



# RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

SPRING 2014 • ISSUE 124

An Official Publication of the Healdsburg Museum & Historical Society

## VISIONARIES, BELIEVERS, SEEKERS & SCHEMERS

### Utopian Communities of Sonoma County

#### 19th Century



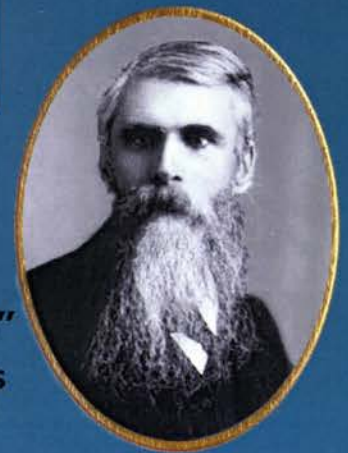
**"Altruria"**  
Edward Biron Payne



**"Preston"**  
Madam Emily Preston



**"Icaria Speranza"**  
Armand Dehay



**"Fountaingrove"**  
Thomas Lake Harris

## In This Issue

In conjunction with the Healdsburg Museum's summer 2014 exhibit, "Visionaries, Believers, Seekers and Schemers," this issue of the *Russian River Recorder* highlights our local 19<sup>th</sup> century utopian communities. Between 1850 and 1950, more idealistic intentional communities were established in California than in any other U.S. state. Sonoma County was at the forefront of these enthusiastic and earnest settlements, boasting four Utopian colonies founded between 1875 and 1894: Preston (northeast of Cloverdale), Icaria Speranza (south of Cloverdale), Altruria (at Mark West Springs) and Fountaingrove (in northern Santa Rosa).

Religious and political seekers were attracted to these groups, hoping that by living righteously by their ideals they would provide an alternative model for a better world. The groups differed widely, yet all four looked to heal and improve the human condition through their efforts. All four looked to agricultural pursuits to help support and expand their enterprise, three of them joined in the local wine

industry. All four followed a charismatic leader; although only three leaders resided with the community. All professed to be Christians in practice; three followed the Christian Socialist tradition; and two were actually led by ordained ministers.

We have drawn from original letters, historical photos, newspaper excerpts, unpublished manuscripts and original colony documents. We are especially pleased to present a biography of Altruria founder, Edward Biron Payne, written by his great-granddaughter, Pamela McMurray. She and her cousin Cindi Hoveland generously shared many never-before published photos from the Payne family albums. Overviews by Museum curators Holly Hoods and Whitney Hopkins round out our publication.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

Holly Hoods, Curator  
Pamela Vana-Paxhia, Editor



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*The Official Publication of the*

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**Amoruso Printing, Printing**

221 Matheson Street

P. O. Box 952

Healdsburg, CA 95448

(707) 431-3325

[www.healdsburgmuseum.org](http://www.healdsburgmuseum.org)



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Photo: Courtesy Cindi Hoveland

*Edward B. Payne*

**“To the friends of cooperation...”**  
***The Quest for Cooperation and Edward B. Payne***  
*by Pamela M. McMurray*

*“Edward Payne was a minister, and gave Jack London his first payment for a story. He was very close to Jack; and Amino [family name for Lynette Payne, Edward’s daughter] was like a sister to Jack’s wife Charmian... They lived in California and Rev. Payne preached under the redwoods at a stump pulpit... His wife went blind when young and died when Amino was just a teen.”*

In the 1960s, these words from my grandparents started my quest to learn more about Edward Biron Payne, the handsome white-haired man who was my great-great-grandfather. Research was slow back then, but today’s computer resources provide a cooperative environment with a wealth of information about this man with whom I share my genes - minister, author, poet, editor, Christian Socialist, lecturer, philosopher, founder of an altruistic colony, and close friend to Jack and Charmian London.

**“To the friends of cooperation...”**

These words flowed from the mind and heart

of Edward Biron Payne, through his fountain pen and onto paper as he drafted a circular promoting Altruria, a cooperative community begun in 1894 in Sonoma County, California. Payne, President of the Altruria Association, conducted the first meeting in the liberal, intellectual city of Berkeley, California. With indictments of capitalism, competition, and the poor treatment of the working classes, the popular books *A Traveler from Altruria*, by William Dean Howells, and Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward 2000-1887*, inspired the group to promote social change.

Cooperation and social reform had long been guiding principles of Edward B. Payne’s philosophy -

he “bridged the gap between Christian ethics and Altrurian Socialism.” The planned colony would be “... based on democratic suffrage, complete equality of community goods, but individual ownership of all possessions purchased with colony labor checks.” The initial small group of 26 who would live and work at the colony would be supported by 600-700 members around the country in local Altrurian Councils.

### Deep Congregational Roots

Son of a Congregational minister and abolitionist, Edward B. Payne attended colleges with Congregational ties, and graduated from Oberlin Theological Seminary, as had his father. Marriage to Nanie M. Burnell, daughter of a lay missionary and granddaughter of a deacon, deepened the Congregational roots of the family.



*Edward B. Payne*



Photo: Courtesy Cindi Hoveland  
*Nanie M. Burnell*

### “Night Work” Illuminated His Life Focus

In Chicago, Edward worked as a librarian and did three years of “night work” with the evangelist Dwight L. Moody in the tenements. This ministry engendered a change in Payne’s outlook. Seeing the toil and pain of the working class life firsthand, his heart knew there had to be a better type of society.

Shortly after completing his degree and being ordained on November 10, 1874, the Paynes took the train from Ohio to the still ‘Wild West’ of California. In March 1875, Rev. Payne conducted the first service in the first church built in Berkeley, the Congregational Chapel. Edward had been recommended by Oberlin as “a specially gifted divine... to stem the tide of ungodliness in the State

University at Berkeley.”

**“If Dr. Payne spoke no word but just stood before us during the service hour, we would all be flooded by the benediction of his spirit.”**

**-Prof. WC Jones, University of California**

With his gift of rational thinking and eloquence in speaking, Edward became a rising star in Congregational circles. After just two years in Berkeley, however, living and working near the liberal university and regularly interacting with the intellectuals of the area, Rev. Payne “...became convert to certain non-sectarian doctrines, and in consequence he felt impelled to resign his charge.” He returned east to consult with family. Though troubled by making this change, with his family supportive, he knew in his heart that it was the right path.

Payne took up the ministry once again after converting to the Unitarian doctrine. Unitarianism, he wrote, allowed one “...to worship God in a freer and happier way than seemed possible... in the orthodox connection.”

**“There is apt to be a larger percent of the ‘poor in heart’ where the many factory hands are poor in pocket.” –Edward B. Payne**

Rev. Payne decided to leave his wealthy Unitarian pastorate and take the charge in Manchester, New Hampshire, a manufacturing town full of those who really needed his services. This work not only reinforced the validity of his philosophical change, but it also changed his physical life: he developed tuberculosis, like many in the factory towns, and his health began a decline.

Again, he quickly made a name for himself within church leadership, and Edward was offered the first Unitarian pastorate in Berkeley, California in 1891. He accepted, hoping that the climate of California might also ease his pulmonary affliction.

Cooperation to rid society of ills continued as a theme in Rev. Payne’s work in Berkeley. In 1893 he suggested that the “...churches, young people’s societies and auxiliary ladies’ societies combine... looking out for families needing aid and find[ing] out the circumstances which bring about the destitution.” It was important to him for society to not only help those who needed it, but to help put them on the path to self-sufficiency.

**“... a glorious failure.”**

The Altrurian colony was a fulfillment of Rev. Payne’s dream for a more equitable society. In October 1894, with high hopes, Altrurians moved onto 185 acres purchased in the Russian River Valley. Payne continued work in his Berkeley pulpit while visiting Altruria as much as he could and promoting it through “The Altrurian,” the colony’s newspaper, which he edited. Sadly, debt incurred by the colony and the continuing nationwide economic depression caused the colony’s “glorious failure” in 1896. Altrurian Councils broke off to become small cooperatives selling meat, produce, etc. in the Bay Area, the beginnings of small cooperatives that still thrive today.

### **The Overland Monthly and Jack London**

Continued pulmonary problems forced Rev. Payne to resign from the pulpit. He took an editing job at the *Overland Monthly*, then the only western literary magazine. One day a shabbily dressed young man walked into the *OM* offices, introduced himself as Jack London, and pleaded to be paid for his first published story, “To the Man on Trail,” as he was supporting his widowed mother and siblings. The struggling magazine had been slow in paying, so Edward B. Payne paid him \$5 out of his own pocket.



Photo: Huntington Library

*Jack London and Edward Payne*

**“I have heard him [Jack London] avow on more than one occasion that no man was so dear to him as Edward Payne.”- Ninetta Eames**

Ninetta (Wiley) Eames, *OM* author and wife of Roscoe Eames, *OM* business manager, introduced Jack to beautiful Sonoma County, as well as to her niece, Charmian Kittredge, who became Jack’s second wife. Ninetta’s summer home, “Wake-Robin Lodge,” was one mile from Glen Ellen and a

gathering place for friends, family, and boarders seeking relief from the cities and communion with nature, including Edward B. Payne. “It was there besides [sic] the rushing waters of the Wildwater that Jack London wrote his “Sea Wolf” on a rustic table constructed for him by Mr. Payne under spreading alders,” wrote Ninetta. “Under a camp fire one summer night he read to the little coterie of that vacation colony from the proof sheets of “The Call of the Wild.”

The London home adjoined Wake-Robin. With Eames and Payne plus visiting authors, they made “...a literary colony in the heart of the valley.” Payne preached a sermon regularly in the nearby ‘cathedral grove’ of redwoods with a large stump as his pulpit, and many came to hear his joyful sermons. Although of two different generations, their cooperative, “...common open home together for a happy period of years” was a cherished memory to Edward B. Payne all his life.



Photo: Huntington Library

*Edward and Ninetta (Eames) Payne on their wedding day*

### **“Writers on Social Problems United”**

“Friends surprised by wedding news” was the subtitle of the above article when Edward married Ninetta in 1910, 12 years after the death of his wife; Ninetta and Roscoe had divorced earlier that year. Jack and Charmian London were members of the

happy wedding party.

Edward and Ninetta had thirteen more years together, until 1923, the year of the Great Berkeley Fire. The inferno consumed their home, library, and two of Edward's completed manuscripts. Edward died just 34 days later, at 76 years of age.

Ninetta describes his last hours: "On the day of his death he walked twenty blocks by choice, and in the evening attended a lecture in Oakland... he was hardly seated when the heavy cane he carried fell to the bare floor, and the beautiful snow-crowned head dropped to his breast...The pulsing heart whose every beat was dedicated to his burdened brotherman, was forever stilled."

