



RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

SUMMER 2011 • ISSUE 113

An Official Publication of the Healdsburg Museum and Historical Society



A waiting ox and cart in front of the Healdsburg Post Office, pictured in 1869

HERE COMES THE MAIL!

HEALDSBURG'S POSTMASTERS—FROM HARMON HEALD TO JOE MACHADO

by Janet Sbragia Pisenti • Page 16

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Geyserville: Some Things She Has

reprinted from The Geyserville Gazette, February 3, 1899 • Page 8

You Might Have Been a Geyserville Kid If You Ever...

by Joe Pelanconi • Page 9

In This Issue

This issue of the *Russian River Recorder* is the first issue in fourteen years that the Museum has produced without Arnold Santucci in the editor's chair. We honor and appreciate Arnold's many years of dedication to the Museum and are pleased to report that he is currently working with Museum staff to produce a book of RRR articles from the past 10 years. This book will be a companion to the Museum's first volume of *Russian River Recorder* articles, 1976 – 1999, published in 2000.

This issue of the *Recorder* includes short submissions from three of our readers. Elvira Belluomini Hahn sent a letter to the editor in response to Janet Sbragia Pisenti's article "Rosenberg and Bush: A Dry Goods Store Serving Healdsburg for 120 Years." Dolores Buchignani Rovai wrote a follow-up to Shonnie Brown's oral history with Louise Buchignani DePiero. We also received a heartwarming email message from Stan Derkx of the Netherlands whose family has adopted the grave of Arthur C. Beeman of Healdsburg, killed in Germany during WWII and buried in Belgium. Stan's outreach to the Museum to help locate Art Beeman's descendants was just featured in the *Healdsburg Tribune* and the *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*.

The 100th anniversary of the Bosworth and Son general store of Geyserville was the focus of a well-deserved huge celebration in July. Joe Pelanconi, who grew up with the general store, has written an engaging article about the store and about the Bosworth family who started it and sustains it. Joe is the author of two other books, including the recently-published (and hilarious) *Geyserville: Fuzzy*

Old Snapshots. In keeping with the Geyserville history theme, we have included a description of Geyserville, reprinted from the 1899 *Geyserville Gazette*, as well as "You Might be a Geyserville Kid if You Ever" from *Geyserville: Fuzzy Old Snapshots*.

Ernie Palmieri has been an active participant in the Healdsburg community for 89 years. Did you realize that he is the namesake of the popular restaurant "Frank and Ernie's"? Ernie's vivid memories of growing up in Dry Creek Valley and living through the Depression and Prohibition make for fascinating reading, based on interviews with Shonnie Brown, Ernestine Nicoletti Reiman and Holly Hoods over the past several years. We are happy to share his story and his many excellent photos with our readers.

Janet Sbragia Pisenti returns to the *Recorder* with a well-researched article about post office history, full of surprising and interesting details. Janet also presents an artifact from the Museum's collection, a 1902 postal scale from the old Skaggs Springs post office; donated by Catherine Curtis whose husband's family once owned the Skaggs Springs resort. Richard Papp's brief history of the Skaggs Springs post office rounds out the issue. We hope you enjoy it.

Sincerely,

Holly Hoods
Curator



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The Official Publication of the

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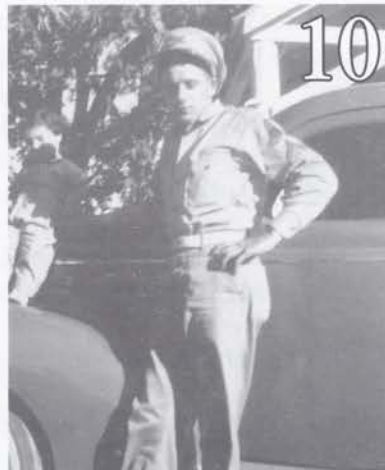


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Letters to the Editor

Editor:

I read with interest your article about Rosenberg & Bush in the Spring issue of the *Russian River Recorder*.

In the summer of 1944 between my junior and senior year at Healdsburg High School I decided now that I had my driver's license I would try to get a job in town. I had not worked anywhere except on our small farm picking grapes and prunes; and we needed the money, as my father had died when I was eleven and Mom was struggling to keep up with the bills for our family.

I put my name in at every store on West Street. Soon after, Ira Hayes Rosenberg called and gave me a chance to work at the store. I started out on the floor and later Mr. Rosenberg had me working in the cashier's box in the center of the store. This was a new experience, but his patience paid off. He was a great boss with a wry sense of humor and tested me many times.

At the time many items such as Levis, Kleenex, and nylons were scarce. Levis were \$2.25. Nylons were so scarce that women would leave their hose with runs to be repaired by a person who would mend them to look like new. When Kleenex came in, they would be gone in a few minutes.

Mr. Rosenberg would be on the floor with the customers, and when he was in his office in the mezzanine, he kept a close watch that customers would be served promptly.

I worked there during my senior year after school and on Saturdays and earned money to pay my tuition at business college. When I graduated from high school, he and Mrs. Rosenberg gave a dinner for me with all the employees at the store.

I have always been grateful to him for giving me my first job and taking a chance on a sixteen year old with no experience.

Elvira Belluomini Hahn

Hello All,

I adopt the Grave of US-Soldier Pvt. Arthur C Beeman who was killed on October 13, 1944 on German ground. He is buried on the American Cemetery Henry Chapelle in Belgium, Europe. On this Cemetery are buried 7992 US-Soldiers, who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our Freedom. Since our Liberation in 1945 the local people of this Cemetery adopted all the 7992 graves to honor their lives and their families. This grave-adoption is passed on to the next of kin, so the graves will be always honored!!!

I would like to let his daughter Carol Lee Beeman know that her father's grave is being taken care of by visiting his grave every Memorial Day, Christmas and Liberation-Day of Belgium and the Netherlands in 1944, after the battle of the Bulge. Also there are flowers being laid on the grave.

I find out by Google that his picture, as Policeman and with his daughter Carol Lee Beeman in 1937, is on your website. That why I would ask you if you would try to contact his daughter Carol Lee Beeman, so she knows that her father's grave is being honored and taken care of. Look at the pictures I joined to this mail.

We live some 25 miles from this US-Cemetery, in Berg en Terblijt, the Netherlands. Just 5 miles away from our village there is another American Cemetery, in Margraten. Here are 8301 US-Soldiers buried and 2000 US-soldiers on the Wall of the Missing. On this Cemetery we also adopt 2 graves of US-Soldiers. Their lives must be remembered!! Just visit the website: www.adoptiegraven.nl Each adopter tries to join a little story with a picture of that soldier, to get a face to that beautiful white cross. That's the least we liberated people can do for those who gave their lives for our freedom.

