



RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

AUTUMN 2010 • ISSUE 110

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Bossi, Scalone, Ferrari - Healdsburg Machine Shop

BUILT FOR QUALITY: THE RISE OF THE HEALDSBURG MACHINE SHOP

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In This Issue

Over the years that I have been associated with the Museum as the editor of the *Russian River Recorder*, our Curator Holly Hoods has produced many well-researched and meticulously written articles about places and people and events. Her article for this issue is no exception. Again, after extensive research and interviews she has come up with a fascinating account of a very important community business, the Healdsburg Machine Shop. Unless you were or are in the wine business, you probably are unaware of the importance this company played in the growth of California's wine industry. We congratulate Holly once again on her considerable abilities to bring our readers a beautifully written history of a very special Healdsburg company.

We've been talking to our longtime contributor, June Maher Smith, about writing an article about her father and his Auto Top and Leather Company. She finally said that she would share what she had written about William Maher and his firm for her children with Marvin Bowers who has written a number of pieces for us. The result, an interesting account

of a business that served the community from the 1870s to the 1960s.

Dry Creek native Kay Schmidt Robinson shares with us the history of the one room schools in the Dry Creek Valley. Much research has gone into this article as you can see and we thank Kay for the opportunity of presenting this historical information to our readers. Kay with Ann Howard authored the history of the Dry Creek Neighbors Club (now celebrating its 100th anniversary) which appeared in a recent issue of the *Recorder*.

Shonnie Brown does such a great job with her oral interviews; we are pleased to present another one, this time of the Di Piero-Buchignani families. Another look at immigrant families who became important members of the community and contributed much to our rich history. We know you will find this most interesting and enlightening.

Arnold Santucci
Editor



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Our Curator, Holly Hoods, spent considerable time and effort in researching the history of an important Healdsburg firm that as she aptly put it "became one of the leading wine machinery manufacturers in California during the early 20th century. As you read this article you will become aware of Holly's ability to capture the historical as well as the human element of this fascinating story.

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An interesting profile of her father, originally published in the *Recorder* the summer of 1977

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Once again Shonnie Brown, in her very professional style, lets us share the history of the DiPiero and Buchignani families who played important roles in the community.

WILLIAM MAHER'S AUTO TOP AND LEATHER COMPANY: A HEALDSBURG INSTITUTION

by Marvin Bowers



William Maher, left, J.D. Wilson, circa 1920

These days most of the businesses on or near the Healdsburg plaza cater as much or more to visitors as to Healdsburg residents. In the last couple of decades Healdsburg has changed from a farm town to a wine country visitor's destination. Some Healdsburg residents lament this change. However, I am certainly grateful to see visitors wine tasting, and dining and shopping in the restaurants and shops around the plaza, rather than facing the sad spectacle of one empty storefront after another. That said, I do have happy memories of a time not so long ago (I came to Healdsburg in 1972) when Garrett's Hardware, Plasberg Liquor, the Plaza Market, Wainscott's Stationery, General Drug, John and Zeke's (the sole survivor), the Bank of America, and the Office Cafe surrounded the plaza and served a clientele made up almost exclusively of locals.

These businesses and the people who ran them were institutions, not only in the commercial sense but in the community sense. They served, reflected and formed the town. An example, one might say an epitome, of such a Healdsburg institution, was a business located at 105 West Street (later 247 Healdsburg Ave.) from 1877 to 1966. It was a business that made and repaired saddles, harnesses, luggage, hand bags, gloves; carriage and later auto tops, awnings, auto upholstery, and auto glass. It was also a meeting place; one might say a hang-out, for a generation of

Healdsburg farmers and businessmen.

The December 20, 1877 edition of the *Healdsburg Enterprise* reported that W. O. Gentry moved his saddlery and harness shop into the Gum & Zane building near the southwest corner of the plaza. A new proprietor, David Thornton, came six years later. On January 2, 1884, Thornton purchased the property from Peter Griest and John Young for the sum of \$850. Thornton was succeeded in 1908 by the firm of C. S. Spillers & Son. An August 13, 1908 article in the *Healdsburg Tribune* reports that "C. S. Spillers & Son have christened their saddlery and harness emporium the Grey Horse Harness Shop. They received a few days ago a life-size dapple-gray horse form for use in displaying their fine harness, and the shop takes its name from the 'animal.' It occupies a place on the sidewalk during the day and is a very attractive sign ... A novelty they have on sale is an automatic, self-cleaning curry comb, which is a decided improvement over the old-style curry comb." In 1914 C. S. Spillers retired and sold his interest in the business to William Maher. Two years later in 1916, the son, Luther Spillers sold his interest to William Maher, and Maher entered a partnership with J. C. Wilson. Seven years later, in 1923, Maher bought out Wilson for the sum of \$1200, and became



Interior of Maher's shop



the sole proprietor of the Healdsburg Auto Top & Leather Co. A deed dated March 13, 1929 (the year of the stock market crash) states, "L. Thornton et al to William Maher for sum of \$10 in gold coin." Maher had presumably paid rent to the Thornton heirs up to this time. William Maher would continue to operate this business at this site until the time of his death in 1960. His son, William, continued the business until 1966 when the property was sold. The building was demolished and the site became the parking lot for Fred Young Mortuary. The mortuary burned in 2000, and the site is now the outdoor dining area of the Healdsburg Bar and Grill.

William Maher's daughter, June Maher Smith, shared with me newspaper clippings and excerpts on which the above summary is based. She also shared some of her childhood memories of her father's shop. What follows is based on June's "precious memories", to quote an old gospel hymn. The shop was said to

have been built before 1868 using firstcut redwood and square nails. By the 1920's it was one of the last remaining false-front buildings in town and, says June, "it was getting pretty creaky." Roy Lowe, a long-time family friend, told me that the Chamber of Commerce tried to convince Mr. Maher to paint the shop, but he felt that fresh paint would make it look worse, not better. June remembers walking through the two ten-foot-tall, glass-paned doors and smelling the leather. The floor was springy and oil soaked. Customers could drive their cars through the big doors into the shop for a new auto top or windshield. Display windows on either side of the doors contained harnesses, belts, holsters and luggage. Inside were saddles on stands, and showcases containing gloves, bridles, belts, holsters, toy holsters for cap pistols, curry combs, and powders and salves for horses. On the walls hung buggy whips and horse collars. Her father's desk, cash register and safe were at the rear of the shop.