*Edward B. Payne may be looking through the small opening in the door that he believed divides our two worlds, joyful that his quest for cooperation can be told because of the cooperation of so many today. Those who have helped me in my quest include Thomas Harakal, Cindi Hoveland, Julie Forgy, Sandi Dahm, Eileen Glaholt, Chris Lee, Jeff Lee, Lisa Spulick, Natalie Russell and Holly Hoods.*

## Notes and Recommended Sources

Photos sourced from the Huntington Library were reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Stories vary as to Jack London's first payment from the *Overland Monthly*. Our family oral history states that Edward B. Payne both accepted and paid Jack for his first story. Ninetta (Wiley) Eames describes the first payment as being made by Roscoe Eames out of his own pocket. See *Jack London's "Mother Mine"* by Rose Glavinovich, Oakland Tribune Magazine, October 22, 1922, page 5. The last paragraph states that London received this money as a five-dollar check (not coins). Other articles claim that Ninetta accepted Jack London's first article.

*The Soul of Jack London* by Edward B. Payne, Kingsport Tennessee, 1933. Published posthumously by Ninetta Eames Payne, as a friend had a carbon copy of the manuscript that was lost in the Berkeley Fire. See also Ninetta's Preface.

*California's Utopian Colonies* by Robert V. Hine, W. W. Norton & Company, 1973. See Chapter Six, "Altruria."



Photos: Huntington Library

*These photos found in Charmian London's photo album are the only known pictures of Altruria taken during its existence.*



Photo: Courtesy Cindi Hoveland

*From left - Ninetta (Wiley) Eames Payne, Maude McMurray, Edward A. McMurray, Edward B. Payne in back, Lynette (Payne) McMurray sitting on step at Wake Robin Lodge.*

## Sunday in Altruria

*excerpted from article by Ninetta Eames, The San Francisco Call, 18 August 1895*

The day itself was perfect; one of those inspiring mornings in our California foothills when life seems worth living, and this peaceful, brother-loving world of Altruria the most delightful spot upon earth whereon to spend one's days. It may have been the inimitable beauty of these Sonoma hills, with their soft summer brilliance at this season, or the delicious quality of the air, that made us feel that here was an ideal spot for existence—that upon all this swinging old globe there was not to be found elsewhere such unbroken harmony in nature and man.

The cottages and unfinished hotel belonging to the colony are scattered here and there in a cuplike glen, whose girdling summits are well nigh too

rugged to be called hills. Through this fertile vale Mark West Creek makes a crooked descent to the Santa Rosa plains, its banks a wilderness of trees and vines. The first object to attract attention is an old gristmill leaning crazily against the wall of the creek, its roof and timbers scarred by half a century's use, and its great water-wheel wrapped in moss and lichens. A man with half the soul of an artist would tramp a hundred miles to come upon such a picture.

We are told that last winter the old mill once more served a use to man—not to grind him his wheat and corn, as in old days, but to stand to him as shelter—a convenient makeshift until more habitable quarters could be built for the Altrurian pioneers. These enthusiastic co-operationists—some twenty at



the time—camped in its cobwebby chambers, their household stuffs crowding the room so long the undisputed possession of rusty machinery. When asked if they did not find this sort of living rather trying in the rainy season, the answer was characteristic of the spirit among them: “It’s a place you wouldn’t care to stay in unless you had a great cause for doing so.”

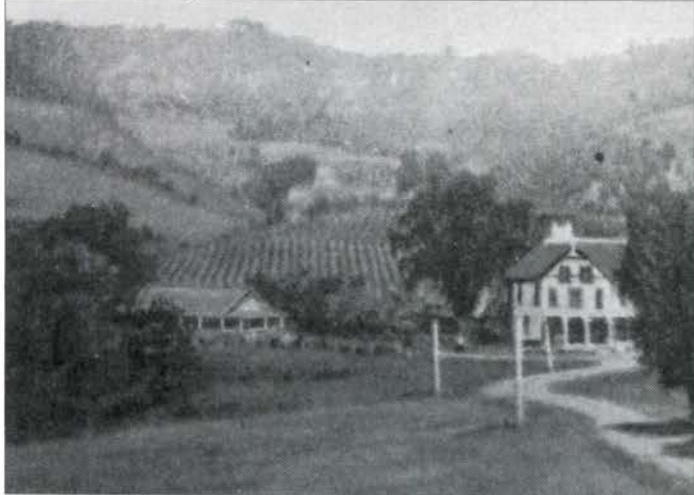


Photo: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*At Altruria (later Burke Sanitarium)*

We indulged in a morning’s saunter through the grounds, while the majority of the colonists busied themselves with the homely duties necessitated by so large a family and so thrifty a garden. One pretty Altrurian in graceful out-door costume was deftly covering with squares of paper some young cabbage plants set out the day previous. The tract owned by the association embraces 2,000 acres, mostly picturesque hill lands which are tillable or good for pasture. Ten acres along the creek is a market garden in a high state of cultivation. The City of Santa Rosa being but five miles away, and the depot of the San Francisco and North Pacific Railroad but two miles, the supplies of berries and vegetables can be shipped fresh daily. Vineyards and orchards are to be set out in the near future, and the hotel completed to accommodate members who prefer to board and the many visitors who are more or less curious and sympathetic on the subject of a co-operative community.

As the prospects of the colony brighten, other improvements will be made. The site for a more commodious hotel than the one now building was pointed out on the crest of a mount overlooking a basin wherein a coil of the stream drops so loosely

that it is almost a lake, and will be one in fact, if Altrurian brain and brawn fail not of purpose.

The present members of the colony comprise 14 adults and four children. Within the past months the financial straits of the association were such that it was thought advisable to form branch colonies. The mother hive, in fact, swarmed, and as the result 19 members removed to a farming tract in suburban Cloverdale, and the others who went out undertook co-operative living in Santa Rosa. Those who remained on the grounds assumed the debts of the colony, and have made important modifications in the original plan of organization. Members are now expected to turn over to the association all the property belonging to them. The greatest caution will be practiced in taking in new members, as perfect congeniality is regarded the essential feature of admission. A new applicant must submit to be taken on trial for six or more months to determine his fitness to live up to the fraternal obligations of the community.

When certain properties which are owned by the present members are turned over to the general fund, the association will be practically out of debt and a ready living will be assured them from the profits of the garden, hotel and their printing plant. The *Altrurian* is published on the grounds and promises to be vastly improved under its new management. Mr. John Marble, a leading contributor to the *Star*, has taken the paper in hand, and if Charlotte Perkins Stetson [Gilman] is right—she openly declares Mr. Marble to be the strongest thinker on social problems on the coast—the scope of the *Altrurian* will be markedly broadened. The Rev. Edward B. Payne will continue his able editorials on the paper, a labor which will in no wise conflict with his larger duties as pastor of the Unitarian Society of Berkeley. Poet, writer and divine of more than twenty years’ experience, Mr. Payne is yet a practical worker in socialistic fields. Indeed, his straightforward, manly way of preaching a sermon by deeds is rather startling to the conservative religionists of the nineteenth century. As an instance, a prominent Oakland minister, when referring to the Altrurian plan, said with some severity: “Brother Payne, you should confine yourself to the preaching of your views and let your congregation carry them out if they will. Are you not getting pretty deep in social problems?”

“Yes, I am in way up to my chin already,” was the laughing rejoinder, but said so sweet-spiritedly that it was impossible to take offense.



Photo: Courtesy Cindi Hoveland

**E. B. Payne**

No one who is personally acquainted with Mr. Payne can doubt that this move on his part is the outcome of much prayerful consideration; nor is it possible to meet the young men who form the majority in Altruria—young men who remind one of Hugo’s heroes, so splendid is the purpose in their eyes—without realizing that his followers have hardly given less thought to ways and means to solve the problem of how industries can be controlled by the people so that every man who wishes to work can be assured that he shall not come to want.

The Sunday of our visit to Altruria happened to be one included in Mr. Payne’s vacation, which he is spending here. A morning service was held out of doors under a central oak where the devoted band—all refined people with shining faces—gathered in good time to hear what this reverend gentleman termed a “sermonette, something easy to write and easy to listen to.” As there was no organ or choir, a meadow lark in the weeds nearly burst its throat with a doxology, after which every soul present was thrilled by the reading of the prayer written by Robert Louis Stevenson on the Sunday before his death:

*We beseech thee, Lord to behold us with favor, folk of many families and nations, gathered together in the peace of this roof; weak men and women subsisting under the covert of thy patience. Be patient still; suffer us yet a while longer—with our broken promises of good, with our idle endeavors against evil—suffer us a while longer to endure and (if it may be) help us to do better. Go with each of us to rest; if any awake, temper to them the dark hours of watching, and when the day returns to us—our sun and our comforter—call us with morning faces, eager to labor, eager to be happy, if happiness shall be our portion, and if the day be marked to sorrow, strong to endure it.*



Photo: Courtesy Cindi Hoveland

**E. B. Payne sharing a common meal at Camp Reverie**

From overhead there was the subdued murmur of bird-notes in the benediction and shortly after the un-sabbatical clamor of the dinner-gong. The entire family assembled in the dining-room of the hotel, which though uncompleted, was yet convenient and homelike. The meal was well cooked and served, and everyone seemed thoroughly happy and hungry. The ladies were, without exception, pleasing to the eye and interesting. They appear to be working out for themselves and others, in a perfectly feminine way, a mission quite as important to their sex, as is attempted by their more aggressive sisters in the various women’s conventions of this age. Women at Altruria are given equal voice in all affairs of the colony, and are a recognized force in general councils, home, garden and printing office. The showing is not as yet so brilliant, but the signs are even more hopeful of ultimate fruition.

# Return of Professor Swift, Party from Altruria

*reprinted from The San Francisco Call, 1 October 1895*

Professor Morris I. Swift, the Boston Socialist, who, accompanied by Miss Etchison and Mrs. Gertrude E. Murray of Los Gatos, left Los Gatos about three weeks ago to walk to Altruria Colony at Mark West, has returned to Los Gatos. The party walked the entire distance, about 140 miles, in a little over a week, stopping at hotels and

farmhouses along the route. The trip was made with the object of studying the life and condition of the working classes.

The travelers speak highly of the reception given them by the Altrurians, and think the Altruistic theory as practiced at Mark West a success.