My name: Stan Derkx, married to Kim, and two beautiful children who can live in freedom thanks to those brave US Soldiers.

My Address: Pastoor Halmanstraat 4, 6325 EJ Berg en Terblijt, the Netherlands, Europe stan.kim@hetnet.nl

Our regards,

Stan and Family Derkx, Berg en Terblijt, the Netherlands

Down Memory Lane with Miss Redwood Empire

by *Daughters of a Queen,*
Dolores (Barbara and Marilyn) Rovai

Florence Buchignani Rovai is the daughter of the head of the Dry Creek family group of Esaia Buchignani and his wife, Gioconda Marselli Buchignani. Florence is the last living child of the tribe. The former "Miss Redwood Empire" Florence had three beautiful daughters: Barbara, Dolores and youngest Marilyn. All went to Catholic schools for twelve years in San Francisco and graduated with honors.



Dolores, age 16, "Hollywood Bound" in 1956

Florence made history and is in the Healdsburg Museum for christening the Geyserville Bridge in 1932 and again in 2006, when the bridge was redone as an emergency replacement project. She appeared with Louie Colombano in the parade.



Florence at 1932 Christening of Geyserville Bridge



Florence with family and Louie Colombano at christening of new Geyserville Bridge, 2006

I, Dolores, was picked to go to Hollywood to be a movie star at the age of 16 by a producer and director while I was participating in a Grape Festival at the Rotunda Hall in the San Francisco City Hall in 1956. Thank you, Mom and Dad, for my life, my good education, respect and love for people and the high values you and Dad (William Americo Rovai) gave your daughters. But I wish you both would have signed the papers for me to go to Hollywood!!!!!! My parents would not allow me to go and would not sign the papers. They said I was too young.

Barbara is the first born, then myself, Dolores, and then Marilyn. I gave her two handsome grandsons who gave her three great-grandsons and one great-granddaughter. Marilyn has been co-owner of Parma Deli for 22 years in Concord, California.

Florence would like to see her friends here in Healdsburg visit her at her home. She would like to see Louie Colombano, her high school friend, and all friends. Please call first to visit at 431-8650 or Dolores, her daughter, at 431-8650. Thank you.

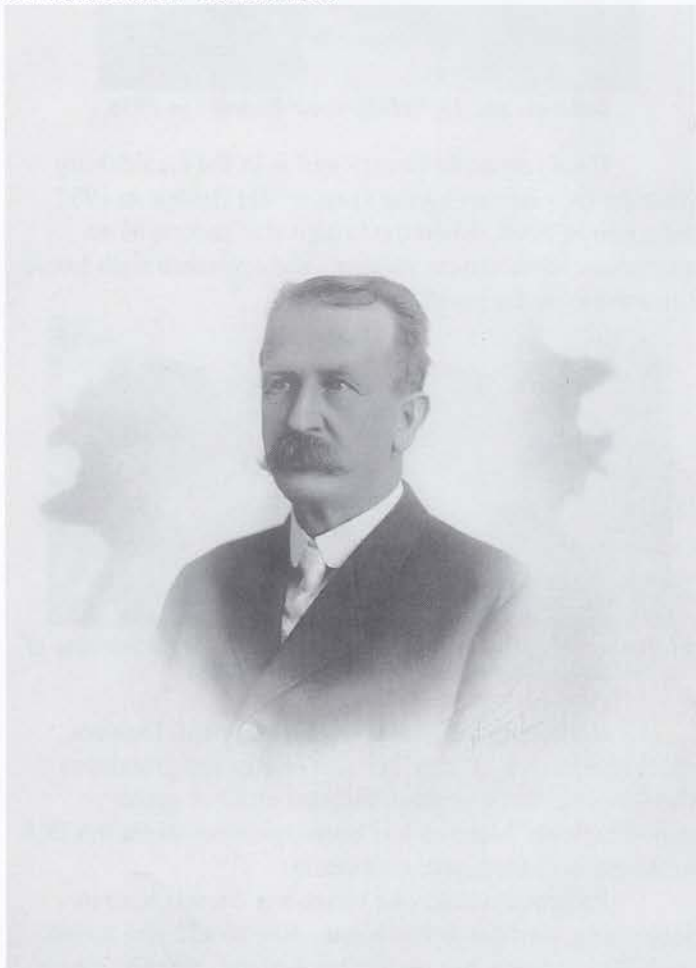
I would like all to know she had and still has a wonderful happy life and has been blessed with good health.

Bosworth & Son General Merchandise

The First Hundred Years

by Joe Pelanconi

"I didn't come here and I ain't leavin'." Country western icon Willie Nelson is reputed to have said that about his native Texas. However, some would say Willie stole the phrase from the Bosworths of Geyserville. George Bosworth was a Geyserville businessman in the 1880's. Along with his son, Obed, George opened Bosworth & Son General Merchandise in downtown Geyserville in 1911. One hundred years later, Obed's son, Harry, runs that same business, in the same building, as they celebrate their centennial.



