



RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

FALL 2014 • ISSUE 126

An Official Publication of the Healdsburg Museum & Historical Society



Life Histories



In This Issue

At the Healdsburg Museum, we strive to present authentic voices of local history. We do this through historical research and by recording and transcribing oral histories to use in our exhibits and publications. In this issue of the *Russian River Recorder* we bring you "Life Histories," a collection of autobiographical and biographical sketches of eight local residents.

The articles in this issue represent a range of eras and life experiences. Diane Schmidt Carriger interviewed Walter Snider of Dry Creek Valley in 1989. Shonnie Brown interviewed Frank Pastori this year. Both of these passages vividly convey the narrators' personalities while reflecting their personal memories.

This issue also features two autobiographical entries by country girls Josephine Baiocchi Del Sarto, who grew up in Chianti north of Geyserville, and Lorraine Kimes Owen, who grew up in and around

Windsor. Their stories detail aspects of their rural childhoods during the 1920s and '30s.

The other articles derive from an author's personal connection with a subject. Ann Howard brings us her heroic story of World War II shipfitter Flora Annett Batch. Kelly Korte has written an intimate look of her special relationship with Gertrude "Daisy" Nosler," a Healdsburg girl whose Victorian diary inspired Kelly to connect with the Nosler family and to explore the past in her own life. I have written a biographical article about two local historical figures who had always intrigued me: John G. and Saul Sylvester Howell, the radical crusaders of the *Russian River Flag* newspaper, 1868-1875.

We appreciate the opportunity to share these stories with you.

Holly Hoods, Curator

Pamela Vana-Paxhia, Editor



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Source: Sharon Pastori

Frank Pastori, 2014

Looking Back: Frank Pastori

by Shonnie Brown

Family History:

Constante Pastori, Erminia Domenichelli Pastori

My father came from the small town of Pavia in the Lombardia region of Italy—an area well known for white wine. The exact date of his voyage and arrival in the United States is uncertain, but I've been told it was in 1889. He told me the following tale throughout my childhood in Geyserville. I believe this story took place at the Port of Genoa because Dad said the passengers were Genovese:

A group of ragazzi (boys) and I were just goofing around below deck on a ship when suddenly the boat began moving out to sea. Seeing that we were out in the water, we approached the captain.

'I hope you can swim,' the captain said. 'Because we're on our way to New York. Go down below and bust up the coal and feed the burner.'

Figuring we wouldn't be missed at home because of poverty conditions, we did what

the captain said. In that one moment we each left our family behind.

We stayed down below, feeding the burner, and when the steam went down, the captain got after us. After a couple of weeks, the ship pulled into New York City.

Dad began asking where a grape growing region was in the U.S. and was told he must go on to California. Having no money, he got back on the ship with his brother, Carlo. The bottom of the ship was covered with five-gallon cans of olive oil being hauled to San Francisco. Because this was before the Panama Canal, Dad had to shovel coal all around Cape Horn. Carlo decided to get off in Argentina, but Dad came all the way to San Francisco with some of the other young men, and was never to see his brother again. The last thing the captain said was, "You get the hell out and I don't want to see you again! Go down to the Italian restaurant and they'll feed you."

Dad and his friends had no money and nowhere to go, so it was suggested by someone at the

restaurant that they go see a Mr. Andrea Sbarboro at San Francisco's Italian American Bank. "They're building a big winery up north [Italian Swiss Colony] and may need workers," the young men were told.

Dad headed north with two or three other immigrants. He spent some time homesteading in Signal Ridge, near Philo, then went to Cloverdale, where he tended racehorses for the Frenchman, Louis Bee, son of Emile Bee, one of the founders of Icaria Speranza, the local French utopian colony.

Dad became acquainted with Remigio Domenichelli, a fellow Italian immigrant and grape grower in Geyserville. After showing Dad a photo of his younger sister in Massa Carrara, Tuscany, Remigio sent for her to be a "picture bride" for my father. When Erminia Domenichelli arrived in San Francisco in 1908, Dad went to meet her. He remarked that though she was terribly short, she looked like she might be a good worker. The next day, the two were married at Saint Peter & Paul's Church in the city. My mother was believed to be 21 years younger than my dad. (*A relative says his birthdate was 1869. His gravestone says 1870. The, 1940 census records say he was born c. 1875.*)



Source: Sharon Pastori

Constante and Erminia (Domenichelli) Pastori wedding, 1908

Dad soon purchased 117 acres of land north of Geyserville from a Paul Leroux, one of the local Frenchmen from the utopian colony, in 1916. The agreed upon price was \$14,000 and Dad was told he could "work it out." My sister Emma was born in 1910. My brother Americo was born in 1914. I was born in 1920. My other sister Stella, born in May 1912, died just over a year later, due to diphtheria.