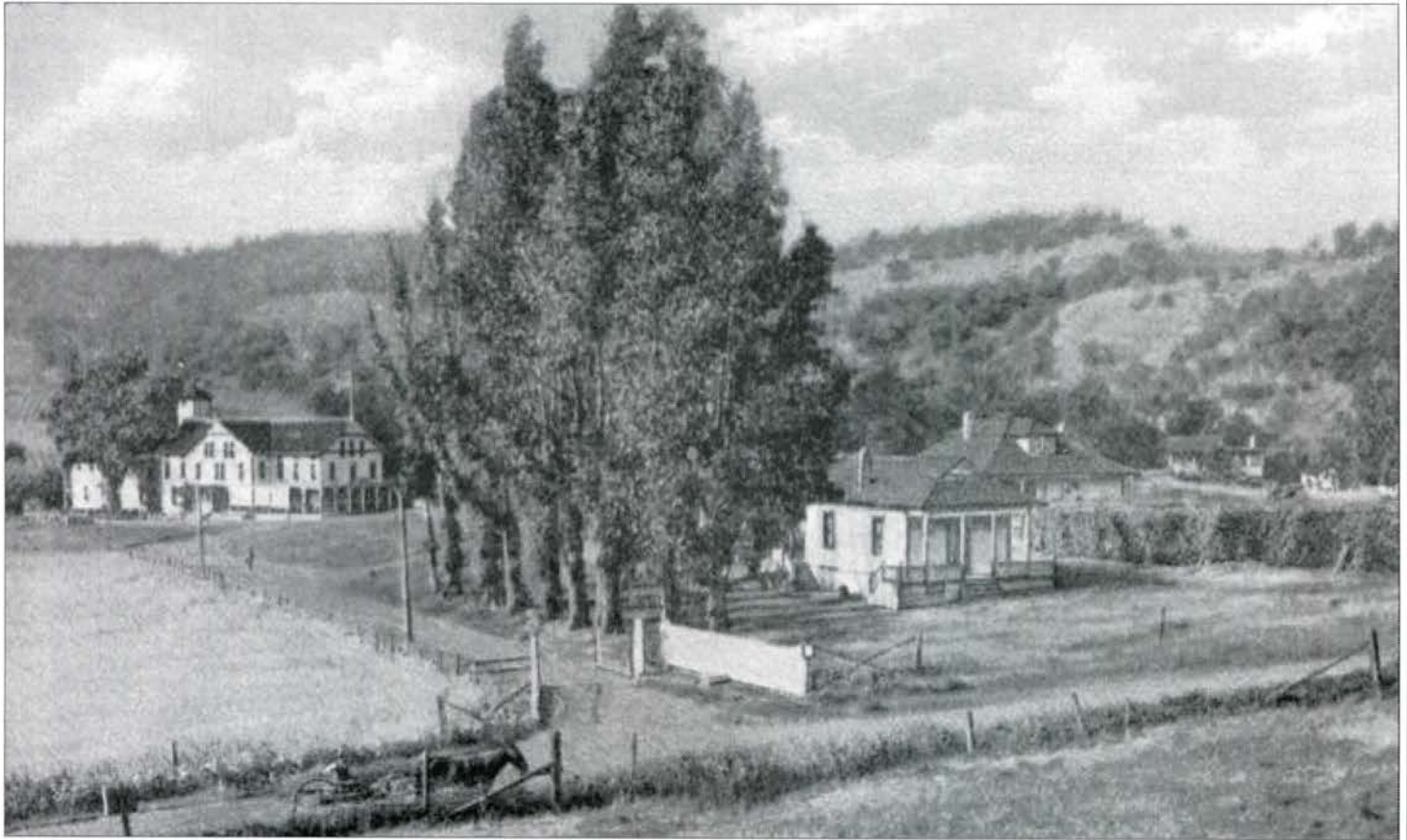


Photo: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Postcard of Burke Sanitarium at Altruria, c. 1898*

## Altruria in California: on the Cooperative Colony

*by Morrison I. Swift*

*excerpted from Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine, vol. 29, issue 174, June 1897*

Fifty miles north of San Francisco, in the Santa Rosa Valley, the soil is rich and the climate

perfect for a co-operative experiment. The founders chose 200 acres of land beautifully encircled by hills,

with plentiful water for irrigation and power, and a vein of coal running beneath. The ranchers of the surrounding country are intelligent and kindly and not adverse to new ideas and methods.

The colony was to be a refuge for those strained and tired by competition or defeated in the struggle. The terms of entrance were therefore light, fifty dollars and moral character being sufficient passport to membership. The Association proposed to "buy, sell and hold land, erect buildings, institute agricultural, mechanical and manufacturing industries, establish schools, libraries and institutions of art, found co-operative colonies," and otherwise labor to illustrate and extend the cooperative method. The colonists hoped that the fraternal spirit of the industry would be contagious, that colony after colony would spring up, until not only the surplus laborers of society were absorbed, but people of means had joined and transferred their ranches and manufactories to the commune. By the success of joint friendly association in production it was hoped to wean all society from egotism and individualism to a broad and practical altruism.

The colony did not do this, but it performed much else. The first year was purely experimental, finding out the right basis. The discovery was made that a carefully selected group of persons would be necessary to give form and direction to the undertaking. Reorganization was effected, reducing the membership from 56 to 21.

Altruria was a picturesque and attractive demonstration of society without classes. It had no servant order and no superior caste of idlers, and the gratitude one felt at escaping from these trials grew with each day's residence. The tasks were divided among all the members as the preference of each decided, and through the pleasant association of intelligent workers the ordinary irksomeness and monotony of labor disappeared. The office of "Laundry-Lady" was especially sought after on account of the prevailing fun in the laundry department. All ate in a common dining room and the members, particularly the younger ones, took turns in waiting upon the tables. The food was chiefly obtained from the vegetable gardens of the colony, and was cooked in a manner that made the outsider envious and converted the most selfish to altruism.

Each member presented his entire property to the community and signed a contract to take away only such as the association should allow him, if he saw fit at any time thereafter to withdraw. Some of the members possessed no wealth to contribute, while others brought in several thousand dollars each.

The labor of the members was divided between perfecting the material foundations of the institution and publishing a paper. The best outdoor work centered on the land, from which several wagon loads of produce were sold weekly at Santa Rosa, beyond the consumption of the community. A large building, for the colony dwelling and as a hotel for guests, was erected but not wholly finished. Its spacious parlors were intended to provide a place for public meetings and lectures of which a number were given...One evening a week the Altrurians met to hear an original paper from one of their number and each Sunday morning services were held, consisting of music and an address from some member, following a general exchange of opinion. As to religious opinion, each was at liberty to think quite as he chose whatever that might be.

It was proposed to increase the common income by developing a number of industries, such as seed-growing, fruit-preserving and job printing and by receiving visitors to board at the house. The spot was a lovely one for summer or winter guests. The journal published by the community was the chief means for diffusing the principles of the colony. It was a keenly edited weekly sheet called the *Altrurian*.

Taking a general view, the colony was strongest as an educational foundation. California is stirring for something better in the social line, and it listened attentively to those who came from Altruria, because the Altrurians had the distinction of daring to put their theories into practice. There is still some lingering prejudice against the term Socialism in California, but here were these Altrurians, hard-working, intelligent and just like other people only better, and there was no prejudice against them.

On the whole, it was a healthy experiment, which was thoroughly respected, and those who found colonies hereafter will gain much from studying its history and listening to the judgment of those who were in it.

# “An Extraordinary Settlement: A Woman Owns All the Property; is Director, Teacher, Preacher and Ruler”

*excerpted from the San Francisco Chronicle, Sunday, 25 September 1898*

Is there anyone who will credit that somewhere in the world there is a woman who not only owns a townsite, but runs every enterprise of importance in it; who is Mayor and Council and School Board and preacher, who owns the water supply and provides work and wages for the inhabitants, who is their medical advisor and cemetery association and their spiritual guide; who develops their mental resources and directs their aesthetic tastes; who superintends the designs and construction of houses and plans all their amusements and recreations? She has been found in California. As a matter of course, she could scarcely exist elsewhere.

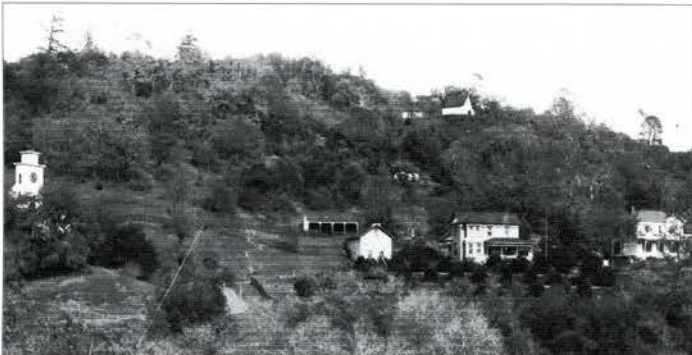


Photo: Healdsburg Museum Collection  
*View at Preston, 1898*

On the line of the San Francisco and North Pacific Railway, in the vicinity of Cloverdale, there is a lovely and fertile country, made up of vales and rolling hills and streams that gurgle with laughter at this dry season. In the midst of this picturesque country there is a village, made up of a depot and post office, which are at the same time a telephone station and a general supply store. Nearby there is a shop or two, and there are cozy cottages embowered in vines. Following a series of pleasant winding roads one comes upon some pretty villas. This is the station of Preston, and Mrs. Preston is the woman who has signalized herself by the above schedule of accomplishments.



Photo: Healdsburg Museum Collection  
*Preston Mansion*

Mrs. Preston's house is on the heights that overlook the demesne of her marvelous achievements. It is a roomy structure, with a square front and broad piazzas and a dignified entrance, but investigation proves it to be matter of growth and evolution, for following it along toward the rear one comes to a gables portion and a lowlier cottage beginning. Outside it is as white as marble. Within there is the immaculate housekeeping comfort and coziness, and a skilled housewife's perfect system. Tall trees shade it on these warm days, and a neat iron fence gives it a distinctively metropolitan air. Everything else about it is white—the stone walks; even the great snow white turkeys that strut upon the nicely trimmed lawn.

Mrs. Preston herself, a lady in whose hair the white threads are gathering, was clad in immaculate white, although on the day when visited she was taking the place of an absent cook in her kitchen, and well served, delicious meals her men have by reason of this substitution.



Photo: Healdsburg Museum Collection  
*Madam Preston, 1890s*



Photo: Courtesy Preston Family  
*Hartwell Preston, 1880s*

All remarkable conditions have their histories and their beginnings. This one began in quite an ordinary way. Twenty-nine years ago H.L. Preston, a lawyer, a native of West Virginia, and later practicing on the raw frontier of Dakota [Idaho], having come to this state with his wife, took a fancy to invest in a quarter section of land where the settlement of Preston now stands. It was not until four years later that he went there to make his home upon the tract. From time to time, he bought other lands in the vicinity which were offered for sale, and the estate grew and grew until now his widow, upon being asked to supply some rough estimate of how many thousands of acres it comprises, that she "has never counted them up."

Land was cleared and planted, water piped for purposes of household use and of irrigation, orchard trees planted, roads constructed, and the pretty home grew to its present proportions. Seven years ago Mr. Preston died, leaving his widow alone in the world, with the exception of a son, Wellington Appleton, born of a former marriage. Up to this time, there had been no town, no settlement, nothing in the world on the premises but a nicely cultivated fruit farm and a prosperous little family, engrossed in its own concerns.

Mrs. Preston, whose maiden name was Emily Lathrop, is a native of Connecticut, that land of Yankee pluck and enterprise, and the fact that she had spent most of her early life in Michigan had abated not one whit of her inheritance of Yankee energy. She was not the woman to meekly fold her hands and sit down and inertly enjoy the proceeds of her husband's labors. Occupation she needed for mind and body, and she provided it. Somehow or other, without being a physician of any school, regular or irregular, she had won quite a reputation as a healer. She saw people who were ill or ailing, and forthwith provided remedies for their infirmities. Agreeable people came to her for help of this sort, and she was loath to part with them and they with her. So she bestirred herself to make life agreeable for them up here, and they stayed on.