George Bosworth

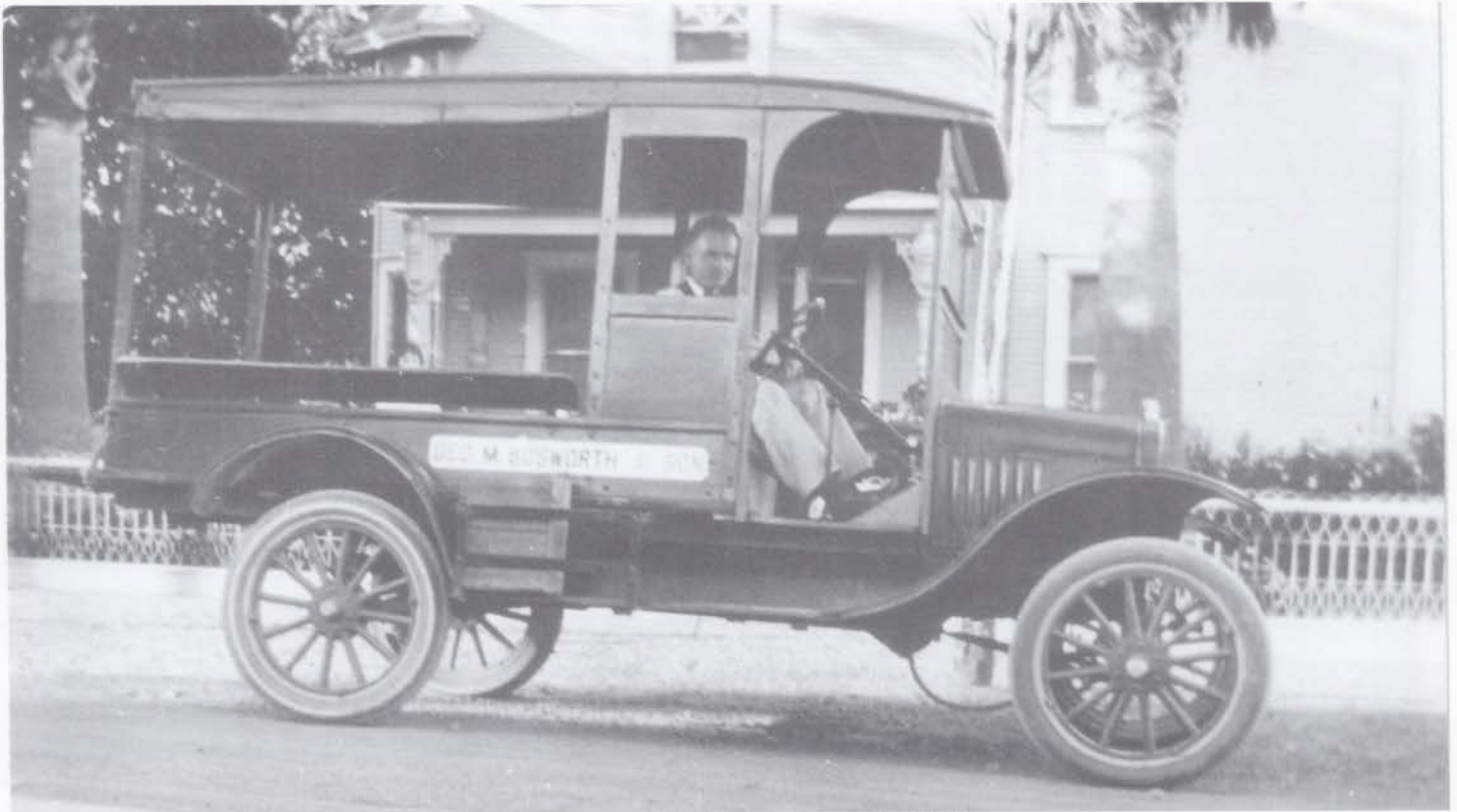
The Bosworth family was among the earliest settlers in Geyserville. Obed's paternal grandparents came to California from Maine in 1851. His

mother's family, the Kilgores, landed in San Jose from Ohio about 1851 and moved to Sonoma about five years later. Obed's father, George was an adventurous man who traveled throughout the West, worked a variety of jobs and owned a number of businesses. In Geyserville, he managed a Rochdale Co. general store and also owned a livery stable. From 1900 to 1925 he was Geyserville's undertaker and conveniently owned the cemetery.

In 1911, seventeen year old Obed was attending the nearest high school, located in Healdsburg. When George discovered young Obed was spending more time in a Healdsburg pool hall than attending class, he suspended his educational pursuits. (He later graduated from Geyserville High). It was at this juncture that Obed joined his father and became the 17 year old proprietor of Bosworth & Son General Merchandise. The business was housed in the 1902 building originally owned by the Kilgores, which had served as the local mortuary and home base for George's various business ventures.

Obed initially took over the mortuary business from his father. An ad in the July 1911 *Geyserville Gazette* offered "Undertaking Parlors" with a "Full Line of Funeral Supplies." The funeral supplies, of course, included clothing for the dearly departed, which became a part of the general merchandise offered. After a year or so, the Bosworths sold the mortuary business to Fred Young in Healdsburg, but continued to own the cemetery. The general merchandise came to include groceries, dry goods and farm supplies. For a time, the store was the post office with Obed serving as postmaster. He also served as deputy coroner and sold insurance at the store.

Dressed in western boots, khaki pants, khaki shirt and khaki necktie, topped off with a well worn, but dressy Stetson hat, Obed was the unique and



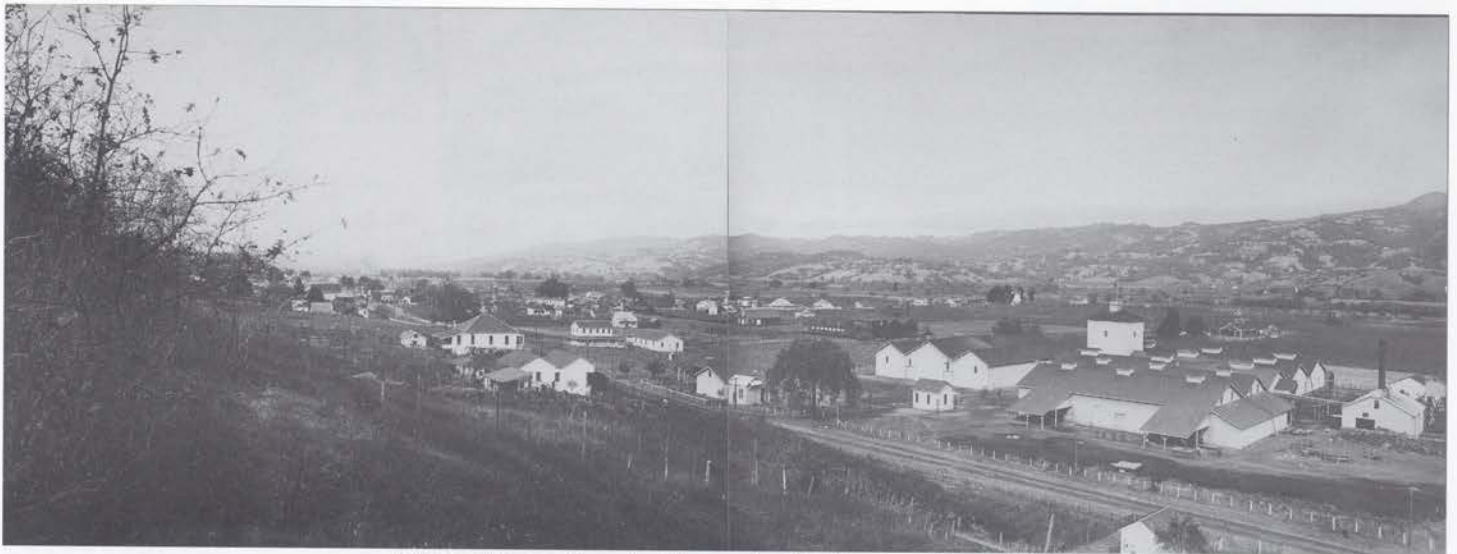
Obed Bosworth in his delivery truck - 1915

legendary proprietor until his death in 1981. With one wandering eye and slow talking style, Obed would meticulously describe his merchandise, which seemed to include most everything one might hope to purchase. A 1976 article in the *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* stated that "People say if you can't get it anywhere else, try Bosworth's." After Obed's death, his son, Harry, took over the business and in 2011 continues to preserve the tradition, having added the town's water company to the cemetery as ancillary Bosworth endeavors.