Also in the rear of the shop was a cast-iron stove, which was a gathering place for some of the Healdsburg old-timers who would sit around the stove and talk for hours. One man June remembers was named Ben Rennels. He was extremely opposed to daylight savings time, which he referred to as "anarchist time," and which he blamed on FDR to whom he was also extremely opposed. The stove was also the meeting place of the "Waterfront Gang", a group of merchants whose shops backed up on the Healdsburg Slough (now called Foss Creek). The gang met on winter days for hot buttered rum. Each man had his own bottle of rum stored in a cupboard in the shop and Mr. Maher heated the water and provided the butter.

Mr. Maher's dog Jack was a shop fixture in the 1950's. He was a black and white McNab shepherd. He was well trained and would sit on the sidewalk outside the shop and never go into the street.

An old frying pan clock, dating back to the 1880's when David Thornton owned the shop, hung on the south wall of the shop. It was made from a real skillet with the works of an old-fashioned alarm clock. June remembers that her father's first task each business day for 45 years was to wind that clock.

A final personal note. In 1993, my wife and I purchased the Maher family home at the corner of Tucker and East Streets. We feel blessed to live in a house that was built, cared for, and filled with love.

ONE-ROOM SCHOOLS OF DRY CREEK VALLEY

by Kay Robinson

"Bruna Guadagni – graduated; George Black – satisfactory if urged; Angelo Del Carlo – frivolous but bright; Annie Gelatini – faithful; Hollis Black – playful" - 1927-28 State School Register for Peña School.

In the early days of statehood counties were divided into manageable units called Townships, encompassing towns and rural areas. Mendocino, one of 14 townships in Sonoma County, included Healdsburg, Pine Flat, Dry Creek Valley and Skaggs Springs north to the Mendocino County border. In 1854 the records indicate that the Mendocino Township was divided into two districts by the School Commission. The schoolhouse for District #1 was at "The Narrows," identified as 2 miles north of Heald's Store. The best guess places that at roughly the current location of Manzanita School. According to *Vintage Memories*, District #2 schoolhouse was between the H. D. Mullison and George Storey's properties on Westside Road, perhaps in the location of the later Mill Creek School.



1898 Map of Schools in Dry Creek Valley (missing is Lincoln School, east of Hamilton school, since it wasn't established until 1909)

At one time there were nine one-room schools within Dry Creek Valley, from Warm Springs Dam (now) south to Mill Street. On the east side of Dry Creek were Hamilton, Lincoln, Canyon, Dry Creek, Lambert, and Manzanita. On the west side were Peña, Grape and Pine Ridge. Not covered in this article, but also within the watershed of Dry Creek, were Hot Springs School 5 miles west of Skaggs Springs, and Daniels, Junction and Felta schools in the vicinity of Mill Creek. All of these schools came into existence from the mid 1850s to 1912 and all were incorporated into existing school districts by 1954. Five of the schools still exist and are in use as residences.

Hamilton (originally Upper Dry Creek) School, near Board's Bridge, Dry Creek Road, 1866-1936

"...located at the head of Dry Creek Valley surrounded by large and shady fir, oak and madrone trees." (*Healdsburg Enterprise*, Nov. 7, 1879). In 1870 and 1874 the voters turned down a tax for \$700 to build a new school, but within a few years one was built for \$550 (source of funds unknown). Other points of interest are that it had 'patent' desks, a good library, 152 feet of blackboard, a globe and a good stove. Uniquely, the bathrooms were suspended above the bank of Dry Creek, for ease of cleaning! One Halloween some pranksters cut the cables holding the outhouse in place and it fell down the bank. People associated with this school were Alex Skaggs (trustee), Misses B. England and Geraldine Phillips (teachers), and Ann Petersen (Black Rued) and her brother Hereward "Hey" Petersen (students). Tom Baxter III was the last (and only) student at this school when it merged with the Geyserville schools in 1936.



Hamilton School, 1884

Lincoln School, Dutcher Creek Rd., 1909-1936

The land for this school was donated by Sam Vassar and it opened with 18 students, the youngest being 4 years old. A few of the teachers at this school were Alva Hill, Katherine Jones, Isabelle Andrews and Hilda Llewelyn. It had a short lifespan, merging with the Geyserville schools in the mid 1930s. It stands now as a renovated residence with expanded living space blending well with the old school. Today's building features a front door flanked by two windows. According to the current owners, the windows were originally doors with girls entering through the left door, boys through the right.

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Canyon School, Canyon Road, 1913-1936

Another old school renovated to become a comfortable home is Canyon School. The bell tower still remains, although the bell is gone. Early trustees of this school were Al Glaser, Sr., Paul Stefani, and Bill Roseans. Two of the teachers were Mrs. Mullins and Miss Edith Field, with student Albert Glaser, Jr. among others. After merging with Hamilton School in the early 1930s, it was incorporated with the Geyserville school district in 1936.



Canyon School, no date

Dry Creek School, Reinersville, Dry Creek Rd., prior to 1863-1954

Reinersville was located at the sharp right-hand turn on Dry Creek Road about 1.5 miles north of the Dry Creek Store. This sharp bend was eliminated in 1964 with the widening and straightening of the road. The property for the school was originally donated by landowner Kelley. However, with the school in the flood-prone land near the creek, the Reiners family donated an acre on the



Dry Creek School, 1914

knoll to the east of the road for the school. Some trustees for the school were D. B. Austin, J. R. Peck, and Emma LeBaron. Among others, there were students from the Phillips, LeBaron, Barrett and Enzenauer families. The author's mother, Patty Phillips (Schmidt), attended this school. In 1942 it merged with the Geyserville schools; realignment of school district boundaries in 1959 brought it into the Healdsburg school district.

Lambert School, south of the Dry Creek Store, Dry Creek Rd., 1855-1954

This school was named for the first Euro-American family to live in Dry Creek Valley, the Charles Lee Lamberts (Milt Brandt's great-grandfather). Very little is known about this school. People associated with it are Mrs. Mullin (teacher) and Aileen Steadman and Fred Henderlong (students). Irma Cuneo was hired just out of high school in 1932 to be the janitor at \$8.00 per month. She received a 25% increase to \$10 per month the following year. It was incorporated into the Healdsburg schools in 1954. The building no longer exists.

