



RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

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Healdsburg Museum, 1910's



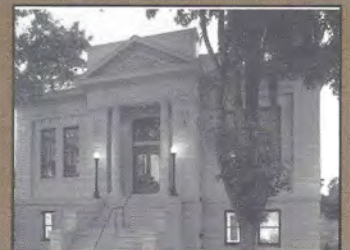
Healdsburg Museum, January 2010



Healdsburg Museum, 1960's



Healdsburg Museum, 1920's



Healdsburg Museum, 1990's

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Carl Nolte in his Native Son column in the *San Francisco Chronicle* dated April 11, 2010 remarked that "Springtime is a time for baseball dreams, and sometimes they come true." In reading Clarence Ruonavaara's oral history, as chronicled by Shonnie Brown, it seems that Clarence's dreams came true. Baseball was my passion, he told Shonnie and baseball has remained a big part of his history. It's a wonderful story and one in which you can relate especially if you are getting a little older. We are pleased to share Clarence's story with our readers, during this time of Spring.

Canon Marvin Bowers, a retired Episcopal priest, again joins our list of contributing writers to tell us the story of the "People's Protestant Church In Alexander Valley". It's a very well written history of the beautifully restored church in Alexander Valley which is still serving the people of the Valley. Canon Bowers recently returned from a two months missionary stay in Peru where he taught at a seminary.

Ann Howard, another faithful contributor to the *Recorder*, this time gives us a fascinating insight on the making of wood charcoal as was practiced in Italy and brought to the United States by immigrants from that country. Many settled in Sonoma County and the rich heritage they brought with them has enriched our historical perspective.

AND OUR VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE RESEARCH CURATOR HOLLY HOODS gives us a history of the magnificent building which now houses the Healdsburg Museum but was built one hundred years ago as Healdsburg's Carnegie Library. When my wife and I arrived in Healdsburg 60 years ago it served as the Healdsburg Library with the downstairs section devoted to the children's section and the gallery upstairs as the adult and reference section. We are indeed fortunate to have this beautiful building as our Museum even though many feel that the size of the building restricts the Museum's ability to expand. The Museum staff and volunteers are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the building and we are pleased to feature the history of what was the Carnegie Library in this issue of the *Recorder*.

Arnold Santucci
Editor



RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

*The Official Publication of the
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An Oral History Interview with Clarence Ruonavaara by Shonnie Brown

A very respected and admired teacher and administrator, Clarence Ruonavaara, in an interview with Shonnie Brown, recalls his childhood and growing up in Healdsburg, his "Passion" for baseball throughout his high school and university days and onto his involvement with many aspects of the community. Healdsburg has always been a "baseball" community and Clarence gives us a first-hand report. We know you will find this a most interesting account of Life In Healdsburg.

THE PEOPLE'S PROTESTANT CHURCH OF ALEXANDER VALLEY

by Marvin Bowers

The *California Road & Recreation Atlas* indicates Jimtown with a dot at the intersection of Highway 128 and Alexander Valley Road in the heart of the Alexander Valley. Jimtown is named for James Patrick, the first proprietor of the Jimtown Store, located on 128 about half a mile north-east of the intersection. According to Carrie Brown, the current owner, the store was



opened by Mr. Patrick in 1893. Three years later the half acre parcel next door to the store, on the southwest side, was sold by George Alexander to the Trustees of what was then known as the People's Protestant Church for the sum of \$125.00 in gold. The deed is dated July 13, 1896, and the Trustees whose names appear on the deed are the Rev. William Floyd, S.L. Osborn, J. Cottle, J.M.Chitwood, Peter Young, Rosa Cottle, Emma Smith and M.E. Collins. Construction began two weeks later on August 1. The August 6, 1896 edition of the *Healdsburg Tribune* recorded that construction "began on Friday and the raising took place on Saturday. People came from all over, had a delicious repast on long tables beneath the shade trees. Music was by the Alexander Valley and Geyserville bands. Geyserville Choir sang.

Program of music, bands, hymns, scripture reading." An offering was taken that yielded \$23.00. An article in the October 1, 1896, edition of the *Tribune* describes the progress made on the construction of the church noting that a Mr. Bolles of Healdsburg was superintending the work. "I must not forget the ladies", adds the writer identified only as J.B., "as they are as zealous if not more so than the sterner sex, as on every day--Sundays excepted--you may see them busy as bees, carpentering, painting, etc., lending their might toward the completion of the sacred edifice." The church was dedicated on December 20, 1896. The preacher, the Rev. Joe Waldrop noted that "God has truly blessed our valley in planting His house in our midst." A collection taken after the sermon yielded enough to pay off the remaining debt of

\$157.00.

The March 16 and 23, 1897, editions of the *Healdsburg Tribune* contain accounts of a very successful series of revival services at the People's Church preached by the Rev. E.B. Ware. "Twenty converts was the result of the meetings the first week and forty-seven last week, making sixty-seven converts to date. A reconciliation has been brought about among families

which might never have been effected but by the planting of the spirit of Christ into their lives. One very noticeable feature of our protracted meetings is the number of men that have consecrated the remainder of their lives to the service of Christ." The article goes on to note that on March 12, "a great crowd gathered at the creek near Mr. John Ferguson's where thirty-seven of the converts received baptism by Brother Ware. On Saturday morning twenty-three others received the sacred ordinance of baptism at the Christian Church in Healdsburg." For a few years following this revival, the People's Church flourished. There was an active Union Sunday School attended by more than 100 children, the Ladies Aid Society was active in missionary and charitable work, as well as organizing social events. The Church acquired a bell,



a reed organ, hymnals, and installed "a neat, new picket fence" to separate the church property from that of Mr. James Patrick.

The high point of purchasing property, building a church, the experience of revival and the development of the ministries noted above followed decades of worship beginning in the home of Cyrus Alexander, the patriarch of Alexander Valley. A "Church History of the Valley," collected by Mrs. Ruth Seeman in 1962, notes that non-denominational services were held in Alexander's adobe home beginning in 1852. Alexander was a member of the Presbyterian Church, but the services in his home were conducted by a Methodist Circuit Rider. The Rev James Woods, the pastor of the Healdsburg Presbyterian Church, said of Alexander, "He was one of the few men of great wealth, whom I ever met, that was sufficiently satisfied with his riches not to toil for more." Rev Wood goes on to note that the first Presbyterian Church building in Healdsburg was largely the gift of Alexander. "Next to my own parents or kindred", Woods said, "I never expect to retain so cherished and grateful a memory of anyone, as of Cyrus Alexander." Ruth Seeman's account goes on to say that later a small church was built on Cyrus Alexander's property, but that it was destroyed by fire in 1863. In

the 1890's, the Rev William Floyd, a Methodist pastor in Geyserville, began to hold services in the Guilford School on the property of Mr. Peter Young. As noted above, Floyd and Young were Trustees of the People's Protestant Church when the present church was built on the site

purchased from Cyrus Alexander's son George.