More than a unique shopping experience, Bosworth & Son General Merchandise has served as the cultural and historical heart of the community. Obed knew every person and event related to Geyserville as far back as the founding of the community. Never in a hurry, he relished taking time to share local dates, places and stories with anyone who asked. Pausing occasionally to roll a cigarette from his tin of Prince Albert, Obed would slowly unravel stories with amazing accuracy and detail. Absent the khaki uniform and Prince Albert cigarettes, Harry possesses similar historical knowledge and oratory skill.

In 1966, the *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* called Obed "a pretty good candidate for a title like 'Mr. Geyserville'." Although he'd probably scoff at the notion, Harry qualifies for a similar designation. At the very least, Harry has preserved a nostalgic trip into the past. You can no longer buy shoes for \$2 a pair, but it is not difficult to imagine horses tethered out front as locals (along with a few curious tourists) search for a colorful western shirt, Old Timer pocketknife, bale of hay or 3/8" wing nut.

To locals, Bosworth & Son General Merchandise has been there forever, long before the freeway bypassed the town and the prune trees were burned for firewood. Many would say that, in some sort of curious way, the store has long been a significant part of the fabric that holds Geyserville together. When asked what major changes he's seen at Bosworth & Son General Merchandise over the years, Harry quips "Changes? What changes?" That says it all – and Harry ain't leavin.'



Geyserville, south end of town, view looking northeast, 1899

Geyserville: Some Things She Has

(reprinted from the Geyserville Gazette, February 3, 1899)

- A beautiful location.
- A picturesque environment.
- An industrious and prosperous population.
- A delightful climate.
- Good streets.
- Very few hoodlums.
- Handsome boys and pretty girls.
- Almost countless resources.
- Two general merchandise stores (another to be added).
- Two blacksmith shops.
- One tin and hardware store.
- One dry goods store.
- One confectionery store.
- One barber shop.
- One hotel.
- One restaurant.
- One church.
- Two schools.
- One post office.
- One Wells Fargo & Co.
- One railroad station.
- One livery stable.
- One shoe shop.
- Two Wineries.
- One Distillery.
- One Saloon.
- Two Fruit Driers.
- One Butcher Shop.
- Two Laundries.
- Two (branch) Bakeries.
- One Cooper Shop.
- Two Lumber Yards.
- One Jail.
- One Public Pound.
- One Physician and Surgeon.
- One Insurance Agency.
- One Painter.
- Two Paper Hangers.
- At least two Poets.
- One Justice of the Peace.
- One Constable.
- Two Notaries Public.
- Two Popular Medicinal Springs in close proximity.
- One Fraternal Order.
- One printing office.
- And last but not least: One Newspaper - *The Geyserville Gazette*. Subscribe at once!



Geyserville Grammar School - 1917

You Might Have Been a Geyserville Kid if You Ever...

by Joe Pelanconi

Knew the difference between French and Imperial prunes.
Skinny dipped in the Russian River.
Bought school clothes at Bosworth's General Merchandise.
Had a cherry Coke at Pat's Fountain.
Smoked in the bleachers behind GHS.
Thought there were two kinds of wine, red and white.
Weighed on the big scale at C & S Market.
Hoped the River would flood so you could miss school.
Harvested steelhead with a "Dry Creek Spinner."
Picked up rocks at recess.
Had friends and relatives residing on Olive Hill.
Remember when Dry Creek went dry every summer.
Ditched school when it snowed on Geysers Peak.
Ate venison all year round.
Thought being in the school band was mandatory.
Had important events in your life happen at the Grange Hall.
Had parents that drove a Lampson Ford.
Thought Santa Rosa was in Southern California.

(Excerpted from the 2011 book, *Geyserville--Fuzzy Old Snapshots* by Joe Pelanconi)
Available for sale in Healdsburg Museum gift shop.

Ernie Palmieri: A Look Back

By Shonnie Brown, Ernestine Nicoletti Reiman and Holly Hoods

This article is compiled from interviews with respected lifelong local, Ernie Palmieri, in the company of his niece, Mary Lou Eddinger, and her husband, Jerry. These rewarding conversations included informative drives with Ernie through his old stomping grounds in Healdsburg and Dry Creek Valley, enlivened by Jerry's humorous anecdotes and Mary Lou's fond remembrances of these people who shaped her life.

Beginning in Bujinosca

Ernie Palmieri: I was born at home in 1922, in a little yellow house, in Healdsburg's old Italian neighborhood. It was pretty much all Italian here on Ward Street, Palm Street and Adeline Way and along the railroad tracks. People called this neighborhood *Bujinosca*. I'm not sure how to spell "*Bujinosca*." I knew the name, but I never could figure out what it meant

Jerry Eddinger: Geno Dericco told me it was you guys' name for "Little Italy."

Ernie: I guess so...Little Italy. Look, there's old Buffi's Hotel [just north of the McDonald's on Healdsburg Avenue]. In 1937, that building was moved across the tracks to where it is now. It was moved over to face the Redwood Highway. It used to be next to the railroad depot. It's a shame that it is just sitting there empty now.



Parents Maria and Agostino Palmieri

My father was quiet. He just didn't talk that much about his background and I didn't ask him questions—I should have asked him more. I'm pretty sure that he was a farmer back in Italy, because farming is what always interested him the most. I know his first job upon arriving in San Francisco was as a dishwasher. He then found logging work in Sonoma County at Duncans Mills. There he met up with some acquaintances from Italy. I think that is how he found out about Healdsburg. He moved to Healdsburg in 1919 or 1920 where he grew and farmed vegetables with his brother, Ernesto, his cousin, Carlo and Carlo's wife, Della. They ran that garden commercially. A lot of the Italians in the neighborhood planted vegetable gardens on rented land --where the McDonalds is now all the way down



Buffi Inn on the move, 1937

My Father, Agostino's Journey

My parents were Agostino and Maria (Tedeschi) Palmieri. They came from Fivvizzano, Italy. They actually came to America separately—I mean at different times. Agostino came first—in 1899 at the age of 17. He had to leave his wife behind and start his life here without her. He wasn't able to go back to get her until 1919, she would have been 29 years old! That must have been pretty hard on them.

to the railroad tracks--and saved up the money to buy their own land. Many of the older Italians that worked at the old cannery [Miller Packing Company] on Grant Street would walk down to the Palmieri garden to buy their vegetables. They sold them right there. They also made some deliveries in town to restaurants. I remember my parents telling me about carting loads of vegetables up to the Salvation Army Orphanage at Lytton in 1919 or 1920. [They were probably contributing to relief efforts after a disastrous fire at Lytton in April 1920].