She organized no colony. Colonies have been organized before and they have failed. Keeping all of her material interests separate, she began to supply one by one, the needs of a civilized community. First of all, there were educational opportunities needed for the children and the young people. She built one

of the prettiest little country schoolhouses, shining white like her home, and bowered in green foliage, with green blinds to shut out the sunshine when it grows too strong, as it has a fashion of doing in the Russian River valley, and as there was no recognized school district, and the state would assign no teacher, for six years she constituted herself the patient instructor of the little ones. Of equal importance was a church, to meet the spiritual needs of the settlement. Mrs. Preston could not conscientiously subscribe to any of the established creeds, and she gave her people a new church and a religion as brand new as the pretty white structure which she set on the brow of the hill overlooking the beautiful valley, with a great clock on the front of its tower, keeping her people mindful of the passage of time.

The services regularly conducted each Sunday are as original as the creed. In conversation Mrs. Preston calls her religion the Religion of Inspiration and she herself preaches the sermons, reading what she says she "sees written." She desires to sharply discriminate between her own form of inspiration and spiritualism, explaining that the demonstrations of the latter religion are worked by earthly parts of souls that have left this earth but cannot rise to heaven. By which it will be seen that a bit of Swedenborg's philosophy has crept unawares into this new doctrine. To live so that one may not be afraid to die is her ideal of spiritual life here on earth.



Photo: Healdsburg Museum Collection  
*Preston Church Orchestra*

The music of this church is provided by a string band, furnished with horns, cornets, violins and trombones. Traveling along a quiet vale on almost every day of the week and at every hour, one may hear the patient notes of some member of this band

practicing for the coming Sabbath. There are some good singers in the church, but these belong to the older generation. Music is a popular accomplishment at Preston, and is regularly taught by a gentleman [Prof. O. C. Smith] who comes up three times a week from Healdsburg, a neighboring village.



Photo: Healdsburg Museum Collection  
*Preston Cemetery, 1976*

On the summit of a hill overlooking her home, Mrs. Preston has a sightly cemetery, where a handsome white marble mausoleum contains her husband's remains. Another tomb and a dozen little gravestones already keep it company.

The Preston settlement is the most independent one ever conceived. It asks no odds from the outside world or even from the government, to which it is presumed it pays taxes. There are children enough to justify its claiming a regular State appropriation, but instead, the teacher of the public school, still housed in the building contributed by this good lady, is hired by the private subscription of parents. Mrs. Preston constructs bridges and keeps the roads in order as well as lays out new ones. The land is still in her name, and she disposes of no little jot or title of it. Instead, those who find it agreeable to live up there are given a life tenancy free, secured to themselves and their children, after which the land again reverts to the estate.

No liquor is permitted to be sold in the settlement. To absolutely prevent any saloons gaining a foothold, young Appleton has in his own right all of the land on which the station house and neighboring buildings stand. Intoxication is never seen up there—one very effective way of carrying into practice the principle proclaimed in the religious

creed of “teaching the children to know the good before they know the bad.”



Photo: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Preston store and depot; church in the distance*

Most of the people live in pretty villa homes, some of which would compare favorably in beauty with those of fashionable resorts. The majority lives on their own incomes, and does no work, except what they choose to perform by way of exercise or pleasure.



Photo: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Preston homes and church in snow, ca 1890*

The only enterprises conducted for the purpose of profit, aside from the little store, seem to be connected with the productive fruit orchards of the Preston estate, but as the profits are so generously applied toward the advancement of the common interests, no one looks upon them with any but a friendly eye. Mrs. Preston has never counted the number of acres she has in fruit. She knows she has 1,800 prune trees in one place and 300 in another, that she has about eight acres in grapes and that she has a good many apricot trees and plums and apples and some oranges and lemons; and the products of

these seem to be free for the personal use of such of the settlement as do not have fruit in abundance and variety on their own grounds. The estate extends into Mendocino County, and it has many charming features about it. Nowhere in California are there such giant manzanita trees, and it is rich in white and black oaks.



Photo: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Madam Preston (holding polka dot parasol) on the lake*

In the mountains there is a lovely lake, covering an area of ten acres, and stocked with fish. It has no visible outlet, although this fact may account for the abundance of fine springs in this locality, which is one of the best watered within a like distance of San Francisco. There is a boat on the lake, and it forms a most attractive resort. Wise woman that she is, Mrs. Preston comprehends the universal desire for change at least once a year from one's customary surroundings, and so she has arranged a summer camp on a place on the road to this lake, where exist some spring waters of a peculiarly bitter taste and of medicinal value. Here she has built a church and there is also accommodation for the school and the public baths, and for two months in the year all of her people betake themselves thither to drink and bathe in the waters while education and worship go on uninterrupted. A nice garden and miscellaneous orchard supply the wants of the summer guests, and everything is as free as air to members of the settlement.

Preston seems to be an entirely new type of local organization. It partakes of a plutocracy and a monocracy, and an absolute despotism, with the most agreeable features of each preserved and their disagreeable features eliminated.





Photo: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Madame Emily Preston*

## My Memories of Madame Preston

*by Mary Larrison Mowbray, 1939*

### Answers to Some Common Questions

A lot has been written about Emily Preston (better known as Madame Preston) by writers that didn't know her, never saw her. I have been asked time and again a lot of questions about this good woman. Here I will answer some of them.

*Was she a Doctor?*

She was no medical doctor. She made her own medicine, used her own medicine in treating people. All her medicines were made from roots and herbs that she imported from some foreign country.

*Was she a healer?*

No: she was not a faith healer, although a lot of people thought she was.

*Was she wealthy?*

No: she owned about fifteen hundred acres of land on this mountain that brought her very little income. She made most of her money on the medicine she made and sold to her patients.

*Was she a spiritualist?*

A lot of people thought she was a spiritualist.

She said to me once, "Some people think I am a spiritualist, but I'm not. I don't know anything about spiritualism."



Photo: Healdsburg Museum Collection  
*Frederick Rindge*

*Did she build the Preston Church?*

The Preston Church was built by the late Frederick Rindge in 1886. He also built a fine

residence on top of the mountain. Of course he built these buildings on Madame's land. When Rindge moved his family to Boston Mass, the Madame bought the church and home. I was told that she gave him ten thousand dollars for the church and residence. Mr. Rindge used to preach in the church before the Madame took it over. The house burnt to the ground in 1906.



Photo: Healdsburg Museum Collection  
*Preston Church, 1886*

*What denomination was her religion?*

It was called the "Free Pilgrims' Covenant." Therefore it was a religion for everybody. The Madame always said that there was only one religion, and that was the covenant of "God." Everybody was welcome to her church. It didn't make any difference who you were or where you came from. The Madame was always pleased to have the people come to her church. This church was for everybody. Rich or poor. Before Frederick Rindge built the church, they held prayer meetings at her house.

*Were you a member of her church?*

No: I never joined her church. My husband and his mother belonged to her Colony. Therefore, they belonged to her church. My mother-in-law played second violin in the Preston Church orchestra.

*Did she have a large Colony?*

When I first came here, she had about one hundred members that belonged to her church... Most of her followers were sick when they came here for her treatment. I know she did everything she could for those unfortunate people and they all looked upon her as their "God." She was the "Boss" among her people. When she told them to do a thing,

they did it. Her word was law. They simply idolized her. She was a woman of few words, but when she said a thing, she meant it...



Photo: Healdsburg Museum Collection  
*Mansion and Medicine House, 1976*

### **Unlicensed, Yet Legal Medical Practice**

All of her medicine was made on her own place. She had a building just for that purpose. She also had a wine cellar. She used a lot of port wine in her medicine. The wine was made from the grapes she raised on her place. She also had a small still for distilling alcohol for medical use. I remember one time some U.S. revenue men called at her house. They were going to arrest her for running a still but nothing came of it. They soon found out that the Madame was no law breaker. Some of the medical doctors tried time and again to have her prosecuted for selling medicine without a license. But when they found out she had a perfect right to sell her own medicine they gave it up.

The Madame was wise. She knew what she was doing. She always kept within the law. The Madame never called on any of her patients. They had to call on her. Then she would tell them what to do and what medicine was needed and how to use it. She always played safe.

When a patient came to her that was hopeless she would tell him or her. I saw a lot of human wrecks come to her for help. She always did the best and tried to make them well. She had a lot of sick people come to her that were given up by the medical doctors. She cured a lot of them. Some were hopeless. Nothing would help them. And if you were too poor to pay for her treatment, she would give it to you free. She was like that, kind-hearted, always ready to help. Her treatments came high, but they were worth the price. She had her own way of

treating people, and there was no law against it. Some of the medical doctors found that out.



Photo: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Preston Hospital*

### **The Controversial Blister Treatment**

Even to this day, people ask me about her treatment and so on. As far as I know, the blister treatment dates back for ages. Years ago the Madame got the formula from a German doctor. This treatment is supposed to draw the impurities of the body out thru the skin and that meant a running sore. My husband and his mother had a lot of faith in the treatment. They were like the rest of the Prestonites. They thought it was the only treatment for all ills. As for myself, I didn't want any of it. I often wondered how those people could stand them. Some of the people I knew had a blister on all the time. I knew one woman that could not live unless she had a blister somewhere on her body. Of course it got to be a habit with some of the people. I do know that the treatment helped a lot of the hopeless cases. And let me tell you these poor wrecks were very grateful to the Madame for helping them.

But the blistering wasn't all. Everybody that took the treatment had to take wine bitters and cordials to keep up their strength, and on top of that, they had to do a certain amount of exercise. She told the men that they must saw or split wood. It didn't make any difference whether he was a poor wretch or a millionaire. I knew of one millionaire that went to the Madame for the treatment. When she told him to put on overalls, go out in the field and work until you "sweat," he went right up in the air. She said to him, if you want to get your health back, you'll do as I tell you, so he did as she told him. He got well, married and raised a family. That man was a very sick man when he came here, but the Madame cured him. That

man thought there was nobody like Madame Preston and no doubt he paid her well

### **Standing her Ground**

A lot of people criticized her religion, just because they didn't understand her. As for me I think her religion was as good as any. Her followers thought she was perfect and that she never made a mistake, but she did make a mistake now and then, like the rest of us. Some of the people tried to besmear her good name by calling Preston "*Blisterville*." Yes indeed, she had to take a lot of insults. She had a lot of good friends, but she had her share of enemies too...

But the Madame didn't always have her own way. Years ago there was an old couple [Jesse and Sarah Wickersham] living on the Mendocino Coast [upper Skaggs Springs, northwestern Sonoma County]. They had a Chinaman [Ah Duck Tai] working for them. One night the Chinaman killed the old folks. Stole all their money, then skipped out. Anyway that Chinaman was never caught, in fact, he was never heard from. Of course the people were up in arms about it. Then the "Big-Wigs" in Sonoma County decided to run all the Chinamen out of Sonoma County and no one was allowed to hire a Chinaman and those that did have a Chinaman got orders to get rid of him at once.