The founding of non-denominational Protestant Churches and Union Sunday Schools swept across rural America in the years preceding and following the Civil War. In the early 19th Century the Rev Thomas Campbell, a Presbyterian in Pennsylvania, organized a unity movement that he hoped would unite all Protestant Christians. The movement emphasized local autonomy and self government, and strict adherence to the descriptions of the early Church contained in the New Testament. Campbell's goal was to do away with denominationalism, but the end result was the founding of one more Protestant denomination--The Christian Church--sometimes referred to as the Campbellites. The American Sunday School Union was likewise organized in the early 19th Century as one of the fruits of the Second Great Awakening. The mission of the Sunday School Union was to establish non-denominational

Sunday Schools in rural communities. The fellowship that began meeting in the home of Cyrus Alexander and which developed over several decades into the People's Protestant Church was typical of trends in Church life of 19th Century rural America.

In the first decades of the 20th Century the fortunes of the People's Protestant Church of Alexander Valley began to decline. The December 30, 1900 edition of the *Healdsburg Tribune* recorded that "The Christian Church (the denomination noted above) will hold services in the People's Church the first and third Sundays of each month. The Union Sunday School will continue as in the past." Such sharing of facilities often is a result of declining membership and income. Ruth Seeman notes that in the early years of the First World War (1914-1918) "attendance dwindled so greatly that the church congregation disbanded such members as wished to attend church, going to Healdsburg or Geyserville." Thus ends the People's Protestant Church congregation, and thus begins a period of disuse and neglect of the Alexander Valley Church building and grounds.

When I was appointed to serve as priest at St Paul's, Healdsburg, in 1972, I began to make regular visits to Holtzen's Sunset Manor, a senior residence on



Matheson Street. There I met Beatrice Warren. She and her husband Hiram had lived on Alexander Valley Road between Jintown and the Russian River. She told me about a harrowing experience when she and Mr. Warren attempted to ford across the River, believing that the water had dropped enough following the end of winter rains to make such a crossing possible. This would have probably been around 1910. Their team of horses and the wagon were very nearly washed down stream by the current. She told me that when the water was high and there was no bridge in Alexander Valley, the trip to Healdsburg via Geyserville was an all day affair. So it occurred to me that the People's Church may have grown and prospered when there was no bridge and a Sunday trip to Healdsburg for church was not practical; and that membership declined when there was a bridge in

Alexander Valley, and people could more easily attend services in Healdsburg. When I checked the dates of Alexander Valley bridges, I found the exact opposite. The first bridge across the Russian river was built in 1876 and continued in use until it collapsed in the 1906 earthquake. So the bridge was up when the Church was growing. The next bridge was built in 1920. 1906 to 1920, when there was no bridge, were years of decline for the People's Church. So much for the bridge theory! Whatever the causes of the decline in membership in the first decades of the 20th Century, they must have been of a more personal and spiritual nature.



In 1929, after more than two decades of relative inactivity, a Sunday School was revived at the Alexander Valley Church by Beulah Balderree and arrangements were made for various ministers from Geyserville, Healdsburg and beyond to conduct preaching services, especially on or near occasions such as Mothers' Day, Easter, and Christmas. Ruth Seeman recalled that Fr. Baskin from the Episcopal Church held a carol-sing before Christmas in 1959; The Rev. Carl Stocking of San Francisco officiated at an Easter service in 1960, Dorothy McCutchan was soloist, and the girls and boys of the Sunday School composed the choir. The Board of Trustees

began to restore the fabric of the Church, including a new foundation in 1956. Trustees at this time included Mrs Seeman, Katherine Kellogg, Robert Young, Vicar Kron and Pat Penry. The Ladies Aid Society held fundraisers and organized social events with the proceeds going toward maintenance and improvements to the church, annex and kitchen. In addition to being a Trustee and a member of the Ladies Aid Society, Mrs Seeman also taught Sunday School at this time and one of her Sunday School Students was Susan Young, now Susan Sheehy, to whom I am indebted for providing the historical documentation for this article.

In the final decades of the 20th Century and now into the first decade of the 21st Century, the Trustees have rented the church building and annex to various congregations to hold Sunday worship services and

weekday Bible Classes. In 1997, under the leadership of the Rev Ken Marshall, The Alexander Valley Christian Fellowship was legally incorporated. This Fellowship continues to meet at the Alexander Valley Community Church. The present pastor is the Rev Warren Hayes. Susan Sheehy, whom I once again thank for the material upon which this article is based, is a member of the Alexander Valley Christian Fellowship, a Trustee of the Alexander Valley Community Church, a member of the Ladies Aid Society, and, of course, a graduate of the Alexander Valley Sunday School.

OUR HISTORY HOME: THE MUSEUM BUILDING IS ONE HUNDRED YEARS OLD

by Holly Hoods

This year the Healdsburg Museum and Historical Society proudly salutes the centennial of our historic museum building. This neo-classical revival building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the register of the most historically significant architecture in the United States. The importance of the Museum building derives not just from the composition of its elegant pillars and pediments, but from its association with significant historical events: the implementation of Andrew Carnegie's philanthropic community benefit grants. Built as a Carnegie-sponsored public library in 1910-11, this restored and retrofitted building, repurposed for more years of useful life preserving the local history and culture of the Northern Sonoma County area, has continued to benefit and serve the larger community as the Healdsburg Museum since May of 1990.

LIBRARY BEGINNINGS

The roots of the library are entwined with the early town's first efforts to found schools, churches and social clubs in the late 1850s and early 1860s. Healdsburg's first libraries were book collections held at private schools. When the schools closed for lack of funds, their books were absorbed into the community and found their way onto the shelves of the first public library.

"FOR THE PURPOSE OF MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT AND THE CULTIVATION OF FRIENDLY FEELING"

The Healdsburg Masonic Lodge was instrumental in nearly every public library effort in Healdsburg. Healdsburg's first public library was located on West Street (now Healdsburg Avenue) on the second floor of Fox's Masonic Hall. The rent was waived for the first Public Library Association in February 1869, but their funding somehow dried up within a few years. The Masons stepped up again to support a public library in 1876 when a new Library Association was formed. The Masons offered a ten-year lease on their second story room for \$12.50 per month and the first six months free. The new 33-member Library Association elected a board of nine trustees: Ransom Powell, H.M. Willson, Jonas Bloom, T.W. Hudson, George Mulligan, E.L. Whipple, Robert West and Charles E. Hutton. The statement of purpose declared:

We, the undersigned, do hereby associate ourselves together under the name of the Healdsburg Library

Association, for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a library and reading room in the city of Healdsburg, Sonoma, and for the purpose of mutual improvement of its members and the cultivation of friendly feeling and for such other literary and social purposes as its members may desire.