Remembering My Mother, Maria

My mother was the best cook and she really worked hard! She got up at 3:30 a.m. to cook for 10 people on a wood stove. She baked homemade bread every day, made prosciutto, ravioli, pasta, batter dipped vegetables... and we always had cloth napkins without any wrinkles! She'd leave the orchards at 11:30 to get everybody's dinner [lunch] ready.

My mother would always cook two main courses for us. Money was pretty scarce a lot of the time and we almost lost the house (more than once). Still, we had enough to share with people who were worse off. During the Depression, there were a lot of unemployed men that passed through the area looking for work. At the time we called them "hoboes." My mother was kind hearted. She always had a bowl of minestrone soup and bread for the hoboes. The same ones came back every year and she had a special table out on the patio just for them.

Mary Lou: Like other Italian-American farmers, my grandparents always had food and a roof over their heads during those lean years. Nonno and Nonna and their children were part of that generation of Italians who lived a remarkably self-sufficient life and personified the notion that nothing goes to waste.

Palmieri Farm on West Dry Creek Road

It was 1924 when my parents bought a farm on West Dry Creek Road. All together we had 34 acres on both sides of the road--18 going into the woods in back and 16 acres in front which were planted to prunes. We had French and Imperial prunes, like everybody did around here. We had an old red barn in back—it's still there! We raised chickens, cows, hogs, rabbits, and horses on our farm. Besides

prunes, we also grew grapes, apples and vegetables. These many acres of vineyards in Dry Creek Valley—they were all prune orchards when I was a boy. There were prunes in the valley, apples and grapes on the hills. Americo Rafanelli was a neighbor, three or four years ahead of me. His son, David, bought the piece of land below our old house. That place where the [West Dry Creek] road splits and we could have gone up Westside Road, the prunes stopped there, but that's where the hops took off.

It's hard to see it now, but at one time you couldn't see anything here for miles but orchards. You know how now they have the "Wine Tasting Weekends"? They used to have people up here for "Prune Blossom Tours."



Prune trees in blossom on the Mill Street road to West Dry Creek, 1929

When they were all in bloom--a solid blanket of snow! Everybody would always have a couple of peach trees, scattered in, and they would bloom pink. It was beautiful.

Sheep were raised back in the hills. They were herded in front of our house by dogs and real cowboys on horseback. Then they'd load 'em up on the train in town. West Dry Creek was a gravel road in those days. We had an eight-party phone line that everybody picked up on no matter if it was their ring or not! We didn't get electricity until the '30s.

Jerry: Here we are. This is the Palmieri home ranch [3491 West Dry Creek Road]. It's a beautiful spot. Actually not much has changed. Except for the paint job, it looks just like it did.

Ernie: The front yard had in-ground sprinklers, which my father eventually removed, because he thought they were a waste of water. The house had a dumbwaiter and a basement. That basement was so cool in the summer that our family would plop there on cots after a day in the fields. We had this place from '24 until we sold it in the '70s.

Jerry: They sold it when his dad passed away and his mom couldn't take care of the whole thing.

Childhood Experiences and Adventures

Ernie: There was a lot to do. I had to milk the cow and feed the horses before school. I got up every morning at 5:30 to do that. In my family there was me and two brothers and three sisters: Rose, Ernie, Louise, Alba, Frank and Louie. I was the second oldest. In the summer we dammed up Dry Creek so we could swim. One year some older kids built a dam above us which took our water. So Rose and I snuck out one night and went up and tore up their dam. My sister and I were pulling boards and tearing up sandbags. We were the original 'Dam Busters!' After that they kind of looked at us funny, but they never said nothing about it.



Siblings Ernie, Rose, Louise, Alba, Frank and Louie Palmieri

In the summer I farmed a vegetable garden in Santa Rosa for \$1.00/day plus room and board. Kids always got two weeks off from school to pick prunes at harvest time.

When I started kindergarten, the school was temporarily located at the American Legion Hall [where CVS drug store is now] for two years while the school was being built. I was in the first class at Healdsburg Elementary. There was a group of guys I went to school with: Milt Brandt, John Biasotti, and the Boehm brothers--Fred, Chet and Art—they were my gang.

I didn't know any English before I went to school; a few kids teased me about it. Jack Wattles always stood up for me.

On my sister Rose's first day of school, our father handed her in through the window of the old school bus instead of waiting for the driver to open the door! The kids laughed while she cried. It was the only bus that went out this way. It went one ranch past ours, that's as far as it went. Then, one day on the way home, when Rose was about 9 years old and I was 7 or 8, the old Reo bus with wooden benches and canvas sides overturned and the kids were all scattered into the prune orchard! The bus driver had turned around to holler at some kids fighting, and he must have turned the wheel with him! It was kind of like a surrey bus. The top of the bus broke off and the canvas sides tore. But the neighbors came by and got us all home safely. They had it running the next day, though. That wasn't the only trouble with transportation. Dry Creek flooded before the [Warm Springs] dam was built and sometimes our school bus couldn't get us home.

Keeping Secrets

There was quite a bit of bootleggin' going on in this part of the country and I knew 'em all. Most of 'em have still got people around so I won't use any names. During Prohibition people were allowed to make up to 200 gallons of wine for personal use. The government officials were always coming around looking for illegal booze. They would show up in suits and you would know why. There were definitely some stills up in those hills in Dry Creek Valley. One time the officials parked their 1930

Chevy sedan out front to come inspect our property. They went to the front door and said that they wanted to check the hay loft and the basement. While they were looking around, my dad snuck over and put water in their car's gas tank! The next morning I passed their car in the school bus. I saw that sedan pulled over and abandoned by the side of the road. I knew who did it, but I never said a word!

Louise Joins the Family

Jerry: [pulling over on West Dry Creek Road and pointing up a hill] That house up there is where my wife, Mary Lou [Cattalini Eddinger, Ernie's niece] lived. It didn't look like that of course, it's been changed, but you see where it is? If her mom would give her static, she'd just run down to her grandmother's!