Manzanita School, Dry Creek Rd., 1854-1954

This was probably the site of "The Narrows" School, perhaps so named because it lies at the constriction of Mendocino Township. Several iterations later, it is still serving as a residence with "Manzanita School" emblazoned across the front. Several articles appeared in the *Tribune* in 1956, when it was converted from schoolhouse to residence by William Duffee who bought it at auction for \$3000. Early trustees included H. M. Green, John Hatfield and I. C. Laymance. The record book of the minutes for this school exists from 1863 to 1884 and provides wonderful insight to the business of running a school: trustee elections, teacher salaries, construction and maintenance, and school funding.



Manzanita School, 1896

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Peña School, Peña Creek, West Dry Creek Rd., 1889-1943

This school is entwined with the family name Bell in many ways. George Kimsey Bell sold the land on which the first school was built; George Duvall Bell was one of the first trustees for the school; Olive Mathews came to the school as a new teacher in 1927, married Walter Bell, and stayed on to teach there for 10 years; and Kathy Bell Clendenen (daughter of Olive and Walter) has now preserved and incorporated the school bell into their home on Peña Creek. Notable former students: Della Santini (Faloni), Frank Faloni, and sisters Floris McPherson (Martin) and Blanche McPherson (Keck). The school record books from 1927 to 1943 are archived at the Healdsburg Museum. The school merged with the Geyserville schools in 1943 and the building was destroyed many years ago after it was moved to Windsor. The movers were warned that the heating stove was faulty. The school soon burned down.



Peña School, 1940

Grape School, West Dry Creek Rd., 1892-1948

Grape Creek and Wine Creek merge near Michel-Schlumberger Winery and then flow into Dry Creek. Grape School may have been named for Grape Creek. It was located on Koch Road just north of Wine Creek Road. It was later re-located to the creek side of West Dry Creek Road onto property owned by Jules Auradou. Students came from far distances to this school and often rode in on horseback. Some former students at this school were Vince Lodrago, his sister Pasqualina "Pat" Lodrago (Black), and Vivienne Sioli (Rochioli). When the school was incorporated with Healdsburg in 1948, the property reverted to the original owner and the building was demolished. The "Good Girl" award cup (right) from Grape School, is part of the Museum's collection.



Pine Ridge School, no date

Pine Ridge School, West Dry Creek Rd., before 1877-early 1930s

Pine Ridge School served the southwest region of Dry Creek Valley long before there was a road running the full length down the west side of the creek. Prior to 1898 the road north of Westside Road only extended about 2 miles north and was called Pine Flat (or perhaps Pine Ridge) Road. The road then crossed over Dry Creek and intersected Dry Creek Road at Bloch's Corner (about the 1500 block). West Dry Creek Road, prior to 1898, ran from Lambert Bridge Road north to its current termination. The property that was donated for Pine Ridge School was once owned by George Kelley who was Superintendent of County Roads. The building continues to exist as a residence. A unique feature of this house is the railing on the front porch which still shows the years of wear and tear by children standing on the lower railing. This was the first school to unionize with Healdsburg schools, the first one-room school to go out of existence in Dry Creek Valley.

The research facility at the Museum contains more photographs and background material than could be incorporated into this article. The Museum is always looking for archival materials, objects, artifacts, and photographs to add to its collection. If you should have personal memories of these schools or any artifacts or photographs you would be willing to share, gift or loan to the Museum, please contact Holly Hoods, Curator.

Sources:

- "A Proposed Reorganization of the School System of Sonoma County, California", Wm. E. Baker, 1916
- Healdsburg Tribune*: November 7, 1879; May 21, 1936; July 26, 1956
- Vintage Memories, Dry Creek Neighbors Club*, 1979
- Dry Creek School, Wayne Barrett, ca. 1925
- Map of Schools, 1898
- Personal interviews with Barbara Petersen, Ann Rued, Gail Pacquette, Pat Black, Della Faloni and Vivienne Rochioli.

BUILT FOR QUALITY: THE RISE OF THE HEALDSBURG MACHINE SHOP

by Holly Hoods



Scalione, Bossi and Ferrari, 1910

March 1904 and traveled west to San Francisco. Because of his prior experience with machinery in the Italian army, Abele was put in charge of maintenance at St. Francis Hotel. After a year, he went north to Asti to work at the Italian Swiss Colony. Leaving with a better awareness and appreciation of the mechanics of wine making equipment, Ferrari then took a position at the Healdsburg Foundry and Machine Shop where he worked as a machinist and further honed his skills.

Mario Scalione (anglicized from "Scaglione"), a native of Tortona, was a married man of 25 when he emigrated to the United States, arriving at Ellis Island in September 1904. Mario's wife, the former Angela Bossi of Tortona, joined him the following year. Angela's brother, Constantino Bossi, a mechanic living in Portina, followed his brother-in-law and sister to Healdsburg in Sonoma County, California. Constantino arrived in August 1906 at the age of 26, eager to work with Scalione and Ferrari as a machinist and mechanic. He did not have the matching funds to invest in the company at first, but had skills and talent to contribute to the venture. He became the third partner.

Ferrari, Scalione and Bossi relished the opportunity to take over an existing foundry and planing mill (called the "Healdsburg Foundry and Machine Shop") in 1906 when the owner, William H. Priest, announced that he wished to sell it to move to Stockton. Priest and his brothers had been operating a machining business

The Healdsburg Machine Shop, an Italian immigrant-owned and operated family business, became one of the leading wine machinery manufacturers in California during the early 20th century. This company deserves recognition and appreciation today for the major role it played in helping build and sustain the successful California wine industry.

The founders of the Healdsburg Machine Shop were Abele Ferrari, Mario Scalione and Constantino Bossi, all of whom had emigrated from northern Italy in 1904-1906. They developed and produced winery equipment of superior quality and stood behind their products from the installation to ongoing implementation and service. The Machine Shop established its reputation in the San Francisco Bay Area and Sonoma and Napa Counties and added another partner, Cesare Rafanelli. The company became nationally prominent—then internationally known immediately after Prohibition ended in 1933.

Becoming Healdsburg Machine Shop

It took the partners a few years to get settled in Sonoma County, working to accumulate money to buy their own business. Abele Ferrari, a native of Savigliano, Italy, was the first to arrive in the country and Sonoma County. A 24-year old single man, trained as a blacksmith and mechanic, he arrived in the United States in



Healdsburg Machine Shop, 1918

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and iron foundry on the west side of Healdsburg Avenue at Piper Street (where WestAmerica Bank is today) since relocating from St. Helena to Healdsburg in 1893. The building came with the following equipment: an iron lathe, a drill press, emery wheels for all grinding purposes, a band saw, a scroll saw, one 24-inch planer for making all patterns of rustic moldings, circular saws, a buzz planer and a wood lathe, all powered by a 22 horse power engine. Ferrari, Scalione and Bossi shortened the name of the Priest Brothers' company to "Healdsburg Machine Shop." Within a few years, they moved southeast across the street into a building they purchased from the McNear family of Petaluma who had been operating it as a hay and feed store, and selling live chickens and horses.