The library was supported through funds raised by various benefit concerts and literary debates, enjoying a lively engagement with the community. When the new City Hall was built at the corner of Matheson and Center streets in 1886, the library and reading rooms were part of the design, so the facility moved to the building's second floor.



Andrew Carnegie

CARNEGIE'S GIFT

By 1889, Andrew Carnegie had already endowed several libraries when he wrote his book, *The Gospel of Wealth and Other Essays*, in which he advocated the distribution of "surplus wealth" during one's lifetime. He declared, "The best means of benefitting

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a community is to place within its reach the ladders upon which the aspiring can rise. The fundamental advantage of a library is that it gives nothing for nothing. Youths must acquire knowledge for themselves." Under Carnegie's philanthropic grant program, he would provide all the funds necessary for the construction of a building, but the community had to provide the land and tax base to support a library and maintain the property.

The first Carnegie libraries were funded in 1886; the last requests were granted in 1919, and upon completion of those buildings 1,412 communities in the United States had constructed 1,679 Carnegie-funded libraries. There were also Carnegie library buildings in Canada, the British Isles, South Africa and Rhodesia, India, Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. In 1967, 1,348 of the Carnegie buildings in the U.S. were still being used as libraries. Five Carnegie libraries were constructed in Sonoma County. The Santa Rosa and Sebastopol libraries have been demolished. The Sonoma building houses the Chamber of Commerce. Petaluma and Healdsburg converted their Carnegie libraries into local historical societies and museums.



Architect Brainerd Jones, 1910

SELECTING AN ARCHITECT, BUILDER AND CREW

Healdsburg applied for funding from the Carnegie Foundation in 1908 and was granted \$10,000 in August 1909. The building

site, two blocks east of the Plaza, was purchased January 1910 from Mrs. Racilla Flack for \$2,125. An existing building and fence had to be removed from the property. Architect Brainerd Jones of Petaluma was selected to draw the plans for the new building. Jones had built the Petaluma Carnegie Library and other notable residences, commercial buildings and schools in Santa Rosa and Petaluma.

The contract to build the library was awarded to Frank Sullivan of Santa Rosa, who was the best qualified low bidder at \$9,473. All of the subcontracts for plumbing, painting and electrical went to Healdsburg contractors, including: Al Garrett, J.J. Collins and Walter Gagliardo. The original architectural plans for the building included a "receiving room" and a "future social hall" on the ground floor and above, on the main floor, a "book room," "children's room," "librarian's committee room," and a reading room was planned. Two "hat alcoves" were provided on either side of the main entrance.

CARNEGIE'S REFUSAL

In June of 1911, Attorney J.T. Coffman, a member of the Healdsburg Library Board, wrote to Andrew Carnegie, seeking additional building funds because of cost overruns due to changes to the architectural design. He assured the benefactor that "appreciation of and gratitude for your splendid donation already received will not be diminished in the least if you should see fit to deny this application." Coffman sent a photo of the building and provided a cost breakdown of the extra expenses. His handwritten letter, on file at the Healdsburg Museum, stated:

Our original plans called for a basement room, not to be furnished at this time, excavated to a depth of 3 ½ feet; but after the contract was let, the Library Board, realizing that this room could be made most valuable and useful for public meetings for Library and educational purposes, and that it would greatly improve the appearance of the building, decided to raise it entirely above ground and to complete it with the rest of the building. This has been done, involving additional cost...\$816.75. This extra cost could be paid out of our Library fund, but such action will very seriously hamper and restrict the library work proper.

The Library Board received a curt, typed response from Carnegie's secretary. The idiosyncratic spelling in the letter reflected the goal of streamlining business correspondence by eliminating "unnecessary" letters from words. James Bertram wrote that Mr. Carnegie "does not see his way to add to the amount already given," adding:

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You hav made practically a two story bilding, instead of a one-story and basement. It is, we find by experience, very much against the use of the Library to hav nearly a score of steps leading up to the entrance. You might hav avoided half of them by sinking the basement in this way that is usually done. Furthermore when Mr. Carnegie provides a bilding he intends it to be complete and not a part of a bilding, to be completed later. You should have pland your bilding so that it could be excavated to the necessary depth and all used within the \$10,000 promist.



Building almost complete, 1911

LIBRARY DAYS (1910'S-1960's)

Despite the admonition from the Carnegie Foundation, the height of the stairs did little to impede the people of Healdsburg from using the new library. In fact, the library became increasingly important in the life of the community. As the city grew, so did the book collection. The *Healdsburg Tribune* supported the library endeavors early on by publishing the titles of new books as they arrived. The *Tribune* still publicizes library events and book recommendations.

Record keeping was simple, low-tech and effective. The (one) librarian kept track of book loans in a handwritten ledger, alphabetized by last name of borrower. Each borrower ("Powell, Mr. Ransom"; "Prince, Miss Eloise,") could check out up to five books for two weeks. Some of these early librarians' record books—a far cry from the computerized bar codes of modern life—are preserved in the Healdsburg Museum archives today.

The Museum also retains the library's original wooden card catalog, the use of which is unfamiliar to most people under the



Story Hour, 1950

age of 30. This card catalog has served the Museum Research Center extremely well over the past 35 years. The drawers of the card catalog hold historical newspaper index cards, with brief summaries of news articles with date and name of paper. Thanks to years of volunteer hours, the Research Center has these historical news articles from the local newspapers indexed by last name, business, and other subjects. This former library card catalog and the data it contains has been the heart of the Museum research archives for years.

During the 1950s, librarians implemented summer reading programs and children's story hour at the library. The children's library was downstairs where the Museum staff offices and Research Center are today. Adults who attended those story hours as children retain fond memories of hearing great books read aloud on drowsy summer afternoons. At the Museum, we frequently meet visitors who tell us proudly that they "grew up in this building." Everyone has a story. Some reminisce about the laughing (and flirting) they did as high schoolers, waiting on the front steps of the building for rides home.

LIBRARY TO MUSEUM

The Healdsburg Library joined the County Library System in the 1970s, linking services with the larger Sonoma County. In 1976, Edwin Langhart and a determined group of locals founded the Healdsburg Historical Society to preserve and collect items of local historical significance for the purpose of starting a museum. By the early 1980s, the Museum was located on Matheson Street where the Senior Center is now. The tiny building was much too small for the community's growing collection of history. The Historical Society seized the opportunity to relocate when the plans to build a new larger library were announced.