The Madame had a Chinese cook at that time. So she got a warning that she must get rid of her Chinaman. She paid no attention. Then someone sent her a box of matches with a note saying, if you don't get rid of that Chinaman you'll be burnt out. She got more threatening notes, but she was so stubborn, she wouldn't give in. Then my husband [Frank Mowbray] went up to her house, and advised her to send the Chinaman away before somebody set fire to all of her buildings, and that the people of Sonoma County weren't going to allow any more Chinamen in this county. So you better send him away and play safe, he told her. Then the Madame got mad and told him to go home and mind his own business, that she hired the Chinaman and was paying him, and for other people to mind their own business and that she was going to keep the Chinaman as long as she wanted to and didn't want anybody to dictate to her.

When Frank came home and told me what the Madame said, I said to him, it serves you right, you

have no right to meddle with her affairs. Then he got mad and said, she's got to get rid of that Chink or I'll know the reason why.

Then one evening a mob walked up to her house. When the Madame came to the door, the leader of the mob said: This is the last warning, if that Chinaman is still here by tomorrow night, we are going to burn every building on your place. Now I don't remember what she told the mob, but the next

morning her foreman Joseph Zahner took the Chinaman down to the station, put him on the train bound for San Francisco. Well that was one time the Madame knew she was licked. She was very stubborn. She hated to give in. I never knew where the mob came from. There were a few Prestonites and my husband was one of them. So for many years the Chinamen were kept out of Sonoma County.



Photo: Cloverdale Historical Society

*Cloverdale Horribles, July 4, 1886*

## Photograph: A “Horrible” History Mystery

*by Holly Hoods*

This unsettling photo from the Cloverdale Historical Society is labeled “Cloverdale Horribles, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1886.” Nothing was known about it at Cloverdale Historical Society. Preston Ranch caretaker and historian Lisa Ellis and I recently analyzed this photo and recognized its hidden meaning. These are Cloverdale Squeedunks engaged in political satire lampooning the standoff of Madame Preston and her Chinese cook against the racist anti-Chinese mob after the January 1886 Wickersham murders. Note the signs saying “Blisterville” on the Madam Preston and Chinese cook caricatures. Hartwell Preston, clownish, tall and lanky with a full beard but no mustache, stands next to the Madam Preston.

The Horribles (also known as “Squeedunks” and “Calithumpians,” were loosely organized groups of local men who performed satirical street theater in California towns from the 1860s-1930s, mocking the social and political issues of their day. In Sonoma County, Squeedunks were active in holiday parades from Cloverdale to Petaluma, especially on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Participants hid their identities and reveled in outlandish behavior, humorous highjinks, discordant music and social commentary while wearing scary masks and costumes. Children were fascinated, yet frightened of the Squeedunks. From this photo, it is easy to understand why.

# ***“But You Are Wrong Informed About Me...”***

## **Letter to the State Board of Medical Examiners, 1888**

Emily Preston’s healing practice flourished within the unregulated context of late 19<sup>th</sup> century American medicine. As long as one did not call oneself “MD,” it was not a crime to treat the sick with their consent, no matter how ignorant one was of the quality of remedies used. In early 1888, the physicians and surgeons of Sonoma County assembled in Santa Rosa for the purpose of organizing a County Medical Society and ridding the county of “quackery” (unlicensed practitioners).

Later that year Mrs. Preston’s unregistered practice was brought to the attention of the State Board of Medical Examiners. She wrote the following letter to Dr. Charles Blake of the State Board of Medical Examiners in November 1888. Emily and Hartwell Preston probably shared a chuckle composing it. Her irreverent response to their apparently stern admonition reflects the confidence that she felt in knowing that her practice was firmly within the law. Her husband was a former attorney who had researched the matter thoroughly.

Mrs. Preston continued to lawfully treat patients until her death in 1909.

*Dear Sir,*

*Your favor of 22<sup>nd</sup> last is duly in hand and contents noted.*

*But you are wrong informed about me. I am not “engaged in the practice of medicine at Cloverdale.” In fact, I do not live there at all, but reside some miles away in the mountains and do not profess to be a physician at all. But your kind and flattering letter has put an idea into my perhaps already-too-ambitious mind. It is that possibly I have the making of a doctor after all. You will therefore please keep your generous promise and forward to my address the necessary blanks and instructions to comply with the law.*

*Please send your curriculum very soon, Doctor, for I am getting along in years, and have much to learn—for truly, I have the first “Doctor Book” to read yet. And yet—who knows? I may become a helper in the “Elevation of the Professional Character” as well as an aid in “Enforcing Obedience to the Laws,” which have got themselves enacted for your protection. Your profession, worthy as it is, and deserving of great honor, surely needs a more elevated character, and is showing decided evidence of the need of “protection.” I will gladly do what I can for you. The efficiency of the profession must be raised! Why, just think of it!*

*Even these mountains are alive with poor wretches, of both sexes, whom you have turned out of your offices and sanitariums to die upon their legs; and they so beset my doors and gates, crying for aid and begging for the hope of life, that I can hardly find time to cook my old man’s victuals or wash his clothes! Poor things! They all tell the same story—and it almost breaks my heart: “The Doctors! The Doctors! They used their little morphine syringes upon me and deadened my pain until they got all my money and then turned me out to go to Springs!!” It is dreadful, Doctor, and we must try to cure them—some of them at least.*

*Yours sincerely,  
Mrs. E. Preston*

*p.s. I forgot to speak of your great projected work—“the Systems of Prosecution for Violation of this Law, Being Organized All Over the State.” That is superb and has the ring of business in it! And my old man! He used to be a lawyer. Maybe we can get him to take a hand with us! If you will only send me the things and let me come in! Farewell!*



Photo: Healdsburg Museum Collection  
*Madam Emily Preston*

## **“I am Guided by the Intelligence”**

*reprinted from San Francisco Daily Examiner, August 13, 1887*

It was my privilege to hear from Mrs. Preston’s own lips her strange experiences. One warm July morning we drove up to see her and were received in a cozy sitting room whose windows overlook a pretty garden and a little way beyond, the long low building where the medicine and tonics were prepared. We were not kept long waiting before Mrs. Preston entered. In personal appearance, she is exceedingly attractive. She is short in stature and of somewhat square build. Her dark hair, which is showing lines of gray, she wears brushed back into a tight knot at the back of her head. Her face is strong and firm, with the decided chin that indicates a powerful will. But her eyes! Her eyes are the light and beauty of her strangely expressive face. Large dark and piercing, shaded by thin lids and short lashes, they seem full of latent fire and power. Her life and strength seem concentrated.

She led us into a small side room with bare floor and unshaded windows. An open fireplace filled one side of the room. There were a few chairs, a table and in a dim corner a small cabinet organ, before which she seated herself. Above her head hung an engraving of “The Sermon on the Mount.” She remained silent and motionless for an instant, then turned and gave me a look so penetrating that in

spite of myself I felt that my most secret impressions and reflections were an open book.

“I will play for you,” she began slowly, “but first you must know that I have never learned music and it is the Intelligence which guides me.”

“Pardon me, but will you first explain what you mean by this Intelligence and how it communicates with you?”

“It is the voice, the word that comes to me from the Divine source of all things. I see before me always the white light of Heaven, and in its radiance are written the words I must utter. The veil is torn from my eyes and all things are clear to me.”

“Has this strange power of vision been always yours?”

“No. It is now nearly seventeen years since I first saw the truth. I was with some friends talking as we walked home and suddenly it seemed to me that all the world was enveloped in brilliant light, as pure and white as the electric glow, and at that moment something fell from my eyes and I was happier than I had ever been. My friends spoke to me, and asked what was the matter, and as I looked at them to answer their questions I could see through their eyes into their bodies, and I explained to one a strange affliction of her side which had given her pain for a

long time and which no one had been able to understand. From that time I have been able to heal diseases, although I do not call myself a doctress. I am guided by the Intelligence. The words of inspiration are always before me in the air, in the sky, or sometimes between my eyes and the book I am trying to read. I am no clairvoyant. A clairvoyant closes her eyes and sees through her brain, but I see through the front of my eyes, from which the veil is torn. Some people think I am a spiritualist. That too is wrong. I am not."

It is needless to say there appeared something uncanny, almost gruesome in these familiar references to the other world.

"Are you the only person in existence who is so directly influenced by the Divine Intelligence?" was my next question.

"The Intelligence tells me I am the only one."

She turned to the harmonium and repeated her assurance that she had never had any musical

instruction. "You see there is nothing here to guide me. The divine power is descending upon me."

She played a few phrases—weird and somewhat inconsequent--as one who is in the first impulse of improvisation--and began to sing. The words were devotional and, while evidently improvised, were rhythmical and flowing with the smoothness of the Psalmists' writings.

The music died away in strange unusual chords. Suddenly, scarcely turning her head, the singer spoke to me and to my astonishment told me in clear terse phrases the thoughts that were at that moment chasing themselves through my brain. I was further edified, and it seemed especially favored, by a message from the Intelligence, a message showing—it must be admitted—an extraordinary familiarity with my affairs. Furthermore I received a poetic communication which was most cheering and the music of which had quaint endings to its phrases.

## The Decline of Preston

by Holly Hoods

(excerpted from MA thesis, *Preston: History of a late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Religious Colony in Sonoma County, California, SSU 2000*)

By the time of her death, Emily Preston had won over most of her critics. Her passing on January 22, 1909 was front-page news. The *Healdsburg Tribune* editorialized that "Mrs. Preston has made the world happier and better for having lived in it."

After her death, the year-round residential community gradually diminished. Some colonists left Preston for purely economic reasons. Madam Preston was, after all, the major employer of the rural village; without her industries the local economy suffered a huge blow. Preston also lost members through attrition. Many residents were older adults with pre-existing health problems when they originally moved to Preston. Their children did not make the same commitment to the community that their parents did. The faithful continued to hold worship services in the church through the 1940s.

Madam Preston left as a "will" an undated, unsigned testamentary paper which bequeathed her entire \$125,000 estate to her church. The document was contested by her relatives and subsequently dismissed in court. It did not meet the legal

requirements of a holographic will, so it was not admitted to probate. The judge appointed her nieces as administrators of the estate. Bidding was lively at the estate sale in 1911, as the Preston Ranch was put up for auction. Madam Preston's grand-niece was the high bidder. For the next 20 years, Rhoda Agatha Rindge presided over the Preston ranch as an absentee landlord. Eventually family bankruptcy forced her to sell the remaining 1,439 acres of the Preston Ranch. It was purchased by Fred and Eugenia Oster in 1943, becoming a sheep ranch and boys' summer camp. Preston enjoyed a utopian renaissance during the 1970s and 80s when owner Dr. Russell Lee of Palo Alto rented to a vibrant community of artists and musicians.

In 1988 a downed PGE power line tragically burned 100 acres and most of the remaining Preston buildings. The realignment of CA Hwy 101 the same year disrupted the former Preston commercial district. Fortunately, the historic Preston church, cemetery and a handful of surviving colonist residences have remained.