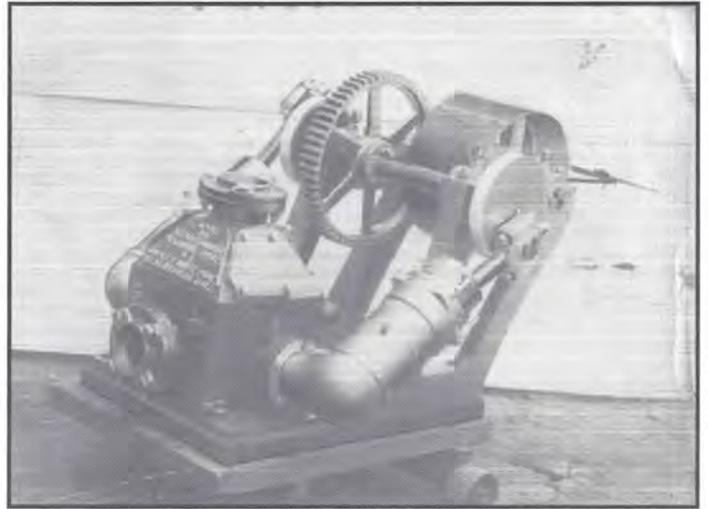


Pulp Washer, 1909

Surviving Prohibition

Cesare Rafanelli, a 24-year old immigrant from Livorna, Italy, joined the Healdsburg Machine Shop in 1919, taking the place of Constantino Bossi, who returned to Italy with his wife. Cesare had been living in San Francisco, employed as a machinist for American Car Company in 1917-1918, according to his WWI draft registration. In the 1920 census, he had a farm on Sulphur Flat Road in the Lytton precinct. In 1921, the partners erected a building at 448-452 Healdsburg Avenue with corrugated iron sidewalls and roof and a concrete floor. According to the *Healdsburg Enterprise*, the new building would have the same width as the old building, but would extend the full length of the lot "to enable this progressive firm to handle increased business." The southern half of the building would be used as the machine shop and the northern half served as a garage.

The firm specialized in the manufacture and maintenance



Must pump, 1909

of winery-related equipment, but the men did all manner of machining, welding, fabrication and metal work. They could make anything! The automobile machine jobs helped carry the company through Prohibition, which were lean years for making winery equipment. In 1922, the Healdsburg Machine Shop erected the first Soule Steel building in Healdsburg. This metal building, which still stands today near the current City Hall, was constructed for Romeo Cerri at 3 West North Street as a warehouse and grape shipping depot. The Machine Shop's sturdy Soule Steel building was adapted to many uses over the years. During Prohibition,



Wine Press, 1909

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raw sugar, dropped off by the Northwestern Pacific Railroad at the Cerri Building's loading dock, would be picked up and made into alcohol by Dry Creek Valley bootleggers, according to local accounts. During the 1930s, the Rosenberg Brothers Fruit Packing Plant dried and shipped fruit from the metal building. Del Monte later took over the plant. The building's last use as storage area for Purity Chemical Products has left it known to many as the "Purity Building." Most people have forgotten its agricultural past and connection to the Healdsburg Machine Shop.



Tractor made by Healdsburg Machine Shop

The Successful 1930s

During the 1930s, Ferrari, Scalione and Rafanelli invented and patented numerous innovations in winery equipment. The men did a lot of traveling to custom install the equipment. It is clear that there was great talent and ingenuity at work at Healdsburg Machine Shop; what is not clear is how to precisely delineate the specific contributions of the individual partners to each patent. The partner names appear in different orders on different patents, so it is probable that the main designer was listed first. All of them share the credit as "Healdsburg Machine Shop". Abele Ferrari was the first listed machinist in three company patents: a Bung Faucet (patented 1935), a Valve (patented 1937) and a Juice Extracting Machine (patented 1939). He was also the one to draw the illustration of the invention and often provided the concise written explanations of its use.

In May 1935 the *Sotoyome Scimitar* proudly announced on the front page of the newspaper: "Healdsburg Firm Gets

Government Winery Contract." The Healdsburg Machine Shop received word that its bid for equipping the United States Department of Agriculture's new "model winery" at Beltsville, Maryland with winemaking machinery had been accepted. The newspaper bragged:

It is no small achievement that the Healdsburg concern won the federal government's order for this equipment. It came into competition with several of the biggest manufacturers in America in open bidding on the equipment. Perhaps the best evidence of the real merit of the local concern's product lies in the fact that other concerns have factories on the Atlantic coast, but the government prefers the Healdsburg product even though it is necessary to ship it entirely across the continent and there install it under the direction of federal engineers. The equipment will be set up and crated here. The Healdsburg Machine Shop is now a busy place, employees working under pressure to get the federal order aboard cars for its long journey east. Work was started at once on the special machinery that will be required. The bid calls for all bronze crushing and pumping machinery, valves and fittings, and the complete installation will amount to several thousand dollars. The Healdsburg Machine Shop, owned and operated by Scalione, Rafanelli and Ferrari, has been manufacturing and installing winery equipment for the past thirty years, and during that time have furnished equipment to hundreds of California wineries. In the past year, the firm has patented a number of winery specialties. One of them, a bung faucet combination brought favorable comment from government engineers visiting California wineries last season and was the means of first introducing the local firm to the Bureau of Plant Industry which awarded the recent contract.

The local newspapers continued to tout the growing influence of the Healdsburg Machine Shop. *Healdsburg Tribune* noted in October 1936 that A. Ferrari, C. Rafanelli, C. Scalione and M. Scalione of Healdsburg Machine Shop attended the official opening of the new unit of the Alba Fruit Products Winery in Escalon where they had installed one of their new Healdsburg Rotary Crushers. The firm had also recently installed one of their Plunger Must Pumps at the Gallo Winery in Modesto.