Former Museum on Matheson Street, 1983. The building was built in 1949 to house the Tribune.

In April 1985, the Healdsburg Tribune reported: "It's Official—Museum Will Move Into Old Library." The article noted that: *the neoclassic library building is one of the last buildings of its type still standing in Healdsburg and will provide a historically significant home for the approximately 10,000 photographs, artifacts and documents collected by the Museum.*

When the City Council confirmed the intention of moving the municipally-owned museum to the Carnegie Library at 221 Matheson Street when the city's new library was constructed, it cleared the way for the opening of a fundraising drive, aimed at raising the estimated \$450,000 needed to bring the old building up to current safety and disabled accessibility standards. According to a 1985 engineering report, the building needed a lot of work, including: seismic retrofit, handicapped access, new bathrooms, interior stairs, exterior stairs, repair of stucco, injection of grout in cracks, new roof, sprinklers, and wiring. A fundraising committee, Ted Etheridge, Peggy Rawlins, Eric Drew, John Holt and Phil Smith, worked tirelessly with Museum Director Hannah Clayborn to seek funds for the restoration project. The committee turned to the community and any available grant source. A generous \$110,000 matching grant from the Ed Gauer family was invaluable in meeting the challenge.

The new Library building at Center and Piper streets was completed in 1987. The City selected Jerry Eddinger's firm and Architectural Resources Group as the contractor and architects to undertake the restoration of the old library to dedicate it to new use. Work began in October 1988.

In May, 1990, the restored building opened as the Healdsburg Museum and Historical Society. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this 100 year old building both houses our City's history, and serves as part of that history; saved from demolition by citizens intent on preserving the majesty and memories of the

past. As a Museum, exhibitions, lectures, programs and resources serve to protect, preserve, and present the past as a bridge to the future. 2010 marks the building's Centennial and the Museum will be celebrating this event all year through exhibits tracing the City's past 100 years of architectural heritage, fashions, cultural diversity and toys.



Grand Opening as Healdsburg Museum, May 1990

Sources:

City of Healdsburg Centennial 1867-1967.

Clayborn, Hannah. "Not By Bread Alone: A Social History of the Healdsburg Public Library." *Russian River Recorder*, Summer 1988.

Kortum, Lucy. National Register Nomination of Healdsburg Carnegie Library, 1988.

Healdsburg Enterprise, 16 June 1906; 21 and 28 August 1909; 27 April 1910; 12 October 1910.

Healdsburg Museum "Library" subject file.

In the 1980s, \$558,719 was raised to renovate the Carnegie Library building:

Community (and Historical Society) Donations	\$292,885
Community Development Block Grant	\$131,400
State Office of Historic Preservation Grant	\$66,544
Interest Income	\$ 23,610
Museum Fund Balance	\$23,000
City Matching Share	\$10,000
Sonoma County Landmarks Commission	\$5,855
Healdsburg Historical Society Gift Shop	\$5,401

MAKING CHARCOAL WITH GUISEPPE "JOE" GARGINI ON PINE MOUNTAIN NORTH OF CLOVERDALE

by Anita (Gargini) and Vincent Colombano as told to Ann Howard

Guiseppe Gargini was born on May 23, 1884, the son of Felice and (?) (Fiornovali?) Gargini, in So Momme – Provincia De Pistoia, Toscana, Italy. When he was about 12 years old, the only son with four sisters, his widowed father sent him to work for men who made charcoal on the Island of Sardinia off the western coast of Italy. He would haul wood so the men could feed the fire inside the cone of logs, slowly burning with little oxygen to create charcoal, and then later in the day he was sent back to camp to start the fire so the men could cook their dinner.

Charcoal is the black residue consisting of impure carbon obtained by heating wood in the absence of air; the resulting soft, brittle, lightweight, black, porous material resembles coal. The production of wood charcoal where there was an abundance of wood dates back to ancient times. Different methods of production were used based on the availability of local materials.

The way that Guiseppe was taught to make charcoal by the men on the Island of Sardinia was to pile small logs on their ends on flat ground so as to form a large conical pile with openings left at the bottom to admit air and a central shaft to serve as a flue. The whole pile was covered with turf or moistened clay. The firing is begun at the bottom of the flue, and gradually spread outwards and upwards. The success of the operation depended upon the rate of the combustion. Under average conditions, 100 parts of wood yield about 60 parts by volume, or 25 parts by weight, of charcoal. The operation is so delicate that it was left to professional charcoal burners. Every culture it seems had its special group of people whose grueling dirty job was to make charcoal. In Italy it was the *carbonai*.

The massive production of charcoal, at its height employing hundreds of thousands mainly in Alpine and neighboring forests, was a major cause of deforestation, especially in Central Europe, England and Scandinavia, and later in the United States. The increasing scarcity of easily harvested wood was a major factor for the switch to fossil fuel equivalents for smelting iron in bloomeries, and later in blast furnaces and finery forges.

Historically, the greatest amount of charcoal was used as fuel, burning hotter and cleaner than wood. It is used in making gun-

powder, in metallurgical smelting operations, and by blacksmiths, in cooking, a dietary supplement for gastric problems, and was even used to power automobiles in China until the 1950s and France in WWII. In recent times, charcoal has many uses as a filter, in drawing and sketching, to improve soils, and for barbecuing foods, to name a few.

On October 29, 1904, Guiseppe left Italy and travelled directly to the property 8 miles north of Cloverdale on Pine Mountain between the historic communities of Preston and Cumminsky where he would spend most of his life.

His sister, Olimpia, and her husband, Florindo "Frank" Bracialini, were already living there. They made charcoal from the oak and madrone cut on the property, and hauled the 50-pound burlap bags of charcoal by horse team and wagon to the railroad station in Cloverdale. Charcoal was shipped to San Francisco where it was burned in stoves and fireplaces. They soon made enough money to purchase the 150 acres of rolling tree-covered hills on which they were living.



Guiseppe Gargina, early 1900's, holding a toscanilli, a strong cigar.

After living nine years in California, Guiseppe travelled back to Italy where he married Ales Lori on May 18, 1913, and they returned to California, also bringing his father, Felice, and two younger sisters, Guilia and Laudomia. Their other sister, Zaida, had immigrated in 1905. Three daughters were born to Guiseppe and Ales - Lena in 1914, Anita in 1920, and Mary in 1926.

Guiseppe gave land on which a school was built, three miles from Cumminsky, so his three daughters and other children in the area could attend school.

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Felice Gargini, Lena, Guiseppe, and Ales holding Anita about 1920 at home on Pine Mountain north of Cloverdale. Guiseppe built the house and the barn for \$500.