Photo: Cloverdale Historical Society

*Icaria Speranza Community, 1882*

## **Icaria-Speranza: French Socialist Colony of “Hope” in Cloverdale**

*by Whitney Hopkins*

Icaria-Speranza, which existed between 1881 and 1886, was a French socialist colony located about three miles south of Cloverdale. The colony was the last of a series of colonies organized as part of the Icarian utopian movement. French writer Etienne Cabet's 1840 allegorical novel *Voyage en Icarie* (Voyage to Icaria), in which a utopian land of political and social perfection was portrayed, was the inspiration for the movement. Cabet believed suffering and misfortune could be erased through proper social organization, and abundance made possible through modern production and industrialization.

In 1847 Cabet's publication *Le Populaire* featured a lengthy article entitled "Allons en Icarie" (Let Us Go to Icaria) detailing the proposal to

establish an American colony based upon the Icarian political and economic ideals, and calling for volunteers. French fluency was also a requirement.

Sixty-nine male volunteers set out from France for America in 1848 to form an Icarian colony. Cabet arrived the following year to shore up the group. 280 Icarians joined Cabet to settle the town of Nauvoo, Illinois, which was originally settled by the Mormons, before they moved to Utah. At its peak, the Nauvoo Icarians numbered 500. In 1860 the Nauvoo colony dissolved after running into financial difficulty. Many members moved to Corning, Iowa to form a new settlement. In 1879 the Corning settlement split their land, and beliefs, into two groups: the *jeune icariens* (young Icarians) who favored giving women the right to vote, and the *vieux*



*icariens*, the older, more conservative Icarians who opposed women voting.

It was in Corning, Iowa, that the founders of the Cloverdale colony, Icaria-Speranza, gained direct experience with the Icarian movement. Armand Dehay, an immigrant from France, and his wife Marie Leroux Dehay with their four young children petitioned to join the *Jeune Icarie* in 1879, stating that they wanted to test themselves in the theory and practices of communal living. Marie's brother Paul Leroux had joined the Icarians in 1877. After six months, the Dehay family noticed that the *Jeune Icarie* colony was coming apart, with debt and declining membership. Dehay announced that his family would move west to form a new communal colony. Armand Dehay's brother Theodore lived in St. Helena, California, so Armand and family joined him there. He and Marie decided that Sonoma County, not far from San Francisco where there were many French immigrants and social radicals, would be a suitable place for a new Icarian colony.



Photo: Cloverdale Historical Society  
**Armand Dehay Sr.**

The Dehays wrote to Marie's family back in Iowa, including her father Jules Leroux and brothers Pierre and Paul Leroux, encouraging them to come to California. The Leroux's joined the Dehays in St. Helena where they began organizing their social experiment. Later in 1881, the Dehays and Leroux

bought 885 acres of the former Bluxome Ranch, about three miles south of Cloverdale and began construction of a sawmill and tree clearing for vineyards. A schoolhouse was erected to educate the children of the colony.



Photo: Cloverdale Historical Society

**One Room Schoolhouse, Icaria District**

The group decided to call their colony "Speranza" from the review *L'Esperance* (Hope) which Jules Leroux had formerly published. Influenced by the scientific social and economic planning of Saint-Simon philosophy, the new colonists planned their agriculture, milling, mechanical arts, schools and even future colonies. All property, including money and possessions, was part of the community fund.

The administration of the colony was performed by five committees – Works, Home Consumption, Education, Commerce and Accounting. The Board of Administration, made up of two members of each committee, assumed all executive functions. The General Assembly, included all colony members over twenty-one, and voted if disagreements needed to be settled.

Vineyards, orchards and wheat were planted. Several small frame homes were built, and clustered around a two-story central home. Communal meals were taken in the home, social activities took place, and the colony held meetings there. All Icaria-Speranza children received their primary education in the one-room schoolhouse. As in other Icarian colonies, education was one of the highest goals of the community.



Photo: Cloverdale Historical Society

*Icaria Schoolchildren*

The Icaria Speranza colony prospered in its early days between 1881 and 1883, and more *Jeune Icarie* members moved there after that colony decided to dissolve in 1883 and pool their resources with the Cloverdale group. Late in 1883, members signed a Contract and Articles of Co-Partnership, and the following year they filed a Certificate of Co-Partnership in the Sonoma County Courthouse in Santa Rosa. Although only 24 adults signed the Certificate, at least 55 individuals, including children participated in the colony.

Despite its initial success, Icaria-Speranza only lasted five years. 1883 brought a widespread drop in farm commodities and farm land. The colony was \$6,000 in debt. 1884 brought localized hardship, and much of the grape crop was lost due to an inadequate number of wine presses, which added to the growing debt. In 1886, the colony's financial situation had worsened, and the colony learned the bitter news that there was no money to be had from the dissolved *Jeune Icarie* property. Later that year, members decide to dissolve the Icaria-Speranza colony.

While some left for San Francisco and the Northwest, other former colony members stayed in Cloverdale. A group continued to tend vineyards on a portion of the Icaria-Speranza lands, and Armand

Dehay and several others formed the French American Wine Company and operated a store in San Francisco where they sold wine.

In the 1890s, the Dehay family took ownership of the winery, and renamed it the Dehay Winery. Armand and Marie Dehay lived in retirement in Cloverdale and were well known and respected in the community.



Photo: Cloverdale Historical Society

*Marie Leroux Dehay, 1941*

**Sources:**

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Photo: Cloverdale Historical Society

*Icarian Community, 1883*

## Contract for a 19<sup>th</sup> Century Commune

When the Icarians took up residence in Cloverdale in 1881, 20 members of the French socialist colony signed a written contract. They agreed that the general philosophy and purpose of the Icaria Speranza Commune (yes, they called it a “commune”) would be:

*To establish for humanity as an example and in devotion to its welfare, a system of society capable of rendering it happy.*

*To prove to our fellow-men that community, based on solidarity, is realizable and possible.*

In addition to these ambitious social aspirations, they committed to a shared mission:

*The general nature of production and business of the Icaria Speranza commune is: agriculture, horticulture, viticulture, mechanical arts, milling, manufacturing, and commerce in all various branches; also the building and establishing of schools, colleges, villages, colonies and the developing of sciences and fine arts...*

They planned to provide security for the health, comfort and welfare of the membership:

*To create a common fund, composed of money, real estate, personal property, and all kinds of other property, said common fund be used for the mutual support and in the interest of all members composing this society; for the supplying of their legitimate wants, their comfort, care and education, in all stages of life, as well in infancy, sickness, infirmity and old age; and to be used also to carry out the principles, business and various objects of the community. . .*

Much of the agreement pertained to labor, working conditions and ownership of property. Each member committed to devoting his or her “entire working time and abilities to the common use and works of the commune.” There were also some quirky specifics about proper dress, housing and food, such as “the committee on home consumption shall see that all food prepared and cooked in the common kitchen be wholesome; and that the menu, or bill of fare, be varied and complete.” Members were required to live at the commune and encouraged to eat in the communal dining room. Every applicant for admission to the colony was required to speak and read French with fluency.

With these agreements in place, the Icaria Speranza commune set out to create a happier world.

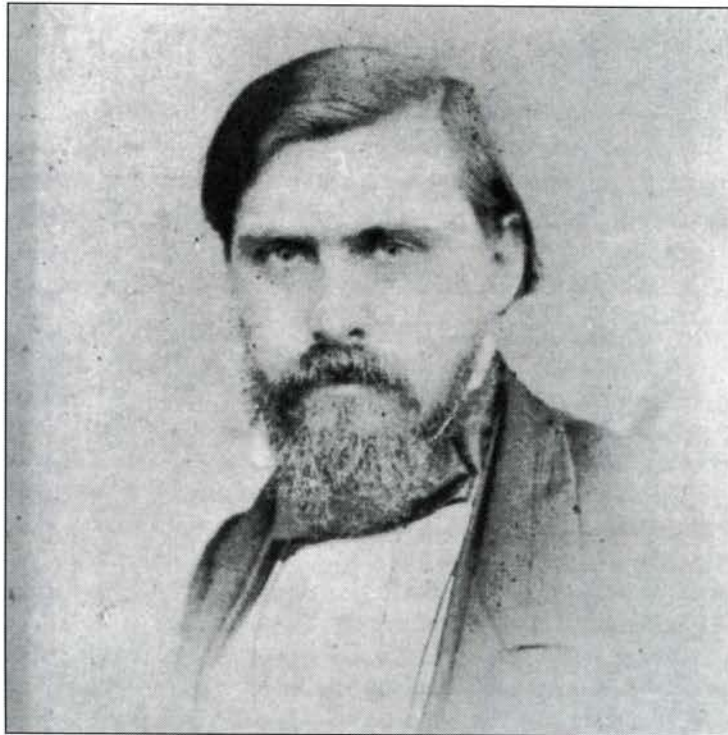


Photo: Courtesy Sonoma County Museum

*Thomas Lake Harris*

## **The Twisted Mystic of Fountaingrove**

*by Holly Hoods and Susan M. Clark, Clark Historic Resource Consultants  
excerpted from Evaluation for Significance, Fountaingrove Round Barn, 2004*

The first Utopian colony in California was founded in Sonoma County. Fountaingrove was the name of the socio-religious utopian community of the "Brotherhood of New Life" that moved to rural Santa Rosa in 1875. Under the leadership of "Father and Pivot and Primate and King," Thomas Lake Harris, a manipulative mystic, from 1875-1892, and the subsequent management as an estate by Kanaye Nagasawa, his loyal disciple and adopted son, from 1892-1934, the Fountaingrove colony prospered as a ranch and winery, growing from 400 to 2,000 acres.

Thomas Lake Harris (1823-1906), an English-born poet and former Universalist minister, combined occult mysticism, Swedenborgian theology and socialism to form his own eclectic and bizarre religious doctrine, "Theo-Socialism" in the 1850s. Positioning himself as divine prophet and spiritual center, Fountaingrove was Harris's fourth experiment in communal living and, like the others, was dogged by accusations of financial and sexual chicanery. He founded his first colony in 1857 in Mountain Grove,

Virginia, proclaiming it to be the original Garden of Eden. This community quickly fell apart, but Harris, undaunted, established a second colony in 1863. The second attempt, called "the Use," attracted a handful of faithful residents, including Laurence Oliphant, a wealthy Englishman who turned over his worldly goods to the group, as Harris required. With the infusion of Oliphant's money, Harris relocated the Use to a larger property at Brocton, New York, where they became successful wine makers and dairy farmers. The colony eventually numbered about 100 members, and Harris decided to establish a new outpost in the West. Among the faithful was Kanaye Nagasawa, who traveled with Harris and three others to California in 1875 to purchase land suitable for viticulture.

### **Colony at Santa Rosa**

The Fountaingrove Colony in Santa Rosa numbered 20 residents in 1880, and eventually grew to 30 chosen members of the group. Buildings were soon

erected in the foothills, including a winery, mansion, hermitage, familstery (group housing), commandery (meeting lodge), brandy house and press. The colony road led from the county road (now Mendocino Avenue) and leveled just before reaching the first group of residential buildings.