In September 1937, the *Sotoyome Scimitar* welcomed Rafanelli and Scalione back from a trip through wine-producing areas of the state including Visalia, Kingsburg, Escalon and St. Helena, during which they inspected new crushing units recently

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Interior Cerri Building built by Machine Shop

installed by the Healdsburg Machine Shop. Installation of one of the crushing units had just been completed in the plant of the Scatena Brothers wine company in Healdsburg. The *Scimitar* was proud to report:

The continuous rotary crusher, patented by the Machine Shop, is meeting with wide favor in the eastern states and Canada as well as in California wineries. The Healdsburg Machine Shop, established as the Healdsburg Foundry many years ago, remains under the ownership and management of its founders. It owns a number of patented machinery units for wine making and it is interesting to know that its trade extends from the east to the west coast, wherever wine is made in reasonably large quantities. It is perhaps the one Sonoma County manufacturing concern having nationwide trade. Healdsburg has good reason to be proud of it.

Turmoil and Change in the 1940s

All of this impressive work was done with a relatively small, close-knit workforce. It was essentially a family business. The 1938 *Healdsburg City Directory* named only six employees working at



Cerri Building built by Healdsburg Machine Shop

the Healdsburg Machine Shop. In addition to Abele Ferrari, Mario Scalione and Cesare Rafanelli, Mario's son Charles was employed as a bookkeeper, Abele's nephew Othello was a welder and Louis Charlier worked as a machinist. Stresses in the multigenerational business partnership became increasingly evident after the death of Mario Scalione in November 1944. Mario's son Charles took over his father's interest in the Healdsburg Machine Shop. This shift soon heralded the end of Abele Ferrari's involvement with the company he co-founded. He quit just months later. In May 1946, Abele and his wife, Mansuetta Ferrari sold their interest in the Machine Shop property to Charles Scalione.

Abele walked away from the business with his head held high, but his annoyance with his former company took an unusual form: he didn't just get mad, he got even--through competition in the patent office. Seven months after leaving the company, Abele Ferrari



Healdsburg Machine Shop, 452 West Street

began to submit patents in his own name for winery equipment, some of which were modifications to existing Healdsburg Machine Shop patents. His Wine Bung Screw Valve, filed December 1946, was patented September 1951. The Ferrari Crusher and Stemmer, (patent filed January 8, 1947 and patented February 27, 1951 as #2543571) was a modification of the Healdsburg Machine Shop's 1939 Juice Extracting Machine. All of this wine machinery expertise became a distinct advantage as he pursued his other business interest with Frank Ferrero. They were partners in the Soda Rock Winery in Alexander Valley.

The Continuation: the Healdsburg Machine Manufacturing Company

After World War II, Cesare Rafanelli's son Arthur joined the business, going into partnership with Cesare and Charles Scalione. The company fired back at Ferrari's patents with new designs of their own. These patents featured Art's drawings and precise descriptions. Art took over management of the company in 1960, buying out his father and Charles Scalione. The name

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Healdsburg Machine Shop, 1980's

of the business was changed from Healdsburg Machine Shop to Healdsburg Machine Manufacturing Company, but its focus did not change. Art continued to strive for the high quality of work of his predecessors. He employed between 4-8 employees for the next 25 years. With increasing competition from large central valley firms like Leon and Pete Peters at Valley Foundry and Machine Works, business slowed down in the late 1990s. Art retired, but maintained interest in the company. Ron Rafanelli, who joined his father Art in 1968, downsized the business and slowed it down in the past three years. He is proud to be a part of the legacy of this longstanding local family business. Hard work, innovation and dedication to craftsmanship built this company an impressive reputation for over 100 years. The high quality equipment and service gave a tremendous boost to wine producers during this time. The Healdsburg Machine Shop should be recognized as one of the major influences in the development and growth of the California wine industry.

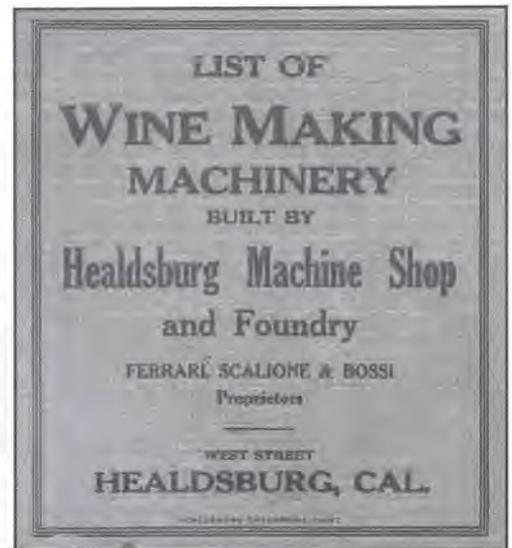
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Artifact: Brochure from Healdsburg Machine Shop, Circa 1909

By Holly Hoods

Donated to the Healdsburg City Archives in the 1960s by Charles Scalione, this informative brochure is titled "List of Wine Making Machinery Built by Healdsburg Machine Shop and Foundry, Ferrari, Scalione and Bossi, Proprietors." The



Wine Making Machinery Brochure

pamphlet presents photographs and cites specifications for some of the major wine related products manufactured by the company in its earliest years. The brochure is undated, but the photos seen inside were later identified as "1909" when they were individually donated to the Museum.

Printed by the *Healdsburg Enterprise* print shop, the seven-page catalog measures 5 x 5 inches and is in excellent condition. The cover is made of heavy, textured green paper and the pages are buff colored. All the type is black and the titles are printed in boldface type. The partners' names, "**FERRARI, SCALIONE & BOSSI**," appear in boldface over every equipment photo. The items for sale in the pamphlet include:

POWER CRUSHER AND STEMMER, Built In Two Sizes. No. 1 is all made of steel and will crush from 150 to 175 tons of grapes a day. No. 2 is made in the same manner and will crush from 100 to 125 tons a day.

DOUBLE ACTION MUST PUMP, This Must Pump is built extra strong and has solid bronze cylinders and plungers; diameter 5 inches; stroke 6 inches; equipped with loose and tight pulleys.

HYDRAULIC POWER WINE PRESS, Made in Three Sizes. No. 1 Plunger is 16 inches in diameter; No. 2 Plunger is 12 inches in diameter, No. 3 Plunger is 9 inches in diameter.

PORTABLE HAND WINE PRESS, With or Without Truck. All sizes.

DOUBLE ACTION PUMP, Designed and Built for the Hydraulic Press.

HAND OR POWER CRUSHER

PULP WASHING MACHINE, Hand or Power Built.