Source: Sharon Pastori

The Constante Pastori family

Frank's Childhood in Geyserville

I was born on the family ranch. My first two school years were at the old one-room Washington School in Asti. I remember a gang of us kids—the Zanzis, Tamborinis, etc.—walking up the railroad tracks to school. Old man Zanzi often caught us stealing cherries from his trees, which grew alongside the track.

After two years, I attended Geyserville Elementary School—one big building with two rooms, four grades in each room. Mr. Del Sarto, who ran Asti Grocery, had a delivery truck and hauled as many kids as he could to Geyserville School. Whoever jumped in the back went with us.

When I started there I didn't speak any English, so I had to work hard at it with the help of my older sister, Emma. But most of the kids that went to school with me were also Italian—the Colombanos, Tedeschis, Marianis, Tamborinis,

Mazzonis, Zanzis, Brignolis and Domenichellis. I recall that Mr. Winters was the principal. One of the teachers used to knock us on the head and all the teachers pulled our ears and made us stay after school. I remember it like it was yesterday.

Every year there was a new Domenichelli in school, until there were seven brothers in all. One of the Tedeschi boys brought bread and another brought prosciutto. A whole gang met in the auditorium for lunch and the oldest boy sliced the bread, making sandwiches for five or six others. But the Italian kids wanted the peanut butter and jelly sandwiches that the American boys had. One time a kid brought a bottle of wine to grammar school to get the other guys drunk. The teacher finally got ahold of it and raised heck with the kid's folks! By seventh and eighth grade, some of the boys were already as big as men.

We all lived on Chianti Road (now called Geyserville Avenue and before that, Redwood Highway). There used to be a Chianti train station just north of here. When Dad wanted to go to Santa Rosa (too far for his horse and wagon), he'd signal the passenger train by flipping the arm of the station's flag to "green," and the approaching train would stop.



Source: Frank Pastori

Frank and Americo Pastori

My brother and I liked to play cops and robbers with sticks for guns. I remember Dad asking,

"What kinda game you playin' there? You don't play with guns around here! That gives you ideas." In 1929, one of the Mazzoni boys got killed in a gun accident, so Dad was very strict about guns. He then taught me to hunt when I was 11 or 12.

Both Dad and my brother had severe asthma. When a bunch of us kids were just playin' around one day, Americo, who was then 19, drowned in the river. I was 13 and the only boy in the family after Americo's death, so a lot fell on me. The incident really took the soup out of my mother and I think she blamed us boys. I should have remained in school, but I graduated from eighth grade and then went to work for my dad.



Source: Frank Pastori

Frank, Americo and Constante Pastori

As early as age 11, I rose with Dad at daybreak to drive our old Case tractor with iron wheels. I also cut wood, which was shipped for heating to Ghirardelli Chocolate Company in San Francisco. I had to make a clearing for our grapes. At first Dad wanted white, because that's what he knew from back in Lombardia. Then he was convinced to plant Zinfandel and Alicante.

Prohibition (1920-1933)

Dad went from grapes to fruit because of Prohibition, which began in 1920, the year I was born.

He pulled out every other vine to plant a prune tree. Before Prohibition, no one wanted prunes. Then everyone wanted prunes. We couldn't sell grapes during Prohibition, so we grew prunes, pears and apples on our farm.

I was a youngster during the Prohibition years. Moonshiners came to my dad, saying, "We'll take the wine off your hands and then burn your building to throw off the Feds. In exchange, we'll send your family on vacation in Italy."

Dad had become a proud American citizen and didn't want to jeopardize his status. He had 15,000 to 20,000 gallons locked up in the winery building. He sat on it and sat on it until the IRS padlocked the doors of all the wineries. But the moonshiners and racketeers would often remove a few loose boards of a winery, sneak inside and drain wine out of the tanks, replacing it with water.