After a time Guiseppe's father, Felice, and brother-in-law, Florindo Bracciolini, did not get along, so the property was split into two 75-acre parcels. As the trees were cut to make charcoal, the families pulled the stumps with horses, cleared the land, and planted vineyards, prune and fruit orchards. Goats were raised in the pastures and the kids sold for meat along with the long hair. When there were no more trees to cut on the property, they stopped making charcoal in about 1925.

In 1945 Guiseppe wanted to make charcoal one more time before he left the property. His daughters Anita and Mary took the following series of pictures with a Brownie Box Camera of their father, at his request, making charcoal on a small scale (the original piles were 2 or 3 times larger).

Ales, Anita's mother, told Anita later that when she was about 2 years old in 1922 and napping, Ales climbed the hill to take the men their breakfast. The men would sleep near the charcoal spread on the ground to cool in case flames broke out. They had to snuff out any flames with dirt or water; if allowed to burn the charcoal would turn to ash. When Ales returned home she found Anita screaming from her crib saying that she wanted to go live with the neighbor!!



First a flat space of land was cleared. Oak was cut into four-foot lengths and stacked as shown.



A second tier of oak logs was stacked on top of the first.



Next pine boughs were stacked against the oak logs.



Dirt was piled on top of the pine boughs and packed down leaving a hole at the top. Holes were punched all around the pile from the bottom to about 2 or 3 feet from the top.

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A fire was started inside the center flue of the cone from the top.



The smoke has stopped coming out the holes in the base of the mound. He is raking the dirt off of the mound of charcoal.



Giuseppe had to stoke (stir and add fuel) the fire to keep it burning. He is standing on a ladder leaning against the cone. Every morning more wood was dropped down through the hole in the top to keep the fire going. Sometimes it was necessary to slow down the burning by putting water down the bole. The pile would burn for 15 days or much longer depending on the size of the pile.

After he opened up the mound, he spread out the lumps of charcoal using the long-handled wooden rake with 4" vertical teeth that he had made from a pine sapling. He watched the charcoal to be sure it cooled properly and did not catch fire.

Shortly after this series of pictures was taken, Giuseppe and Ales moved into Healdsburg in 1946, to the property at 237 Westside Road, Healdsburg, where Anita and Vince Colombano live today. Giuseppe died in 1955 and his wife Ales in 1985. Anita's younger sister, Mary, married Frank Rebottaro, who died in 2002, and Mary still lives on the home property of Pine Mountain north of Cloverdale, which includes the original 150 acres. The original home burned down in the 1960s.



Giuseppe knew the charcoal was finished when the holes around the mound quit smoking.



After the charcoal had cooled, Giuseppe carefully packed it into burlap bags ready for shipping. Notice the long-handled wooden rake lying on the ground.



Rake with seven-foot handle made by Guiseppe to spread charcoal to cool after mound was opened.

Vince and Anita Colombano have the seven-foot, long-handled rake that Guiseppe had made long ago for raking charcoal from the mound. Vince later replaced the worn wooden teeth. They have kindly loaned the rake for display at the Healdsburg Museum along with an example of the charcoal made in that mound in 1945, which they used in their barbeque over the years. Anita mentioned that her father bagged 50 sacks of charcoal from that last mound. The lumps look like thick pieces of oak rather than the modern pillow-shaped charcoal briquettes with which we are all familiar.

Sources:

Anita (Gargini) and Vincent Colombano, Healdsburg, interview with Ann Howard. Making Charcoal, Wikipedia on-line.

Wagner, Van and Steve Hassinger, "Making Charcoal" on U-Tube video 2008 in four parts, Greenwood Furnace State Park, Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania

THE LIGHTS AT RECREATION PARK: A LABOR OF LOVE BY A DEDICATED GROUP OF COMMUNITY MINDED CITIZENS

In 1947 Healdsburg High School coach and teacher Art McCafrey wanted to put lights in the athletic field at the high school (now the Junior High School) but it was deemed too small. So he came up with the idea of installing lights at Recreation Park. He along with Clarence Ruonavaara and a number of business and professional men joined forces to form the Healdsburg Lighting Committee selling \$22,000 worth of bonds to the community in a very short time. The funds were used to install the lights which are still being used today. The Lighting Committee operated Recreation Park until 1976 when the City of Healdsburg established the Recreation and Parks Department, taking over the management of the park at that time.



Members of the Healdsburg Lighting Committee. Front row, left, Felix Lafon, Clarence Ruonavaara, Art McCaffrey and Francis Passalacqua.



Odd Fellows team, 1950, first game under the lights.

BASEBALL WAS MY PASSION: AN ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH CLARENCE RUONAVAARA

by Shonnie Brown



Old Prune Packers Team Reunion

FAMILY HISTORY

I was named Clarence Milton Ruonavaara, born June 18, 1919 in Fort Bragg, California. My father, Frederick Elias Ruonavaara, was born in Fort Bragg on April 4, 1896. His parents were Elias Ruonavaara and Marie Kiankoski. My mother, Mary Catherine Ruonavaara, was born in Telamona, Italy on September 1, 1900. Her parents were Peter and Annetta Luzzi of Telamona, Italy. My siblings were Alvin (born in 1916), Arthur (1917), Blanche (1924), Ann (1931) and Russ (1933).

I have no idea where my name came from. Mom only went through third grade and Dad completed fifth grade and neither read much or had reason to pick names. Russell was named after the country doctor in Mendocino, Dr. Russell Preston. Ann was named Annie Laurie after an author, I think.

I never had a nickname until I went to Cal and Coach Clint Evans couldn't pronounce Ruonavaara and said, "Oh, hell! Let's just call him Rudy." And I was Rudy from 1940 to all Cal people and especially to Betty and all of her family and to my own family. During the Navy days I was "Ron" or "Ronnie." In education and in Healdsburg I have remained Clarence.

EARLY CHILDHOOD IN ALBION

I was born in Fort Bragg and lived there in the woods where my dad was employed until I was about three and we moved to Albion about 20 miles south.

Our house in Albion had four rooms. I'm vague on how we managed, but everyone there was poor and we didn't realize

how others managed. There was a big wood stove with a water tank on the side for hot water. No refrigerator or washer or dryer or indoor bathroom. The toilet was under the house over a sewer flume that I'm sure emptied into the Albion River as did all the outhouses of the mill that overhung the river. I had to cut kindling each day for the morning fire. I only remember forgetting once and Dad woke me up around 5:00 a.m., sending me out to the woodshed. Growing up on the coast in a small house with five siblings meant getting outside as much as possible.