ABELE FERRARI, MASTER MACHINIST

by Rose Demostene

Abele Ferrari was born in Savigliano, Italy on April 10, 1880 and in 1904, at the age of 24, emigrated to California. His first job was at the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco. Because of his early experience with machinery in the Italian army, he was put in charge of maintenance at the hotel. After a year, he tired of this and went north to Asti to work at the Italian Swiss Colony. Having gained some knowledge of wine producing machinery, he shortly after went to work for the Healdsburg Machine



Abele Ferrari and family, 1920

Shop, which he subsequently purchased with two partners. The old shop was then moved from the west side of Healdsburg Avenue (then West Street), across the street to the present site. The building was purchased from the McNear family of Petaluma who had been operating a hay and feed store there, and also selling live chickens and leather trappings for horses.



Abele Ferrari and family, 1960

For forty years, the manufacturing and installation of winery machinery was his life. Abele is most proud of his seven patents for grape crushers and wine pumps. During all these years, he made, installed and serviced winery equipment in nearly every winery in California, spending many hours and days traveling with horse and wagon. He remembers when there were 58 wineries between Healdsburg and Cloverdale—it seemed like every family had its own winery.



Soda Rock house, 8015 Hwy. 128

During the early 1920s Mr. Ferrari worked with John Grant who was boring the first steam wells at the Geysers. He supplied all the needed tools and equipment, going so far as to borrow a pump from the Foppiano Winery and a motor from Fountaingrove. It was during this period that his company decided that the horse and wagon was taking too much time on the road. Therefore they purchased an Overland touring car, cut out the back seat, added a flat bed, and this had to be the first pickup truck in Healdsburg. In 1925 he purchased a one-half interest in the Soda Rock Ranch and Winery in Alexander Valley. The small winery on the place was later demolished and, with the iron beams from the old Dry Creek bridge and the stones from the condemned Healdsburg Grammar School, the present Soda Rock Winery [now owned by Ken and Diane Wilson] was constructed. Abele and his partner [Frank Ferrero] also owned a prune ranch in West Side. However, the machine shop was his first love and he was active in it until selling out in 1950.

Mr. Ferrari was married to Mansueta Vasconi in 1911 and four daughters were born to them: Rose Demostene, Rena Steele, Inez Nuessle and Vera Plum. He has led a very active life and still works in his shop in his home. He attributes his longevity to hard work and his daily half bottle of wine.

Reprinted from the *Russian River Recorder*, Summer 1977.
(Rose Demostene, a founding member of the Healdsburg Historical Society, passed away October 2010.)

AN ORAL HISTORY, LOUISE DI PIERO BUCHIGNANI

by *Shonnie Brown*



Leo and Louise Buchignani

FAMILY HISTORY AND EARLY YEARS

My father, Francesco Di Piero (born in 1890), was a soldier for the Italian Army when they were fighting the Turks back in 1912. He returned to his town, Villa Basilica, in Tuscany, after the soldiers were sent home. There he met my mother, Elvira Frediani, who was from nearby Pieve de Competo. When the soldiers were recalled to the Army, my father didn't want to go. Instead, he married my mother in April 1913 and soon afterwards left by himself for the United States.

I don't know where he landed, but he met up with a cousin in Willits and the two of them began working as lumberjacks. They lived way out in the woods and had to ride a train or boxcar to get into town and have access to a larger train. It took seven years for my dad to make enough money to send for Mom. Meanwhile, she had their son, Armando. When my mother and Armando emigrated, they all lived in Willits. I was born there in 1921 and my brother Livio in 1923.

We moved to Chalk Hill Road in Alexander Valley in 1924. My sister, Dena, was born in 1925 in the Gromo house on University Street in Healdsburg with Maria Gromo attending as the midwife. Then Angie was born at a cousin's house on West Street in 1927. She was delivered by Dr. Sewell who I remember as being a great big man. When I was about nine or ten years old, the school nurse

called Dr. Sewell because I always had an earache. He came to the house, picked me up and carried me to his car to take me to the hospital. There he lanced my ear and then drove me back home. We moved into town to Grove Street and then to West Street. For many years my father, a farmworker, worked for Eugenio Massoni who lived on the corner of Sherman Street and Healdsburg Avenue. After West Street, my family moved onto the Massoni Ranch out on Chiquita Road, where we lived until I was almost 19. During this time my dad also leased a grape and prune ranch in Geyserville which enabled him to buy property in Healdsburg.

Page B-2 Healdsburg Tribune Wednesday, April 14, 1982

Teacher of the month

Louise Buchignani, librarian at Fitch Mountain Elementary School, was recently honored by the Healdsburg Elementary School District as "employee of the month." Among the many services and organizations which Buchignani has been involved with are the Healdsburg PTA, the local Business and Professional Women's Club, Healdsburg CSEA Chapter 314, Healdsburg Community Blood Bank, March of Dimes and more.



Louise Buchignani, 1982

HEALDSBURG SCHOOL YEARS

When I was at the old Healdsburg Grammar School (where St. John's is now), boys had to play on one side of the school yard and girls on the other. It was decided that the building was not earthquake safe and the students were sent temporarily to the American Legion Building and another building on Center Street where the Mitchell Center is now. I was there for sixth and seventh grades until they opened the new Healdsburg Elementary School in 1935 (located where it is now) where my eighth grade class was the first graduating class in June 1936. Of the 68 students in my graduating eighth grade class, many of them remained my lifelong friends and went on to become well known Healdsburgers. Milt Brandt, June Maher, Bob Mascherini, Mabel Ferrero, Gene Giovannoni, Ernie Palmieri, Herbert Passarino, Norma Raffanelli Cousins and Marion "Bill" Walker were among them.

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When we lived on West Street on the north end of town, Mabel Ferrero became my neighbor and lifelong friend. We were always together, though I found her to be a bit bossy. Her family had a cow and harvested corn and we two girls enjoyed playing together in their barn. We used a machine that took corn off the cob to feed the cow. Mabel's family also had an apple orchard and Mabel, her sister, my brother and I made our own golf game using empty tuna cans, baby apples and sticks that were everywhere on Healdsburg's unpaved streets. At our HHS class of 1940 64th high school reunion, Mabel and I exchanged lighthearted quips.