Photo: Courtesy Sonoma County Museum

***Fountaingrove Dining Room***

Harris and a few others of high station lived in the Mansion, but the rest of the group lived in same-sex dormitory housing. Husbands and wives were separated—according to the will of “Father” Harris—and encouraged to remain celibate. This was to better cultivate idealized marital relationships with their true soul-mate counterparts on the spiritual plane. Harris controlled most aspects of their daily lives, including work assignments, social groupings, sleeping arrangements, allocation of resources, and instruction of children. His followers trusted him implicitly and believed themselves to be part of a higher purpose. In addition to wine making, the commune members of “the Use” at Fountaingrove joyfully devoted themselves to labor. They truly believed that their handiwork would be imbued with the positive spirit with which it was created—from a meal, to a painting, to a garden, to a garment. They raised sheep for mutton and wool; grew hay and grain crops; planted 50 acres of orchards; and operated a dairy, selling milk and butter in Santa Rosa. Colony members also ran a printing press to publish Harris's steady outpouring of spiritual and poetic writings.

**Fountaingrove Winery**

In April 1875, Thomas Lake Harris bought 400 acres within the former Rancho San Miguel, north of Santa Rosa. After dairy ranching on the

property for several years, Harris hired Chinese laborers to plant vineyards, under the direction of Dr. John Hyde and Nagasawa. Hyde, who had been in charge of Harris's vineyards in New York, selected vines that were resistant to phylloxera. He also directed construction of a large winery. By 1884, they had 1,700 acres in bearing, planted to Cabernet, Riesling and Zinfandel. Fountaingrove wine attained an international reputation, perhaps being the first California wine to do so. Over the next decade, the Fountaingrove Winery won major wine awards, and was producing 200,000 gallons per year. Most of the wine was sold and distributed to international markets through the Fountaingrove Wine House in New York. Under Nagasawa's excellent management, Fountaingrove also opened sales outlets in London, Liverpool and Manchester, England; and in Glasgow, Scotland.



Photo: Courtesy Sonoma County Museum

***Fountaingrove Round Barn***

**Round Barn**

In addition to his extensive work in the colony's winery and vineyards, Kanaye Nagasawa devoted his attention to the breeding of fine Percheron, Arabian and thoroughbred horses. The existing Fountaingrove Round Barn was built under Nagasawa's direction in 1899 by Scottish carpenter, John C. Lindsay of Santa Rosa. Brotherhood architect Louis Cowles designed the octagonal, redwood-sided barn to accommodate 28 horses, housed in a circular pattern, with a hay loft above. A second polygonal barn was built about 1907, but it burned down two years later. The remaining Round Barn is the only intact building from the once-thriving utopian settlement of Fountaingrove that still exists.

The Fountaingrove Round Barn is one of only three round barns in Sonoma County and one of 11 surviving round barns in California. Polygonal and round barns were promoted as efficient designs in the mid and late 19th Century, but were relatively rare in the USA. Most polygonal and round barns were used to house dairy cattle or horses. They are most commonly found in Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana.



Photo: Courtesy Sonoma County Museum

*Kanaye Nagasawa in the greenhouse*

### **Kanaye Nagasawa**

Kanaye Nagasawa (1853-1934) was born Hikosuke Isonaga, the son of a wealthy Samurai scholar and gunpowder manufacturer in Kagoshima, Japan. A member of a noble family of the Satsuma clan, he became one of the famous "Satsuma Fifteen," group of youths selected by the Prince of Satsuma to be smuggled out of Japan to be educated in Europe and America to learn the ways of the Western world, which was forbidden by the Emperor of pre-Meiji Japan. Adopting assumed names to protect their families, the youths slipped illegally out of their homeland in 1865, aboard a British ship. In London, they were befriended by a Member of Parliament (Laurence Oliphant, a major Thomas Lake Harris follower), who had traveled in Japan. Nagasawa, at 12 years old, was the youngest of the Fifteen. He stayed for two years with a host family in Aberdeen, Scotland, acquiring a Scottish accent with his education. When Nagasawa returned to London to visit his student companions, he found that, due to financial reasons, all but four of them had returned to Japan. Oliphant introduced the remaining students to his spiritual leader, Thomas Lake Harris. Harris offered funds, labor, and a home in America to the stranded Japanese youths. Four of them, including Nagasawa, came to live and work at Harris's colony

in Brockton, New York. Arriving in 1867, they were among the first Japanese in the United States. Nagasawa soon became Harris's trusted secretary and one of his primary disciples.

Kanaye Nagasawa was also to become one of the most influential and respected Japanese men in California. He was the only one of the Satsuma Fifteen who did not return to Japan after the Meiji Restoration allowed for communication to resume between the East and West. When the Western-educated Satsuma students returned to their homeland, all of them became prominent in Japanese government affairs. The three young men who had accompanied Nagasawa to Harris's colony later returned to Japan and became ambassadors. Nagasawa elected to remain with Harris in the United States, but retained his ties to his family in Japan and diplomatic ties to the Japanese government. He achieved a prominent role overseeing the wine-making activities of the Fountaingrove colony in Santa Rosa. This prominence included collaborating with Luther Burbank in a number of plant experiments, which led to a close friendship.

In 1915, Kanaye Nagasawa was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun by the Emperor of Japan for his work among Japanese in the United States. Locally known as "Prince Nagasawa," he became known for his lavish dinner parties, collection of Japanese art, and extensive museum and library holdings. According to his obituary, prominently placed on the front page of the *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* in March 1934, Nagasawa's home was for fifty years the Mecca for literary lights and artists. The late Jack London, noted author, was a frequent visitor there. It was a rare occasion when a notable from a foreign country visiting in San Francisco did not depart from his itinerary to visit Nagasawa.

Though Kanaye Nagasawa enjoyed a social respectability and prestige that eluded Thomas Lake Harris, his wealth and prominence did not shield him from the racial prejudice of his day. The Alien Land Laws in place in 1934 did not permit Nagasawa's Japanese heirs to inherit Fountaingrove, as he had hoped. After his death, the Fountaingrove acreage was subdivided and sold out of the Brotherhood of New Life. Today the only visible traces of the once-famed Fountaingrove utopian colony are the deteriorating Round Barn and the street names criss-crossing a Santa Rosa hillside subdivision.



*Alice Oliphant*



Photos: Healdsburg Museum Collection  
*Laurence Oliphant*

## Letter from a Believer: Brotherhood of New Life, Fountaingrove

*reprinted from Memoir of the Life of Laurence Oliphant and Alice Oliphant, His Wife, 1891*

You ask after our daily life here, how we spend our time. There is a short sentence of G. Fox which will not inaptly express what we do and propose to do. The words are, "All things useful in creation." That one word useful has a particular charm for people here. They are of an intensely poetical genius. With us everything must have a use and every one his work. We have none set apart for the ministry, and we have not salaries to spare for any clergyman. Our maxim is, that the more spiritual we become, the more practical we must become also. We must meet the world in its own way and on its own terms, and conquer all uses, arts, sciences, industries for the City of Our God, until the time comes of which it is written, "that the kings of the earth do bring the glory and honor into her." Our community here we often call "*The Use*." Every one here must have his or her "use" or "uses," according to his or her special genius. The New Church renews the body and mind as well as the soul. Now, the influx of the Spirit, or internal breathing of which we are sensationally and organically conscious, natural respiration undergoing a new change, begets a new ardour, a divine activity for all work; and whether we

are planting potatoes, cooking a roast, singing a hymn or having a picnic in the woods, it is our ambition (if I may use the word) to do it the *very best*, as God would do and does His own work. Our pleasures are joy-births from God; our labour is worship and our meals more like Passovers. We have no place here for those who want to meditate, unless the meditation ultimates in useful work.

You ask how many of us are here. There are between thirty and forty of us. Few, you may think, for such a work—few, indeed if the work was ours; but we are nothing. Christ is all. We could have many adherents if we relaxed, but we may not unauthorized relax one iota of our faith or life. Those who come here must have no country, no relations or friends, no pursuits but such as are given them of God. They must literally "forsake all and take up the cross." Any one coming here must be willing to be anything or nothing—to be a drudge if the Lord's will can be best served in that way; he must account a martyr death as a very small sacrifice and a martyr life as the great and glorious thing to strive for. The world has come to this, that nothing but a race of heroes can redeem it.



Photo: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Fountaingrove Guests and Residents, including Kanaye Nagasawa and Mrs. Jane Parting*

## Mary Harris' Strange Death

*excerpted from The San Francisco Call, 14 February 1896*

The judicial probing into the mysterious death of Mary Harris on January 2 at the Fountain Grove community has brought to light some very strange things. For instance, the dead girl was kept a close prisoner in the "House of Mystery" for ten days before she summoned courage or desperation enough to take the deadly draught of strychnine that released her from her unhappy life.

She was formerly kept under strict watch in the Clark house, but was removed by force to the house occupied by the two Japanese, Nagasawa and Ari, and by Mrs. Jane Parting, her sister and two daughters. This house gained its mystical designation because it was the residence of Thomas Lake Harris, the founder of the colony, before he went to New York, a couple of years ago.

Nagasawa and Clark carried Mary Harris by force to her prison-room in the "House of Mystery," and her meals were brought to her there until the end.

All this was elicited by the cross-examination

of Mrs. Clark, who was asked why Mary was removed to the Japanese residence. She said it was to guard her better until word could be had from Thomas Lake Harris making final disposition of the girl. Harris had been written to on the subject, and they were waiting his orders.

When the Deputy Sheriff went to subpoena Pearl Harris for the Grand Jury, Clark refused to let the girl leave the community until he was threatened with arrest.

It seems there were but two living witnesses to the death of Mary—Nagasawa and Miss Parting. The former has testified before the Grand Jury, but the latter is said to be too ill with nervous prostration to leave the House of Mystery at present.

Mary Harris was a Catholic, the faith of her mother, and resisted to the last the doctrines of Fountain Grove.

It is expected that the Grand Jury of Sonoma County will adjourn by to-morrow evening, and that



then there will come report upon or possibly the indictment of someone connected with the recent tragedy at the Fountain Grove community.

Since Tuesday last this body has been investigating the cause of the death of young Mary Harris, and Assistant District Attorney Butts has been most persistent in his efforts to throw some light upon the mysterious affair.

In the first place the, Coroner's investigations were of the most perfunctory kind. On the day after the tragedy, Coroner Fred Young came from his home at Healdsburg to the community.

He impaneled a jury of six men, all of whom were either members or trusted employees of the community. He did not summon the attending physician, Dr. Thompson, of this city nor any other medical expert. He heard the testimony of but three witnesses, all high members of the community, and then his jury of Fountain Groveites brought in a verdict of suicide while despondent.

Now, as a matter of fact, although there is only the word of the Japanese manager (Nagasawa), corroborated by two women who reside in the Harris mansion with him and unsupported by all the other fifty men and women on the premises, for the theory of suicide, the general impression here is that the poor girl really did take her own life. But why?