The county began taxing the wine that was just sitting there, so Mom wanted Dad to just dump it. Eventually, the bachelors who lived in the upstairs of the winery started an accidental fire and our winery did burn down, even though the firemen doused the flames with wine! Everything went in that fire. Bootleggers did empty out the wine and burn the buildings of many wineries, however.

The county, of course, wanted you to keep your wine, so they'd get their tax money, but the IRS wanted you to dump it. If you couldn't or wouldn't pay the county taxes, the Feds came and opened all the valves on your tanks and flooded the winery. They stood and watched until every drop of wine was gone.

Hobos soon came flooding into the area. They arrived on freight trains, piled on top of lumber cars, when they found that wine was being dumped. They collected the streams of wine into pails and buckets—anything they could find—and couldn't drink it fast enough. They then emptied their buckets into a larger container near the river. One IRS guy came after them, so the drunk hobos threw him into the river and then got the hell out of there! It got out of hand when they also began stealing stuff, so the sheriff kicked them all out.

Local racketeers thought they'd better get into the business before the wine was all gone. It was a dangerous business, and one of the IRS guys was found hanging from a tree. The racketeers made moonshine out of wheat, pears, apples—anything that

would ferment. It was normal to make 300-400 gallons of moonshine per day. I recall sugar being bought from C&H by the carload. A friend with an old truck was hauling five-gallon jugs of wine covered up with hay. When he got to the barge to cross the bay, the guy remarked, "That hay sure is heavy on the boat!"

One big-time racketeer approached a local family whose property had a very large barn down by the river. With their agreement to have a huge still put in their barn, a mile-long underground pipeline was built from one of the larger Geyserville wineries to this barn. Local men (including my dad, until he found out what it was for) dug day and night, even digging under the railroad tracks. They then emptied the wine into the pipeline and ran it down to the barn, where water was pumped out of the river to cool the still. They emptied out that winery pretty darn fast. The still poured out *grappa* (brandy), which was soon hauled away. The racketeers had paid off the local sheriff and district attorney, so they knew when the authorities were hot on their tracks, and everything disappeared just in time.

Meeting Edith Buchignani, Starting Out Together

After Prohibition my family went back into the wine business. We kept the Alicante and Zin and put in Carignane, Petite Sirah and Golden Chasselas—probably about 40 acres in all. Those years were a struggle because the small growers had to sell in bulk to Italian Swiss Colony, Petri Wine Company or Roma. These big guys had control of the industry.

I worked for my dad and then began doing custom farming for neighbors on my own. Dad, of course, wanted me to stay home and work. When I was 19 or 20, he leased 60% of the ranch to me.

When I first saw Edith (Edie) Buchignani at her Canyon Elementary School graduation, I had to ask who that good lookin' girl was—and I kept my eye on her. When I went to the school graduation party at cousin Victor Berizzi's, I met her. She mailed me a Valentine's card clear out of the blue sky when we hardly knew each other—so I sent one back. I got to know her family, but I could never even put my hand on her shoulder without her dad getting upset. So whenever we went out, the car was loaded up with her sisters.

Edith and I used to sneak into town to be together. We'd meet when she'd go to the store to

buy a Coke or candy on her lunch hour during high school. We dated for three years, waiting until I was 21 and she was 18 so her dad couldn't object. Because of my marriage to Edith, I became instantly related to hundreds of Buchignanis!



Source: Sharon Pastori

Frank and Edith (Buchignani) Pastori's wedding

Edith and I swept the sawdust out of a brand spankin' new house on Healdsburg Avenue and rented it for \$22.00 per month. After a few years we moved to Geyserville, where I was still working my dad's ranch. Finally, we moved onto the ranch.

In 1944-1945, a group of us guys who'd been deferred went to the city to get our draft physicals. We were ready to enlist, but they kept postponing, and then the war ended. Our daughter, Sharon, was born shortly after the war on May 20, 1946.

The O'Conner Ranch

We moved to the 63-acre O'Conner Ranch, which we leased and where I live today. Many folks said, "Frank, you gotta have your head examined, taking over that abandoned ranch!" But Edith was made of iron. She suggested we buy a prune harvester for \$4,000, which grabbed trees and shook off the fruit. I went to the dealer and he asked, "Who's gonna drive the tractor?" I told him, "Edith can drive a team of mules!" We cut our costs by 90% with that thing. So I tried the prune harvester with our apple trees and hauled them all in two hours flat! We then bought a new forklift, which Edith drove to haul the prunes to the dehydrator.