Ernie and niece, Mary Lou Cattalini (Eddinger), 1940s

I have a story for you. There was a two-story house there and Ernie came home from the service. He was bringing home his new girlfriend, which was Louise. So they are all wondering, because nobody knows what an "Okie" looked like and all they knew was that she was an "Okie." Mary Lou told me that she got up at about 6 in the morning and stood in the window, waiting for Ernie to come, because she didn't know what she was gonna see. She was so disappointed when it turned out to be Louise, 'cause it turned out that she was just a person!

Ernie: I met Louise at a dance in Windsor at the Oddfellows' Hall. We hit it off right away. She was easy to like. Everybody loved her.



Louise and Ernie Palmieri, 1947

Jerry: I especially loved her, because she was the only non-Italian in the family at the time, so I could talk to somebody!

Ernie: We got married in 1947. Our daughter was born in 1951. Her name is Linda Lickey. She and her husband Dennis own Denny's Electric in Healdsburg. Their son Joe, and daughter, Kristi, both work in the business.

Work Life: From Cars to Bars

Jerry: Ernie worked for quite a while at the corner service station that was here [at the northeast corner of Healdsburg Avenue and Mill Street].



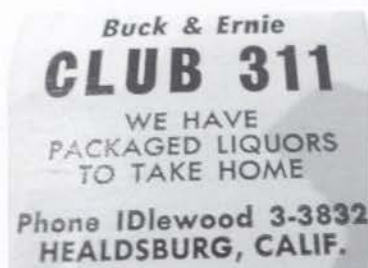
Auradou Shell Station, 1938

Ernie: I worked for Clem Auradou. It was a Shell Station. I was going to take it over, but then I got poisoning from that fuel stuff and ended up in the hospital. So I forgot about it. I had been kind of eager to get in there too. It had a good tire shop and a good place for a business. But I had to give it up and chose something a lot worse. . . (laughs) the bar business.



At Villa Chanticleer Bar for March of Dimes Fundraiser, 1949: L – R Ernie Palmieri, Elmer Ziganti, Buck Nardi, Mary Brandt, Dr Harvey, Glen Knight, John Deck and Wood Wattles

The first bar I worked in was Buck's and Ernie's. I bought that in 1956 or '55. Oh boy, it might even have been before that! I had the bar with Buck Nardi. He used to have the Mile House at Nardi's Corner.



Matchbook cover from Buck and Ernie's

Jerry: You know where that two-story building is now at the southwest corner of Matheson and Center? That's where Ernie had the beer joint, "The Shanty." It was the best beer bar in town.

Ernie: In the '50s and '60s, Healdsburg was lined with bars. They were all along up here on Healdsburg Avenue.

Jerry: There was the "Plaza," there was you guys, the "Brass Rail," the "Eight Ball," "Al's."

Ernie: There were so many bars! Somehow everybody made a couple of bucks. The rent was cheap. The first one, the biggest one, I had was Buck's and I think the rent was only \$65 a month. A lot of room! It was different, a different time. I think people were all just about equal in dollars. There wasn't a high end and a low end. The farmworkers would come in and they had as much money as you had if you worked in a store. The bars catered to everybody.

Jerry: (driving along northern Healdsburg Avenue toward Alexander Valley) There used to be a bar out here that was pretty rough, I'll tell you that. Remember the "Stein Club"? It was owned by Bill Stein. It was on the way to the dump.

Ernie: That bar out here was pretty rough. I worked there! It was called "Shorty's Out Of Town Club." Shorty Watson and his wife, Ann. Shorty got me in a couple of nights and paid me good. You had to learn how to fight!

Turn the tape off and I'll tell you a story...



Harold Sullivan on a mail run to Skaggs Springs from Geyserville, 1920s

Skaggs Springs Post Office

By Richard Papp

William and Alexander Skaggs acquired the land containing the springs in 1856, opening their resort on Warm Springs Creek to the public in 1857. A fourth class post office was established on June 7, 1878 with Alexander Skaggs as postmaster.

The resort was accessible from San Francisco only by a 4 ½ hour ferry and train trip to Geyserville, followed by a dusty 9 mile stagecoach trip into the hills, so one can imagine it must have been something special. By 1902 they were advertising long distance telephone, daily mail and express service to lure the city folks.

The post office was discontinued on September 18, 1884 and was not reestablished until July 27, 1889. During the interim mail

service was provided by the Cozzens Post Office in upper Dry Creek. The post office name was changed to Skaggs on February 28, 1895, then back to Skaggs Springs on June 1, 1927.

In 1913 the resort was purchased by Peter J. Curtis, a former San Francisco Sheriff. The resort remained in the hands of the Curtis family until it closed in 1942. The post office closed on April 24, 1943, with mail service transferred 9 miles east to Geyserville.

The resort reopened only briefly in 1950, and had long since fallen into ruin by the time the Warm Springs Dam was completed in 1983. Shortly after that, what remained of Skaggs Springs slipped quietly beneath the water of Lake Sonoma.



Here Comes the Mail!

Healdsburg's Postmasters From Harmon Heald to Joe Machado

by Janet Sbragia Pisenti

Joseph D. Machado is the newest postmaster of the Healdsburg Post Office and is the 27th person with that title in the city's history. He was born in 1961 in the Azores Islands off the coast of Portugal as one of five children. "I also have five children," he added enthusiastically, "all boys!" He came to the United States in 1969 and grew up in Santa Cruz, California. "My ancestors were dairy farmers, fishermen, and agriculturists, who started out in the Santa Cruz area," he added, while indicating that his ancestors had many children and he now enjoys many relatives in the Hanford area of the Central Valley. When a wedding takes place in that town, Joe's Machado and Azevedo relatives fill up more than half of the Catholic Church!

Joe began his career as a letter carrier in 1984 in San Jose and became a supervisor in 1992. He once managed postal operations in Santa Rosa and did substitute managerial work at the Santa Rosa Carrier Annex. He loves postal memorabilia and the history of old post offices, including Santa Rosa's former post office, now the Sonoma County Museum, and plans to visit the Smithsonian's Postal Museum in Washington, D.C.

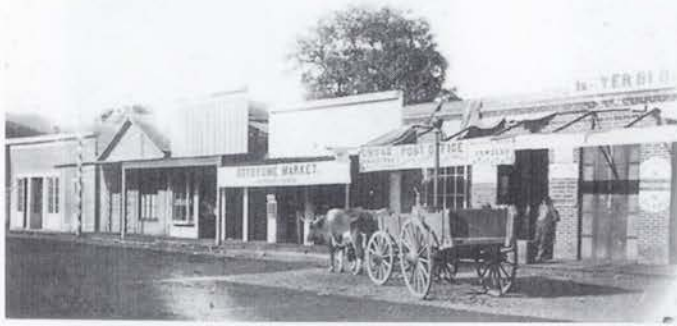
Healdsburg's present post office has 31 employees, including substitute carriers, and it serves a town of 12,100 people, including the surrounding rural areas. Joe is also called upon to assist post offices in other cities, sometimes for months at a time, including Arcata, Eureka, San Rafael, etc. In the town of Healdsburg, Joe follows a long line of former postmasters and others who stepped in to serve the town's postal needs.