Growing up during the Great Depression meant doing things without cost--fishing for trout in Salmon Creek, playing horseshoes, playing ball in the alley with balls made of stuffed stockings sewn tightly. I learned early how to throw fast balls when the ball was hard and curve balls when the ball had been hit several times making it very saggy. Bats also were homemade. Teams were only two versus two and arguments were many.

Baseball was my passion. There was little else in those days. No sidewalks of cement to skate on. No gyms for indoor basketball. We threw tons of rocks into the Albion River, barely reaching the river at an early age and finally hitting the dry kiln sheds on the far



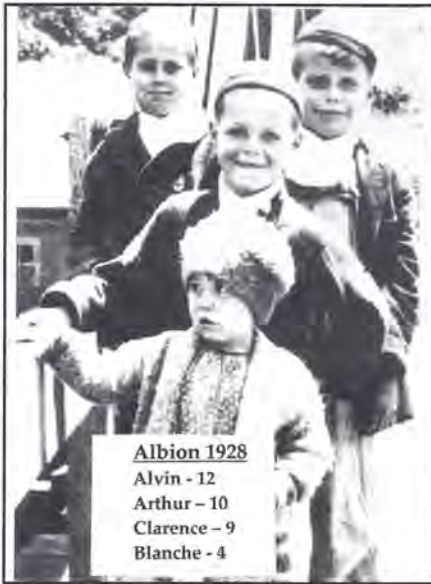
Clarence at 11 months, May 12, 1920

Continued on page 16

side and a window or two on the roofs of the far buildings--then trying to reach the river by throwing left handed.

Breaking bottles in the riverside dump halfway down the road to the river was a test of accuracy. Baseballs soon lost their covers and friction tape was the only way to keep the game going. The balls became much more firm and hurt like hell when you caught a fast thrown ball. Bone bruises were common.

We also rolled tires as an activity. And metal hoops with a stick with a crosspiece to guide them. We made and flew homemade kites with homemade paste. Coastal winds would fly anything.



Clarence with siblings on Albion Bridge, 1928

The church in Albion was non-denominational and people just went. As kids we went with a couple of pennies when we did attend. I recall one Sunday when Art and I decided to go fishing instead in Salmon Creek, two miles south of Albion. Our Sunday school teacher, Jessie Cassell, rode her horse four miles from Middle Ridge. We saw her coming as we approached the

creek and hid in the bushes until she passed. I really felt guilty and the pennies I had for church bothered me. Maybe that was a good lesson in having a guilty conscience... But we did go fishing anyway--with a willow pole and a tobacco can of worms.

Several summers in the late 1920s found us camping on the Navarro River near Dad's place of work. We spent two to three months camping. Stove and tent platforms kept us tidy with no outhouse. We got water from a nearby creek. Trout fishing and learning how to swim daily in the Navarro as barefoot boys was a daily activity. We returned to our home in Albion at the start of school for less frequent baths.

On the coast my dad loaded lumber schooners by winch on the pier at Albion when I was in grades five and six. During the 1930s he did any job he could find. One farmer, Bob Lynn on Navarro

Ridge, paid Dad \$1.00 per day and lunch to make redwood pickets and put up a fence on his ranch. Then he paid Dad by giving him a cow.

CHILDHOOD IN HEALDSBURG

In 1933 during the Depression my father had been out of work for three years with six kids. We sold our home in Albion for \$450, paid a \$300 grocery bill and came to Healdsburg in a 1921 Dodge Touring Car. My dad got a job out in Mill Creek in the woods. From 1933 to 1936 Dad worked in Mill Creek making railroad ties--6x8x8' for 18 cents each. Pointed grape stakes were \$10.00 per 1,000 which Art and I made on Saturdays. Hop poles--4x5x16'--were 75 cents each. Al and Art helped Dad fall trees on Saturdays so he could work on them all week, weather permitting. In 1940-41 I worked with Dad falling trees for the mill--eight to ten per day with eight foot saws on spring boards. He got 75 cents per hour and I got 50 cents or \$4.00 per day.

There were three of us in the eighth grade in Albion and we only had nine boys in the whole school. When I came to Healdsburg there were 64 in the eighth grade and they were playing with a 14 inch softball. That summer Francis Passalacqua started CYO baseball in Healdsburg. He was my first coach and I had to become an instant Catholic.

When I was a junior in high school, my dad's job in Mill Creek expired and he got another job in the woods near Booneville. My older brother was going to the junior college, Art had just graduated from high school, and we didn't want to leave the schools here. So we three boys got a two room cabin on Johnson Street. Al had a Model A Ford and we did a paper route--all of Dry Creek and all of Alexander Valley--by 7:30 in the morning. Then Al picked up four kids for the J.C. and I went on to the high school. The paper route was seven days a week, 50 miles before school on school days.

At that time, Earl Osborn who was the Vice Principal of the high school took an interest in me. In fact, I think he felt sorry for me because I was such a skinny boy. He and his wife, Josephine, thought about adopting me but that never took place. He was my mentor all of my life and he was the influence that made me go into education. During my senior year (1937) I was granted the Greyhound trophy, an athletic/academic award that was given every year. My oldest brother was only in high school here one year but he had also received the award in 1934.

I went through four years at Healdsburg High School playing baseball and basketball. Robert Young was the second baseman on the team. Ralph Sandborn was the first baseman. My sister-in-law to be, Dorothy Ackerman, was in my class. Dr. Meyer's wife, Addie Marie, was a friend, as were Barbara Beeson and her brother Perry. And Phil Witter was my catcher and one of my best friends. His father, Phil, actually built this house that I live in today. Heitz and Witter were the contractors and built three or four homes in the Healdsburg area. To think this house was built without a skilsaw...

COLLEGE YEARS AT U.C. BERKELEY

After high school I went back to Albion for five months and worked at a skating rink. I returned to Healdsburg in February 1938 and attended Santa Rosa Junior College for the next 2 1/2 years. In September of 1940 I went to Berkeley. The baseball coach there recommended a boarding house. I just walked in and two friends from Healdsburg, Ernie Comalli and Elmer Nardi, arrived with tickets to the World's Fair at Treasure Island. I went with them to Treasure Island and when we returned, the boarding house had been sold. So we found another one, aptly named Alka Hall, at 2430 College Avenue where I lived with two roommates for \$30.00 per month room and board. I made the Cal baseball team and I was the only Varsity athlete in the house. I was "top dog" and they were really supportive. We have had several reunions--50, 55 and 60 years--of this particular group.

The first year that I was at Cal the baseball team had a barnstorming tour scheduled through the Midwest at the end of the season. I was the number two pitcher on the team and we played 18 ball games between May 15 and June 15 of 1941. In order to make the trip I had to write the head of the local draft board asking for 30 days. I got a letter back and he gave me six months!