By about 1965, we were no longer making money on fruit. I pulled out ten acres of prunes at a time, piece by piece. We cut up the apple trees for firewood and planted a stretch of bare land down by the river with Carignane. I was still making money on the pears, but when the cannery moved out of Sonoma County, I was hauling to Ukiah. When Mrs. O'Conner died in the 1970s, her heirs sold the land to us at a reasonable price.

Life Continues

I leased Frank Nervo's ranch at the south end of Geyserville for about 14 years, until Nervo sold the land to Schlitz Brewing Company in 1975. Edith held her own here—managing most everything and working as hard as any man.

Because we were able to reinstate our bonded winery, it took a surprisingly short time to start this winery back up. We had a year or two of great success, but then the 101 Freeway was put in and we were no longer on the main road.

Wine publicist Millie Howie and I were good friends and we started the Russian River Wine Road with only seven original wineries. Edith died four years ago this coming February.



Source: Sharon Pastori

Frank Pastori checking his vineyards on his 4x4, 2014

At age 94, I still work 62 acres with the help of three good men. My grandson, 22-year-old Paolo Pastori Ng, helps me out on the ranch. We'll see what the future holds, but Paolo may very well continue our legacy.



Source: Rose Annett Ostby

Flora Annett, age 20

Flora Annett Batch, World War II Shipfitter

by Ann Howard with Rose Annett Ostby, May, 2012

I happened to meet Flora Batch in November, 2009, when I shared a table with her at the Healdsburg Community Church Christmas Boutique Luncheon. It was one of those serendipitous moments that I have come to cherish. Flora, age 89, began to tell me of her experiences as a shipfitter during World War II. Later, when I called Flora to interview her for the Russian River Recorder, she declined, saying she was shy, but I never forgot our chance meeting. Flora died October 5, 2010.

Then, in another serendipitous moment in November, 2011, again at the Christmas Boutique luncheon, I met Flora's sister Rose. Later, I visited with Rose who has generously shared more details of Flora's story.

Flora Emmeline Annett was born on June 27, 1920, in rural Albee, South Dakota, the seventh of ten children of Robert and Clara Froemming Annett. After graduation from Aberdeen High School in 1940, and before the start of World War II, Flora visited her sister Phyllis in San Francisco and decided to stay.

Flora had learned to cook and sew at a young age by watching her older sister Clarice. She made her own confirmation dress at age twelve and sewed her own clothes for school. Later, Flora's skill "with a needle" most certainly contributed to her being qualified as a shipfitter.

While living in San Francisco, Flora was working for the city transit when she saw a want ad for shipfitters. She applied, was given a book to study and passed the shipfitter's test 100%. In fact, Flora was the first female shipfitter hired during the war. A shipfitter fits the parts of a ship together by welding or riveting. A piece of steel is cut for a certain area and by using a burner and welder shapes it to fit. Flora told me that the job was just like cutting out pieces of fabric to make clothing. She said they could assemble a ship in two weeks!

Flora worked on Liberty ships in the Richmond Shipyards. She commuted from the

Richmond District in San Francisco every day wearing her heavy work clothes.

Richmond Shipyards, Richmond, CA

The four Richmond Shipyards, located in Richmond, CA, were run by Permanente Metals and responsible for constructing more ships during WWII than any other shipyard in the country.

A total of 747 vessels were built in the four Richmond Kaiser Shipyards during World War II, a feat not equaled anywhere else in the world, before or since. These ships were completed in two-thirds the amount of time and at a quarter of the cost of the average of all other shipyards.

The Liberty ship *SS Robert E. Peary* was assembled in less than five days as a part of a special competition among shipyards. By 1944 it was only taking a little over two weeks to assemble a Liberty ship by standard methods.

A Chance Meeting

One day while standing on an open stairway where a welder had done some work for her, Flora was checking the weld quality he had made. She used a slag hammer to hit the weld. Just at that moment, her boss pulled on her pant leg to get her attention and a piece of slag flew into her eye. Because of the tearing and pain, Flora needed assistance to go to the infirmary. A co-worker saw her distress and called for help. The supervisor of a group of women nearby quickly came to her aid. He asked if he could help, and when Flora agreed, he pulled out his handkerchief, rolled a corner and removed the slag. He had wanted to meet Flora and offered his hand in introduction. He was Lou Batch from Mill Valley. Flora thanked him and quickly exited. She told me that she had been determined not to get involved with any man in the shipyards!