Healdsburg's Past Postmasters and Post Offices

Established as "RUSSIAN RIVER" in MENDOCINO
TOWNSHIP, SONOMA COUNTY

Harmon G. Heald – Postmaster – 04/01/1854
Name changed to "HEALDSBURGH" SONOMA COUNTY
Harmon G. Heald – Postmaster – 04/14/1857
George O. Edgerton – Postmaster – 9/19/1857
James E. Fenno – Postmaster – 9/08/1860
William S. Canan – Postmaster – 03/19/1869
Albert Wright – Postmaster – 06/17/1873
Leslie A. Jordan – Postmaster – 01/29/1883
Henry Fox – Postmaster – 10/08/1886
Joseph B. Prince – Postmaster – 12/13/1890
Peter Demock – Officer-in-Charge – date unlisted
Changed to "HEALDSBURG" by the 1890s
William S. Dudley – Postmaster – 01/18/1895
Edward G. Hall – Postmaster – 01/17/1899
Paris J. Ferguson – Postmaster – 02/27/1906
John C. Ingalls – Postmaster – 02/18/1910
Reuben E. Baer – Postmaster – 07/27/1914
George T. Pearson – Acting Postmaster – 12/01/1923
George T. Pearson – Postmaster – 01/09/1924
M. Earle Adams – Postmaster – 05/22/1928
Magdalena Seawell – Acting Postmaster – 08/07/1933
Magdalena Seawell – Postmaster – 06/08/1934
Albert N. York – Act. Postmaster – 12/02/1939

Spencer H. Cooley – Acting Post. – 10/31/1940
Spencer H. Cooley – Postmaster – 12/16/1940
Gridley Clement – Assistant Postmaster ending in 1957
John L. Cross – Acting Postmaster – 02/07/1958
John L. Cross – Postmaster – 08/06/1958
Perry D. Austin – Acting Postmaster – 07/14/1967
Thomas G. Farrell – Officer-in-Charge – 03/14/1969
Thomas G. Farrell – Postmaster – 06/26/1971
Chris C. Christensen – Officer-in-Charge – 09/19/1975
Richard P. Billigmeier – Postmaster – 01/31/1976
Saul A. Rosenthal – Officer in Charge – date unlisted
Craig A. Cheadle – Postmaster – 10/31/1981
Raymond P. Garloff – Officer-in-Charge – 08/19/1983
Janet Lloyd-Baker-Hunt – Postmaster – 03/17/1984
Ramona D. Abert – Officer-in-Charge – 06/06/1986
Marilyn Moore – Postmaster – 10/25/1986
Marie Fix – Officer-in-Charge – 04/11/1988
Raymond P. Garloff – Postmaster – 7/30/1988
Jackie Owens – Officer-in-Charge – date unlisted
John W. Maier – Officer-in-Charge – 08/14/2001
John W. Maier – Postmaster – 05/04/2002
Rick Cordova – Officer-in-Charge – 12/21/2005
Randal E. Fetter – Postmaster – 02/18/2006
Rickey C. Cordova – Officer-in-Charge – 05/20/2008
Joseph D. Machado – Postmaster – 05/22/2010



In 1853-54, the Healdsburg Post Office was established in the new addition to Harmon Heald's store. An ox and wagon are parked outside on the old dirt street facing the building. This shows the northeast corner of Healdsburg at Plaza St., looking northeast.



The new and official Healdsburg Post Office is located in the former Foss Creek Postal Annex, having moved there on August 14, 2010, when the Center Street post office was destroyed by fire.

Records show that the first post office in Healdsburg was adjacent to or part of Harmon Heald's store. It was probably referred to as Heald's post office. On an 1877 map, Albert Wright's post office was located on West Street (the main street) across from the Plaza. It was called Albert Wright's post office because it was probably located in his place of business. You will see why this is so when this story continues. In 1883, a post office existed on South Street (now Matheson St.) near West Street (now Healdsburg Avenue), and many of us remember the post office as being on Center Street in two different places.

On August 14, 2010, an unexpected happening took place in downtown Healdsburg. The main post office, in its last location on Center Street, burned almost to the ground in a fiery blaze, which attracted people all along the street. It was situated in what was originally a Safeway store built in the 1960s and was loved by many as to its central location. Temporary quarters had to be set up immediately in the Foss Creek Postal Annex Building, which was already serving as an additional postal station, but when the fire happened, it was upgraded to serve the community with modern efficiency.

How About John & Zeke's Bar As the Certified Healdsburg Post Office?

The history of formal mail service in the United States dates back to 1639, when the state court of Massachusetts established the first government-authorized drop off point for mail. That location was a privately held business – a tavern in Boston! In those days, it was quite common for local stores and taverns to be used as mail drop off points. Now we know why Healdsburg's first post offices were located in various establishments.

Citizens became quite accustomed to inquiring for their mail in that manner. If someone was picking up a package and noticed something marked for a neighbor or friend, that person would probably take their friend's mail and make a personal delivery. Hence, the thought that John & Zeke's Bar could possibly have been your town's post office...if you were living the 1600s, that is. Actually, neither the town of Healdsburg nor John & Zeke's Bar existed then, so you would not get any mail...or even a drink!

Out of necessity, local municipalities soon began establishing routes from one town to another for the transport of mail, and in 1863, William Penn established an independent post office in Pennsylvania. However, the USPS, as we know it today, was first established in 1691, when the English government granted Thomas Neale a 21-year contract under the name of the North American Postal Service. The English government renounced their agreement just 16 years later, and in 1707 they appointed a local deputy to the status of "postmaster general."

