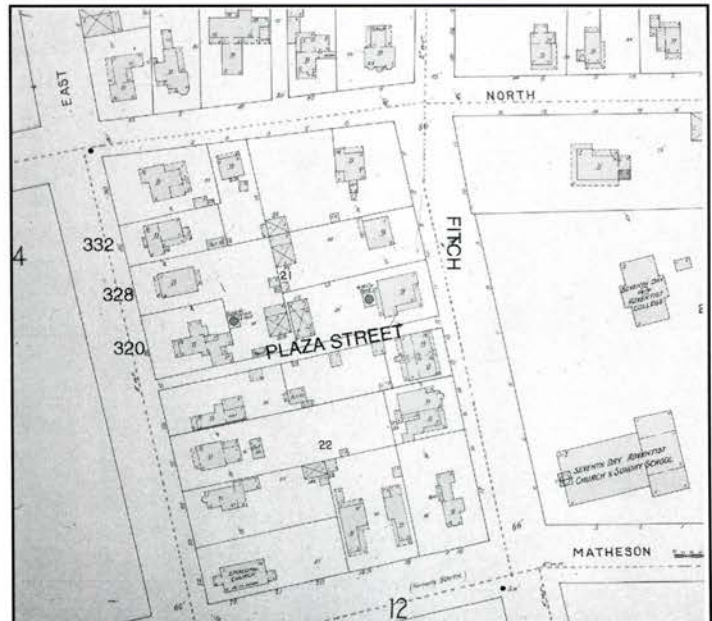
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View of the Plaza and City Hall, Healdsburg, California, circa 1910



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