To most maidens of sixteen who live amid such beautiful and healthful natural surroundings life is very, sweet, but this maiden courted death. Some of the reasons have come out during the Grand Jury's investigations, and these seem to be almost sufficient to account for the rash act. She was kept a close prisoner on the second story of the big boarding-house. In a whole year she was permitted to speak to her younger sister, Pearl, but three times.

Both she and her sister were kept such close prisoners that scarcely any one in Santa Rosa knew until the tragedy occurred that the two girls were at the community. And yet almost daily the community is visited by tradesmen and tourists, who are privileged to drive all about the grounds, and some of whom are entertained very handsomely by Nagasawa.

Another fact that has leaked out is that Mary Harris was detained at the Ranch against her will. For a year she had been trying to escape. When she jumped out of a window twenty feet high, as already admitted by Nagasawa, she was in desperate

rebellion against what must have been to her a most cruel and unnatural existence.

Mrs. Clark complained to the Grand Jury that Mary was a self-willed girl who did not know how to mind, so she had to be shut up and kept away from all sympathy and love. These were not Mrs. Clark's exact words, but the inference that the jurors drew from them. The day after the tragedy Nagasawa appeared at the office of the *Republican*, in Santa Rosa, and announced to its editor and proprietor, Mr. Lemmon, that "one of those alleged granddaughters of Harris" had committed suicide, and accompanied the statement by the request that Mr. Lemmon should have the matter treated in his paper as briefly as possible. Indeed, the tragedy was kept rather quiet for a time, and had it not been for the energy of Assistant District Attorney Butts no further investigation would have been held.

The people of this city and county are not greatly excited over the occurrence, for sensations and rumors of sensations in connection with the Harris community are old stories here.

An indictment is not seriously apprehended, for no witnesses have been heard or seem to be obtainable, besides the interested persons.

Pearl Harris is only 14 years old and has the innocence and ignorance of a girl eight years. She said her sister was always kind and gentle to her, but she knew from what others said that Mary must have been obstinate and willful. In truth, Mary seems to have been a high strung, sensitive girl, who suffered much from ill health brought on by confinement and an unsanitary way of living.

It seems to have been a case for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children to handle, but it is too late now. Yet Pearl Harris is still a prisoner there. She lived in the house with her sister and yet was not permitted to see her. Even when Mary lay at the point of death and Pearl begged to be allowed to go to her, she was restrained.

That last word seems to have been the keynote of the treatment accorded the girls. They were restrained in everything. They lived in separate parts of the big "boarding-house," habited by the Clarks, and dared not even walk across to the handsome and luxurious residence of the vice-primate and the Partings, nor go out in the fields and enjoy the sunshine and the green things and flowers. They were always "restrained."

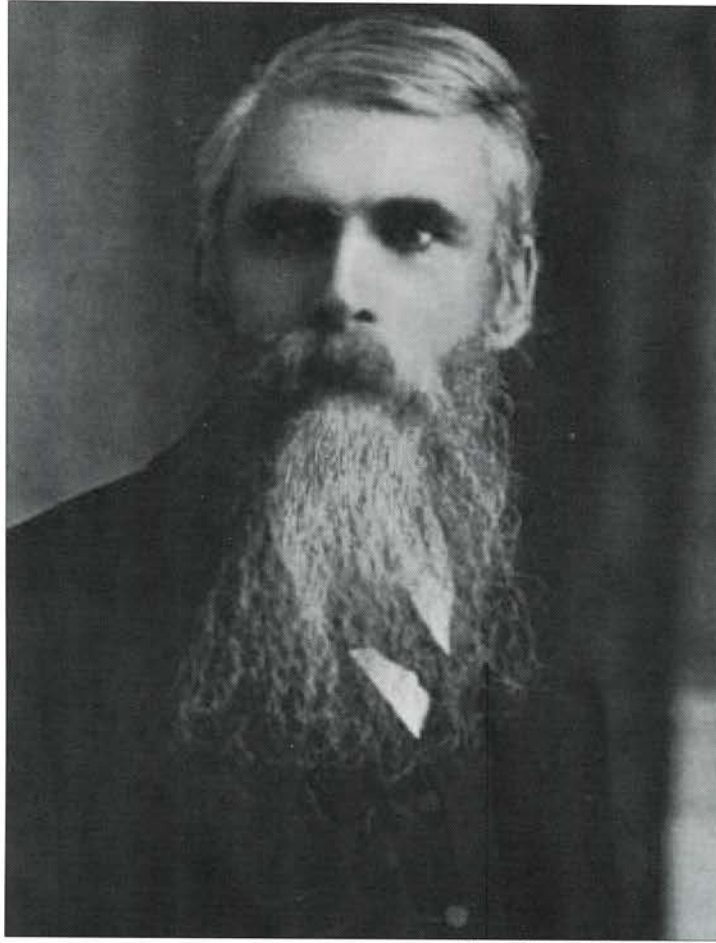


Photo: Sonoma County Museum

*Thomas Lake Harris*

## **The New Republic**

*by Thomas Lake Harris, Fountaingrove Press, Santa Rosa, 1891*

*In 1891 Thomas Lake Harris's seemingly respectable Fountaingrove religious community in Santa Rosa was rocked by scandalous allegations. Miss Alzire Chevaillier, a journalist, publicly accused Harris of making improper advances and admissions to her at Fountaingrove. Harris also faced accusations of psychologically manipulating and financially exploiting Laurence Oliphant, a wealthy follower. These accusations—and rumors—were the talk of the town. Harris, the minister and self-appointed "Primate" of his utopian colony, kept the Fountaingrove presses churning out reams of his ardent poetry and obscure theological ruminations. He wrote this article to the editor of the Sonoma Democrat newspaper. -Curator*

Greeting. Whilst the vocation of the Writer is that of a practical industrialist, calling forth from the good soil its corn, oil and wine, he resumes another function, that of Intellectual Ministry to the People; not seeking to be a ruler of their faith, but a helper in the social labors that result in common fellowship and joy.

This Discourse is mailed to fellow Workers in

Social Humanity, Nationalist Clubs, Socialistic and Labor Unions and kindred Societies in the hope that contact of mind with mind and heart with heart may serve for mutual encouragement and advance of action in the common cause.

Health and Fraternity,

Thomas Lake Harris

Fountaingrove, Santa Rosa, Cal.

The great free Social Manhood is yet to come. However clear the lamp-light, the heart hungers for the stars. Still if the age greatens and men do not greaten with it, this is because they egoise against the greatness. If the age deepens and men do not deepen with it, it is because they shallow themselves that they may hide away in their pettinesses from the tides of the oncoming deep. So, if men egoise while the age seeks to socialize, it is because the private self shrinks from the heroic pursuits, the disciplines, the darings that make for the vast human good. The more vital part of the human faculties are in perpetual eclipse. Egoism holds but at most the lunar light; the richer worths of the solar ray are lost to us because it is only by means of the social passion that the bosom attracts and absorbs the human aura of the sun.

The great men of the Egoists are but brazen and pillared mediocrities. Egoism severs the tap-root of the human tree. Observe any coterie of Club-men or Turf-men or Bank or Railway magnates, or Cabinet Ministers, on the whole they are miserable. Their enjoyments are coarse and feverish; they inhabit an atmosphere of suspicions. They journey at a swinging gait; this is because they ride the crocodile. They see their ruined rivals trodden under the feet of the beast, and they know the rivals rode once where they ride now; they know too that a twist of the reins, a slip of the foot, a careless motion may hurl them down to be as the rivals are.

Now the first of the discoveries that came to me was the key to all that follows. Great in itself, it has opened on from year to year to others; in themselves immense, incredible, overwhelming, but pregnant with results of vast and durable beneficence to mankind that can hardly be expressed in words. Conscious human life begins and ends with the fact and consciousness of breath; all men are aware of the fact that they breathe from and breathe into nature. Immersed by the continuous act of respiration in this beauteous natural world; they are living in it; it living in them; their faculties open to the knowledge of nature and their senses are thrillingly fed and solaced by its joys. With me the breath is twofold; besides the usual breathing from and into Nature, is an organic action of breathing from and into the Adorable Fount and Spirit of existence. First realized as by a new birth of the breathing system; a breath of new intellectual and moral infancy, this carefully held, reverently and sacredly cherished as a gift from

God, has advanced till at present each organ of the frame respire in breathing rhythms, making of the body one conscious form of unified intellectual and physical harmony; the spirit, the real or higher self, is absorbing the lowly naturehood, yet meanwhile nourishing it with the rich and vital elements of a loftier realm of being. This gift that I hold is the coming inheritance of all. Mankind awaits its New Humanity As Earth once waited for the first-born rose.

Every act of my respiration for the last 40 years has partaken of this complex character. During the years that ensued when the new respiration had been confirmed and established in me, I made this the central topic in the discourses of several years, preached in New York and in various cities of Great Britain. Within a week after finding the touch of the last rhythmic chord that leads to the harmonic vibrations into bodily renewal, the bent form stood upright; flesh grew upon the bones; the dim eyes found their sparkle; every bodily sense awoke reinvigorated; the fountains of blood seemed to flow as by a vertical motion, rounding in each recuperative organ to one grand consciousness of bodily grandeur, freedom and in a sense, of complete immortality.

Thus it will be perceived that my endeavor has not been to construct a new philosophy, much less to found a sect in religion, much less to organize a petty social community. I have but taken hold of the clue that every noble and virtuous young man dreams of and aspires to find in the brilliant hours of his ardent and heroic prime, and I have followed that clue till the life-path rounds again into the morning. No more, as the New Life becomes known and realized, shall hearts be crucified and minds perverted, and manhood crippled and womanhood outraged and truth enchained and sages assassinated.

Withdrawing from a public literary and oratorical service for the last 30 years, my effort has been concentrated to survive, to serve the providential ends of my calling, to strengthen the brave men and women scattered throughout the world who were coming into the same organic fact and consciousness. That is all that there is of mystery in the Brotherhood of the New Life. The tie that unites us is not creedal, not communistic, not in any sense hostile to existing religions or social systems, whilst they still continue to exist.

With reference to the recent memoirs of Mr.

Laurence Oliphant and to the hostile criticisms indulged in by a certain class of newspapers, growing out of its misrepresentations, it is a Foreign publication, and those misrepresentations have been answered already by Great Britain where it appeared. There the real facts have long been privately known and there is a gentleman of known probity and character, the intimate and confidential friend of the deceased during the long period of his relations with myself, and familiar with the nature of all those transactions, financial or otherwise, from first to last, has published such statements as should satisfy all unbiased persons that both myself and friends have been greatly wronged, and that in no particular have I or they been the wrong-doers.

Men do not bandy words with carrion. For the function of the respectable Publicist no person has a higher esteem. For the nasal purveyors of the Sensational Press, who prowl about the kitchen middens, and who from the smell of the wastepipes presume to sit in judgment on the aromas of the salon, I hold no more than a kindly contempt. It seems singular that truculent and specious adventurers, who in private circles have no recognized standing among men of honor, should be given a weigh in on the printed effusions of their hirelings, which no one would think of giving to their spoken affirmations. It is they who must stand trial before a jury of the honorable American People.



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