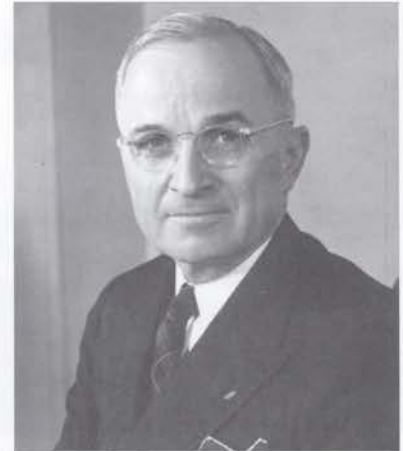
By 1774, the colonists had reached their limit with the English crown's dictation. Frustration over the postal service was one of the lesser known issues that prompted the colonists to seek their own independent government. In 1775, the Continental Congress created a Post Office Department and appointed Benjamin Franklin as the first Postmaster General of the U.S. There were also provisions to prevent opening and reading of any private mail. This was very important to the colonists who had a strong distaste for government intervention as practiced by the English. Mail could only be opened if it had been deemed "undeliverable."



Benjamin Franklin, the first Postmaster General of the United States, was appointed in 1775 by the Continental Congress.



Abraham Lincoln was appointed on May 7, 1833 to serve as postmaster in New Salem, Sangamon County, Illinois.



Harry S. Truman was appointed on December 2, 1914, to serve as postmaster in Grandview, Jackson County, Missouri.

Significant Dates of the USPS

1775 – Benjamin Franklin appointed Postmaster General by the Continental Congress
 1874 – Postage stamps issued
 1855 – Payment of postage required
 1860 – Pony Express began public service subsidy; stamps were deemed
 1863 – Free city delivery began
 1873 – U.S. postal cards issued
 1874 – General Postal Union (now Universal Postal Union) established
 1893 – First commemorative stamps issued
 1896 – Rural free delivery began
 1913 – Parcel Post began (copyrighted title)
 1918 – Scheduled airmail service began
 1950 – Residential deliveries reduced to one day
 1957 – Citizens’ Stamp Advisory Committee est.
 1963 – Zip Code inaugurated

1970 – Express Mail began experimentally
 1971 – U.S. Postal Service began operations
 1971 – Labor contract negotiated by collective bargaining, a federal government ‘first’
 1974 – Self-adhesive stamps tested
 1982 – Last year that the Postal Service accepted a ‘postal product’ rather than a form of taxation and were expected to cover their own costs. Postal products, like first class and parcel post were expected to do the same
 1983 – ZIP+4 Code began (copyrighted)
 1992 – Self-adhesive stamps introduced nationwide
 1993 – National Postal Museum opened
 1994 – Postal Service launched public Internet site
 1998 – U.S. semi-postal stamp issued
 2006 – Postal Accountability & Enhancement Act signed
 2007 – “Forever Stamp” issued
 2008 – Competitive pricing for expedited mail began

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In the year 2010, it was reported that the United States Postal Service, with 596,000 workers, handling 660 million pieces of mail each day, delivered mail to 141 million businesses and homes in the U.S. every day. Even though the Postal Service covered their expenses for many years, it began at some point to go into debt – over \$8 billion reported in 2010. Hundreds of post offices which were not covering their expenses were being closed throughout the United States.

This has caused great difficulty in many communities throughout the country since mail service in the United States has become the organization everyone relies upon almost every day. Grumble we might over minor postal inconveniences, we are still fortunate to have such a remarkable service, especially during the hectic days of the Christmas season. We can, from any post office in the United States, send mail and packages throughout the world and be assured of their arriving at their intended destination.

*“Neither snow nor rain, nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers
 From the swift completion of their appointed rounds.”*

That well-remembered inscription is found on the General Post Office building in New York City at 8th Avenue and 33rd Street. It was originally called the James Farley Post Office and the words are inscribed in huge type all across

the front of the building, above the Corinthian colonnade entrance. The inscription was submitted by William Mitchell, who discovered it in Herodotus Histories. It originally appeared as such:

It is said that as many days that stand along the road, each horse and man at the interval of a day's journey; and these are stayed neither by snow nor rain nor heat nor darkness from accomplishing their appointed course with all speed. (trans. A.D. Godley 1924)

This description was used to describe the expedition of the Greeks against the Persians under Xerxes I of Persia circa 500 B.C. The Persians operated a system of mounted postal messengers and the sentence describes the fidelity with which their work was done. Various translations of the original sentence have been used by others, but the message remains the same – nothing stops postal carriers from delivering your mail or getting mail delivered to you!



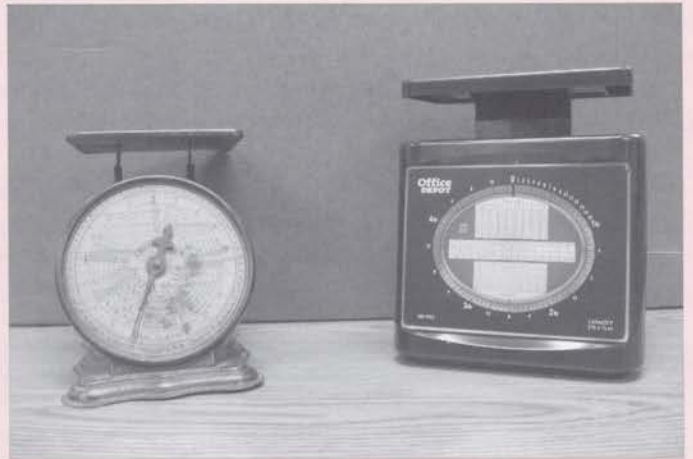
It's the Christmas season and the following hard workers include: (l-r) Frank Carvalho, Manuel Carvalho, Tom Farrell, Patricia Keifer, Cliff Music, Harry Oliver, Al Woltzen, Rex Brookins, Ray Gardner (in back), Ralph Wright, Charles Bryan, Harry Hill, Bruno Bacci (in back), and Marvin Sager



Tom Farrell, left, assistant postmaster, and John Cross, postmaster, right, are at work during the 1960 Christmas season, handling a greater number of packages taken the year before.



Mayor Art Ruonavaara and acting postmaster Tom Farrell, who later became postmaster, are shown with post office curb service mail boxes in 1970...something new!



Postal scales, yesterday and today, are pictured here with the older scale donated to the Healdsburg Museum by Catherine Curtis. Catherine's scale belonged to her former husband, Kenneth Curtis, a descendant of the Curtis family who owned and managed the Skaggs Springs Resort and post office in the Dry Creek area, now inundated by the waters of Warm Springs Dam. The resort was in business from 1857 to 1942.

The Healdsburg Museum & Historical Society is one of the most frequent customers of the Healdsburg Post Office, especially when mailing hundreds of monthly *Reviews* and the *Russian River Recorder*, which appears four times a year. It is a pleasure to salute all the postmasters, assistant and acting postmasters, and officers-in-charge who have served our community, from Harmon G. Heald in 1854 to Joseph D. Machado in 2011.

Sources:
 The United States Postal Service
 Copyright 2010 USPS, All Rights Reserved
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