On the tour we won a game at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota where I pitched to 28 men. After the game I went to Minneapolis with some team members where we joined four girls for dancing and had a great time. One of the girls was Betty Ann Thomas, my future wife. After that night I sent her postcards of the games we had from Kalamazoo, Michigan to Chicago to New Orleans to Los Angeles and back to Berkeley. We won 12 of our 18 games playing Notre Dame, Michigan, Michigan State and Minnesota, and they were all out there to beat us. I was 22 and Betty was 24.

When I got back from the trip I started my senior year at Cal, graduating in 1942. Arnold Santucci, Garry Rosenberg and Les

Meyer, all from Healdsburg, were in my class. I had joined the Navy V-5 pilot training program with a promise that I could graduate first. When I graduated in May, I didn't go to the Greek Theater for the ceremony. I was playing golf out at Tayman Park because I knew I would be leaving soon enough.



Naval aviator in WWII

THE WAR YEARS

There were 52 of us in the Flying Golden Bears squadron and 37 of us came back. Healdsburg's Liz Loebel's dad, Ray Stott, was a member of the group. We went to Corpus Christi, Texas for our final training and I graduated in March of 1943 as an ensign. From there I went to advanced training in Florida, doing night flying for celestial navigation with

day flights over Havana and the Bahamas. From advanced training I went to Norfolk, Virginia and then joined the squadron in Brazil for a few months, ending up back in Rhode Island in 1944.

In Rhode Island I finally got a ten day leave and was able to visit Betty for the first time since we'd met. I returned to Rhode Island where I was on patrol. On my second visit to Betty, I bought a ring and then got orders to North Carolina where I was part of the most heavily armed antisubmarine squadron on the East Coast. From there I went to Maine, flying night patrols over the Grand Banks. Now the war was winding down and I was sent back to Florida as a senior pilot until I finally got the points to get out. I had to come all the way back to San Francisco to be discharged.

POST WAR RETURN TO HEALDSBURG

After my discharge during the winter of 1946 I bummed a ride in a carpool back to Minneapolis to marry Betty. We got married in her home on January 30, 1946. I bought a second hand car and we drove back to California, taking a one room apartment in Richmond while I got my teaching credential at U.C. Berkeley.

All those years that I was gone I thought of Healdsburg as home. During that first year back in California, Betty and I visited Healdsburg on weekends where I worked at my brother Art's service station and

Continued on page 18

played baseball with the Odd Fellows. After completing my student teaching in 1947, my first job was at Healdsburg High School teaching Social Studies and P.E. and coaching baseball and basketball. When the new high school was built in 1954, I became Vice Principal of the junior high under Bob Malone. I got my administrative degree taking night classes and became Principal at the junior high and eventually Principal at the new Windsor Junior High School.

Our first home in Healdsburg was a house on Powell Avenue which we rented for \$40.00 per month. We then bought a house at 110 First Street for \$5,000. It needed everything--a roof, a foundation, electrical... The toilet was on the back porch, not even in the bathroom. We were there 18 years until we moved to 552 Tucker Street in 1965.

ON EDUCATION AND HEALDSBURG SCHOOLS

The biggest advantage of teaching back then was that you knew all the parents and the grandparents and the kids knew that you knew. In 1970, after two years as the Principal at the new Windsor Junior High School, being in administration had become so frustrating that I went back into the classroom for my last eight years and taught ninth grade geography. Once two boys were acting up and I told them, "Listen, fellas... I know your folks. I know your grandfolks. And if we don't get along, you won't even graduate." And the next day this kid said, "Mr. Ruonavaara, do you like abalone?"

I liked the kids. They were a good cross section, a great mix. The school is just a reflection of society... It isn't that the schools have deteriorated today; society has deteriorated. I'm a public school person and I resent the private schools taking the top kids out of the schools. Half the education a kid gets is with other kids, and when you take the leadership out of the classroom the teacher has a tougher job.

I didn't know how poor we were during the Depression, but people are now finding out what adversity is. How they cope with it is going to be a big test because people's needs and wants are two different things. So many times their wants have overcome their ability to cope with it. As a society, we're in trouble.

Some of my favorite colleagues were Earl Osborn (my mentor), Elmer Christiansen and Bob Malone. We used to have people who were in education for the long haul. I had 35 years, as did Art McCaffrey and Bud Christiansen. Bob had 30 years. And you get

to know each other and accept each other. It's such a tougher job now.

ON VOLUNTEERISM, THE REC PARK LIGHTING COMMITTEE AND SMITH ROBINSON

After the War so many veterans came back very serious about education and life because they had had four years taken from their lives. The period in the late 1940s and early 1950s was an important one for Healdsburg. We were 50 years ahead of Santa Rosa with the Rec Park Lighting Committee. The Future Farmers Fair has been an institution since 1949. The basketball tournaments began around 1950. After World War II we had to get the country back into production. Instead of making bombers, we had to start making refrigerators again. And if you wanted something done, you had to do it!

When I spoke at the Healdsburg Museum Pioneer Award Dinner, I made a statement in reference to all the people who did so much to make Healdsburg a better place. I said, "People say that Healdsburg has been discovered. But it was never lost." We've had a wonderful community here, but the newcomers don't know our history. They don't know that so much was done by small groups of dedicated people. The city buying the Villa for \$40,000... The Brandts running the Warm Springs Dam promotion after it was almost killed at one time. What the Iversens did for Scouting... The Boys and Girls Club. The Kiwanis, who make \$8,000 at the Country Fair on corn dogs every year. Kiwanis Christmas tree sales... Our pancake breakfast... It's a tremendous amount of manpower and fellowship. It's volunteerism that makes these clubs function. I'm still involved and I'm still here because I keep myself with people.

My friend Art McCaffrey was a visionary because he loved to come up with ideas. He started the basketball tournament (REIBT) and even had international teams come here. He was a promoter. And if Art had something in mind he had a good following to support him. He wanted to put lights in the football field where the junior high is now, but there wasn't enough room. So then he thought of the ball park and I was included and we started the Lighting Committee.

The Recreation Park Lighting Committee included among others: Art McCaffrey, Smith Robinson, Ed Matteoli, Ralph Sandborn, Dan Modina, Francis Passalacqua, Ed Seghesio, Leroy Danhausen, Bill Atkinson, Ron Puccioni, Bill Murphy, Doug Badger, Perry Beeson, Ernie Biasotti, Maynard Boulden, Walt Cottini, Felix Lafon, Norm Schwietert, George Smith, Jim Grant, Gus Consiglieri, Ernie

Demostene, Quinto Barbieri and myself. A plaque on a rock by the football grandstand reads: "Healdsburg Community Lighting Committee. A unique corporate group. Dedicated to community sports through administering and improving Recreation Park for 28 years. 1948-1976." We ran the park. We scheduled every activity there and we were on duty for every activity held there for 28 years. We painted the grandstands, put fencing up, did the bleachers and the press box and paid off our indebtedness by raising \$22,000 on non-interest bearing bonds in 1948. We got the contract and put the lights in. We dug holes, In fact, I ruined my arm for pitching with a crowbar digging a trench.