While living on the ranch, I had to walk a mile and a half from the north end of Chiquita Road just to get a ride to Healdsburg Elementary. We picked prunes and grapes all summer long and perhaps that's why we all have backaches now! I often went to visit the girls at the Lytton Home orphanage (the "Boy's and Girl's Industrial Home and Farm") of the Salvation Army. One friend from there was a girl named Noreen Ezery. We just accepted the children and didn't ask why they were there. But we were also very naive in those days. One day during high school, our Biology teacher, Mr. Worden, told us that we were going to see all these people who were "different." We went to the Sonoma State Hospital (now the Sonoma Developmental Center) near Glen Ellen to see children and adults who were physically challenged and developmentally disabled. We were totally unprepared for this experience and just too shy to tell Mr. Worden how scary it was. Teachers didn't talk about things in those days.

In eighth grade Mabel and I worked in the cafeteria helping prepare food and do the clean up, so we got our lunches for free. My classmate Norma Rafanelli loved to chew gum in class. Mr.

Gibbs, our science teacher, would always tell her to throw her gum out, but she would be chewing it again the next day. Finally, he had her take the gum out of her mouth and roll it out thin with her fingers. Then he made her put it over her nose! Norma still laughs about how she never chewed gum in class after that experience.

LEO BUCHIGNANI

My husband Leo's family came to the United States when his grandfather, Narciso Buchignani (born in 1844), immigrated to California in 1896. Narciso and his wife, Rosa Petri Buchignani, first lived with the Puccionis (friends from Italy) and the Nicolettis in Mill Creek. They had all come here from Tuscany. Narciso and Rosa had four children: Isola (who married Alberto Giovannoni), Dalida (married Angelo Puccioni), Rizieri (married Fanni Sbragia) and Oreste (Leo's dad, who married Natalina Del Fava). Natalina was a "mail order" bride from Italy. Her brother, Neri, knew Oreste from over here. When Oreste and Neri met Natalina upon her arrival in California, Oreste went toward her and kissed her. She was highly insulted and slapped him, having no idea who he was! But they were soon married in San Francisco in May 1905 and had eight children: Leo, Rosie, Nivan, Deno, Lella, Caesar, Leah and Edie.

Leo was born in 1914 at the family home on Walling Road in Geyserville, near where Pedroncelli's is now. He went to all Geyserville schools. When I was a freshman in high school, he was going with Mabel's older sister, Lucille. He was always there when I visited Mabel, but I don't think we ever even said "Hello."

During the summer before my junior year, Mabel and her boyfriend, Bud Ponzio, would often come to our house to visit on weekends (with Bud's sister, Elvira). One Sunday Leo came over with the others and started a conversation with my dad who thought he was very special because he was Italian. The next week the gang decided to go to the coast and Leo asked if I could go. Then he started coming to the house by himself every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday. I wondered why he was coming because he spoke mainly with my father, but finally he worked up the nerve to ask me to the movies. I had to ask my mother, and my brother Livio had to come along as chaperone to the old theater on West Street. Leo and I went for drives and to the movies for several months, and in December of my junior year he gave me an engagement ring. We got married on May 4, 1940.

EARLY MARRIED LIFE

My father-in-law, Oreste Buchignani, had a grape ranch on Walling Road in Geyserville and a prune ranch on West Dry Creek.

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Leo and Louise, 1942

Leo had rented his father's ranch before we got married and we helped his brother Nivan with the prunes while Nivan and his wife Roslyn helped us with the grape harvest. Leo and Nivan would load five to six tons of grapes at a time, pack them in wooden boxes and haul them down to San Francisco to sell. They would have to crush the grapes in order to get the boxes back to reuse. They got paid \$35.00 per ton, crushed and everything. When the grapes were too sweet, Leo would tell the customers they had to add water to make wine. They wouldn't believe him, and then the wine would turn into vinegar. After that first harvest, Leo's dad got his share of the money and there were plenty of bills to pay. Leo and I were \$25.00 short and had to borrow money from the bank to live on.

Oreste was the big boss and very strict. Leo and I were visiting with him one day. Oreste (who I called "El Vecchio" or "Old Man" behind his back) told me that he wanted us to run the ranches and help the Old Lady "La Vecchia" with the chickens. "And when you want to buy a pair of stockings or something," he continued, "I'll give you 50 cents to buy what you need!" So I told him: "I respect you and like you... but no thank you!" I didn't tell Leo until we got home later that day. I just couldn't see myself doing all the work

of being on the ranch and never going anywhere. I told him if he wanted that life I was going home to live with my mother! It was truly a newlyweds' dilemma.

Since I refused to live like that, Leo took a job with Italian Swiss Colony in Asti and worked there for a couple of years. We then moved to George Stefani's ranch in Geyserville, where we lived from 1942-46 while Leo worked for him. Leo and his brother-in-law George Gondola then went on to lease the Stefani ranch.

MOVING UP

Our first son, Kenny, was born in 1945. By this time we were getting more money for the grapes because of increased demand and had built up a bit of a nest egg. We bought a house at 721 University Street for which we paid \$8,000. We lived on the hill on University. Next door (to the south) were the Rabellinos and then the Gotellis. Our son Tim was born in 1950. Today all three Italians who once lived next door to each other are related. Tim's daughter, Lori, married Jeremy Gotelli and Jim Rabellino's daughter, Jeannie, married Ray Gotelli.

In 1955 we purchased a 42 acre ranch on West Dry Creek where we grew prunes and other fruits and raised farm animals while Leo also worked for Service Lumber Company as a certified grader who was responsible for checking the quality of the wood. At this time Kenny was ten years old and Tim was five. We had a lot of boys roaming the acreage, playing with sheep, chickens and rabbits. I remember that Steve Plass would sit outside reading comic books (we called them funny books) while the others were out running around. I was working at Alexander Bakery where Cousteaux is now.

During several summers Neal Jensen stayed with us during the day while his parents were working. One day I heard Neal yelling while running out of the sheep barn towards the house. When he got inside the screened porch, he opened a gunny sack to show me a live bat which he had caught! He was so excited, but the sheep barn soon became off limits. Neal was our "third son" and still is. Up on the hill were a beautiful group of spindly evergreen trees. One day I saw our boys and four others whooping and hollering up there. Suddenly, I looked closer and saw that all the trees were cut down. They had built forts out of the trees! I was shocked and sent the other boys home. I told our boys that their dad would be very angry. When Leo got home, I told him about the incident and he replied, "So what?" I had been so on edge about Leo's response and it didn't even bother him.