Smith Robinson, a Healdsburg legend, went to high school here and was an outstanding student and athlete from an outstanding family--Healdsburg's only African American family. He was sent home from U.C. Berkeley because he had a heart problem and they gave him six months to live. He didn't die so he went to work at the hospital as a janitor. It was during this time that he organized so many sports activities in town. He would bring muffins and biscuits to people. He started the choir at the Federated Church and created an exchange program with a church in San Francisco.

Ed Langhart's sister's husband, Colonel Weyand, was stationed in Korea during the Korean War. Smitty spearheaded the all town effort to adopt the Colonel's battalion. As chairman of the adopted First Battalion Committee, Smitty excelled at securing contributions from everyone, including Healdsburg's children. Ghirardelli Chocolate Company gave Smitty chocolate bars and Hills Bros. Coffee donated empty coffee cans for shipping the prune cookies and dipped and stuffed prunes that local women made for the troops. Fraser's Shoes on Center Street shipped cartons of good used children's shoes for the Adopted Battalion to distribute to Korean orphans. This goodwill reverberated to Healdsburg with the Battalion donating funds to Healdsburg Elementary School and establishing a trust fund for our kids.

Smitty was a catalyst in so many worthy causes. He took leadership when it was called for and he had the personality that made him a natural leader. His willingness to serve gave him the support of volunteers who could never refuse him. He was honored on Ralph Edward's "This is Your Life" TV program where he was gifted an automobile which he couldn't drive until he got his driver's license. When he was getting low on energy, Bob Malone, Ethel Marie Oakley and I set him up with a greeting card/magazine sales business in his home. Betty and I were back in Minneapolis when he died. He was a doer who had total respect. As an African American, he was one of us and we were one of him. We didn't face the

issue of racism because there was no difference. He was the most unselfish individual I have ever known.

BASEBALL WITH THE ODD FELLOWS AND THE PRUNE PACKERS

I played for the Odd Fellows (with Waldo Iversen and "Cotton" Williams as team sponsors) for about 15 years and enjoyed the fellowship and competition for about 25 games each year. Then the Prune Packers (a semi-pro team) were reborn in 1950 as the Odd Fellows gave up baseball after 20 years in Healdsburg.

The Lighting Committee installed lights at Rec Park in 1948 and from 1950 to 1960 baseball under lights was the only game in town. However, semi-pro baseball was on the decline, due mainly to television, hot rod racing in Santa Rosa and the rise of boating which gave the sports public more to choose from. I played two years for the Prune Packers, but had to give it up at age 39 due to an arm injury. I recall many years of fun that seemed very important at the time.

BETTY AND FAMILY LIFE

I think my wife was the best influence in my life for leaving her family, coming out here and being home everyday for our two wonderful boys, Tom and James. Betty was my sounding board. We could talk about everything. We wrote letters every day while I was in the service at 15 different bases on the East Coast. My letters were up in the attic for 40 years. In Spring 2009 I brought them down and they were all tied up in order--715 of them. I began reading them and read for eight days straight.

Betty was involved with PTA and the church. When we returned to Healdsburg and lived on First Street, our next door neighbor was Jack Thomas, the pastor of the Federated Church. The church became very important to me because of Betty. The boys were baptized there, Betty taught Sunday school and I was on the House and Grounds Committee. Now called the Healdsburg Community Church, I've been through nine or ten pastors.

Our lives were greatly enriched by our two sons, Tom, born in 1951 and James, born in 1956, who have grown up to be solid citizens. As a family we were involved with the American Field Service for several years and had two wonderful exchange students, Gunther from Germany and Marco from Brazil, who blended right into the community. Marco and Gunther have both been lasting relationships for me. They were a wonderful asset to the family and

Betty did such a good job with all her boys, especially with me.

Betty and I did the same walk every year for 10 years, walking hand in hand because of her failing vision. We walked the morning of the day she died on August 20, 2005 and it's a memory walk for me now. I walk the same route that she took.

Our son Tom married Billie Jo in 1970 and they adopted Annie in 1987 at the age of three months. After studying and working abroad, Annie is now back in San Francisco at age 23. Their son Nathan, 21, is a junior at Chico State and is looking forward to a degree in accounting. Both Annie and Nathan are of Korean birth and have added so greatly to Tom and Billie Jo's lives.

Son James and Desiree were married in 1977 and are both employed at Geyser Peak Winery where they met and where Jim is the Production Supervisor. Their daughter Rachele, age 21, is working in Santa Rosa. Jacob, 18, is starting his second year at SRJC where he excels at golf. I am very close to both of them and to their parents.

CLARENCE'S LIFE NOW

Even though I'm only five blocks from the plaza, I don't feel the effects of the changes in Healdsburg because I'm really not part of the plaza activity. I have a big garden and I give my plants away here. I'm in SIRS and Kiwanis, and I've been on the advisory board for the Salvation Army for 28 years. I don't miss having more because when you get to be 90, you don't need any additional activities. I park my car out at the Alexander Valley crossroads in the spring, and while I'm doing my correspondence there, I'll sell \$100 worth of tomato plants in three hours at \$6.00 per dozen. Recently I was out there, as I have been for the past 20 years, and I sold 1,500 plants. A guy came by with a bottle of wine for me and it was one of my former students. At the Pioneer Award Dinner, a guy

came up and shook my hand, saying, "I buy tomato plants from you!" That's how he knew me!

The pastors of the Healdsburg Community Church, Dave and Becca Jordan-Irwin, have been very supportive, and my many church friends continue to be a very important part of my life. I've also been blessed with great neighbors and a close family. My sister, Ann Bynum, lives in Alexander Valley with her two daughters, Marcia and Denise, and her son Rick is in Sacramento. My youngest brother, Russell, lives in Oregon with wife Josephine and keeps in touch. Bob Platt, who lives next door on Second Street, has been a great friend for over 45 years. Bob Gemmer, who shares my gardening interest, and his wife, Marsha, have been close friends for the past ten years. Bob Wheatley and Bob Veenamann, my former neighbors, were especially good to Betty and were like two sons to us. My recent 90th birthday surprise party was at their Fitch Mountain home.

Interview and transcription by Shonnie Brown Healdsburg, California August 20, 2009



Betty and Clarence Ruonavaara at their 50th Anniversary