Leo's habit was to walk the entire perimeter of the property

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with his rifle, checking the security of the fences, but once there was a terrifying threat of a mountain lion in the area. We had to both go back outside in the pitch black night armed with flashlights looking for our sheep, while afraid that the lion might be hovering in the branches above--ready to jump us. We stayed on the ranch until Kenny was 17, but Leo got tired of checking the fences so we moved back into town in April of 1963, just prior to Kenny's high school graduation that June.



The Buchignani Family, 1933. Leo (Dad), Rosie, Nivan,, Big Nona, Deno, Caesar, Big Nono, Ernie (Rosie's son), Edie, Leab, Diane (Lella's daughter, Lella

WORKING AND VOLUNTEERING IN HEALDSBURG

When our son Tim started kindergarten, I got very involved with the Healdsburg chapter of the 14th District PTA (Marin and Sonoma Counties). The profits from our yearly Halloween Carnival during the late 1950s and early 1960s went towards purchasing school clothes for needy children. I served as PTA President and local representative to the 14th District. I was Homemaking Chairperson for the District and in 1958 I went to Los Angeles and gave a speech at a PTA conference. I also served as Director of Health for two years and became very involved in the Jonas Salk Polio Vaccine Program. We got quite a bit of local publicity as we went to different schools telling people about the sugar cube program in which two drops of oral vaccine in a sugar cube vaccinated hundreds of thousands of children and adults. I was also PTA Historian for two years. During those years I was very fortunate to meet and work with so many wonderful women.

In 1963 I was asked by District Superintendent Byron Gibbs (my former teacher) to be the librarian at the new Fitch Mountain School. I'd been bringing biscotti to Mr. Gibbs every year, and actually used to deliver them to his house. One year I didn't get to bake for Christmas, and in February he came up to me and said, "I see I'm off your list!". I told him that we needed a longer

vacation so that I'd have more time for baking. I think my biscotti may have gotten me the job as the first librarian of Fitch Mountain Elementary School!

I worked at Fitch Mountain for 19 years while Leo worked for 20 years as a custodian at Healdsburg Elementary School (a job also secured through the help of Mr. Gibbs). At first Fitch Mountain had kindergarten through sixth grade, and then the school rented the Armory and half of the kids went there. During those years, I'd pack up books with the help of the custodians and take them to the Armory each week. I loved both the staff and the kids. I wish I had kept a journal of my memories of all the children who became so special to me.

For seven of my years as librarian I was very involved with a committee for collective bargaining--a method of negotiation in which employees use authorized union representatives to assist them. We worked to form a classified (non-teaching) employees union for Healdsburg schools. I went back to the Junior College and studied parliamentary procedure, because there were a lot of politics involved. I learned to be very assertive with men because I had to stand up for my rights and those of my colleagues, and at one point we actually sued the School District and won. For awhile I was President of the local CSEA (California School Employees Association), the largest classified school employees' union in the United States.



Louise Buchignani, 1969

In 1968 I was asked to join the Healdsburg Business and Professional Women's Club (BPW), a state and national organization focused on equal pay for women in the workplace. I was chosen Woman of the Year in 1969. There was a big celebration in which Mr. Gibbs presented me with a scroll in front of representatives from many Santa Rosa political offices while I was awarded the key to the City of Santa Rosa by the Mayor's office! One of my jobs with the BPW was my work in establishing the Healdsburg Community Blood Bank.

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The Dipiero kids, 1932. Livio, Louise, Dena (in back), Mabel Angie (in front). Many years later, Mabel Ferrero became Kenny's Godmother.

Over the years I also got awards or headed fund raising committees for Cystic Fibrosis and the American Cancer Society. I received certificates from the local Masons for service in education and I was chosen as Fitch Mountain Elementary School's Employee of the Month in 1982. I loved my years of working and volunteering and felt myself to be a vibrant part of the Healdsburg community. During the 20 years that Leo was working as a school custodian, he was always very supportive of my volunteer work.

After Leo retired in 1976, he often helped me in the library, processing the new books for the children. He also participated in the initial ground-breaking for the Healdsburg Boys Club (now the Boys and Girls Club), a project spearheaded by Al Barbieri with assistance from Philip Barbieri, Charles Scalione and Al Esaia along with Leo.

THE EXTENDED BUCHIGNANI TRIBE

In June 2006 there was a reunion of about 289 Buchignanis from the Oreste Buchignani clan at Lake Sonoma. And this was just my father-in-law's family! Included were Oreste's siblings and their families, the Buchignanis out on Dry Creek Road (Oreste's second

cousins), the Buchignanis from Santa Maria (who are related to the Dry Creek group), Buchignanis from Guerneville (Oreste's second or third cousins) and a group from Fairbanks, Alaska.

The "head" of the Dry Creek group was Esaia Buchignani, a distant cousin of Leo's. He and his wife, Gioconda, emigrated to Sonoma County in 1910. Their daughter Florence's childhood was spent in the Italian community of Asti, but the family went on to farm on Dry Creek Road and are thus referred to as the Dry Creek Buchignanis. Florence ("Flori") Buchignani Rovai was former Miss Redwood Empire in 1932 and is an interesting person.

Flori's sister-in-law, Edwina "Dolly" Buchignani is the "mother" of the existing Dry Creek tribe. Her daughters are Suzie Buchignani Garcia, who works at the Bank of America in town, Joy Buchignani, who works for the City of Healdsburg, and Mary Anne Turbeville, a local CPA. All three are Flori's nieces.

Leo and I were always close to Leo's first cousin, Cerri (now deceased) who married Alma Chiosi, still a dear friend. Their daughter Shirley and son Ricky have a grape ranch on Dry Creek Road.

Since Leo passed away on April 30, 2006, my immediate family is comprised of my son Kenny (who retired from 33 years with Safeway), his wife, Suzie (retired from Marietta Vineyards), their daughter Jennifer (who is a local esthetician), her husband Thomas Loos, and their son Joshua who is almost 13. Then there is my son Tim, a retired mechanic, formerly married to Kathy Davis. Their daughter Lori married Jeremy Gotelli and they have six children: Justine, Samantha, Giamo, Jeremiah, Lucas and Kalen. I am also very close to Edie Pastor, Leo's only surviving sibling, and Alice Buchignani, one of Leo's sisters-in-law.

My days are busily spent caring for my great grandchildren, making scrapbooks and photo albums for all family members and visiting with my 102 year-old friend Mary Barry.



Healdsburg Tribune, May 2000