Later, Lou insisted they go to the Ice Follies in San Francisco. They were finally married in 1951. Flora worked as a secretary from 1947 to 1982. Lou was a radio officer in the Merchant Marines, taking messages, checking weather and using Morse code until his retirement in 1979.

Lou's hobby was ham radios. Flora had one at home so they could talk no matter where in the world he was located. Flora said she always met him in port and that each homecoming was like another honeymoon!

During their vacations, the couple worked on Lou's grandparents' early 1900s home at 88 Front Street in Healdsburg that had been vacant for forty years, with a large yard and fruit trees. Lou and Flora eventually inherited the house and made Healdsburg their second home.

Lou died in October 2002 at the age of 81. Flora celebrated her 90th birthday on June 27, 2010 with many of her friends. She died on October 5th of that same year.



Source: Rose Annett Ostby

Flora and Louis George Batch, 1999

I am honored that Flora shared a chapter of her life story with me in 2009 and to meet her sister Rose Ostby in 2011. Flora and Rose's niece, Roberta Hilgendorf, included Flora's story in "The Annett and Froemming Chronicles," some details of which are included here.

Sources:

Batch, Flora Annett, interview, November, 2009
Ostby, Rose Annett, interviews, November 2011, and family history records in 2012
Richmond Shipyards, [wikipedia.org/wiki/Richmond Shipyards](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Richmond_Shipyards).
Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park website



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Russian River Flag Office, Matheson Street, 1873. J.G. Howell (fourth from right) and S.S. Howell (far right).

Crusaders of the Press: John Gilson and Saul Sylvester Howell of the *Russian River Flag*

by Holly Hoods

Radicals in Early Healdsburg

The Civil War was still smoldering in the hearts of local residents in 1868 when Saul Sylvester (S.S.) Howell arrived in Healdsburg. He was joining his older brother, John Gilson (J.G.), who had moved to the ten-year-old city the previous year. The Howells were outspoken pro-Lincoln Republicans in a strongly pro-South Democratic Sonoma County. Many of the founding families of Healdsburg hailed from Southern states and held onto their cherished

Southern sentiments. The literate Howells (and their freethinking wives) from Ohio and Iowa soon became the town's radical intellectuals.

Abolitionist Ancestry

J.G. and S.S. Howell had passionate anti-slavery roots. They were the grandsons of Joab Howell, a former slave owner who had renounced slavery and turned abolitionist long before the Civil War. Joab had once managed a large plantation in

Bracken County, Kentucky. By the age of 30, he had become convinced that slavery was evil and that he must not participate in it or even live in a slave state.

In 1808, Joab freed all of his slaves. He moved from Kentucky to Urband, Ohio with his pregnant wife so that their child, conceived in Kentucky, could be born in a free state. That child, John Gilson Howell, became the father of J.G. and S.S. Howell. Joab's decisions shaped their consciences and their values.

Family Ties: Howell, Olney, Craven

J.G. and S.S. Howell were born and raised in Springfield, Clark County, Ohio, the sons of Dr. John Gilson Howell and Eliza Ann Henkle. Only three of John and Eliza's nine children would survive childhood.

After their mother died in 1854, Dr. Howell brought sons J.G., 17, and S.S., 15, to Iowa. At the time, most of Iowa was owned by the government, so cheap land was available.

The Howells made the trip in a covered wagon, crossing the Mississippi River at Burlington, Iowa. They moved to Pella, Iowa, a small Dutch settlement southeast of Des Moines, where Dr. Howell became the town physician.

S.S. Howell and Warren Olney were boyhood friends in Pella, Iowa, who later married sisters and moved with them to Healdsburg in 1868. As young men, they enrolled at Central College in 1860. When the Civil War broke out, the men of Central College formed a volunteer company, elected officers and went off to fight on the Union side. Howell and Olney were among those volunteers. S.S.'s health was badly affected and he left shortly after his enlistment. Back in Pella, S.S. married Rhoda Craven. Warren Olney married Rhoda's sister Mary.

1868 Trip to California

S.S. Howell finished his education, moved to Iowa City and became a classics professor, teaching Greek and Latin at the fledgling University of Iowa. S.S. was also an accomplished musician and music teacher. Unfortunately, the cold, damp winters made him sick, so he was advised to move to a warm, dry climate. He was 27 years old when he chose Sonoma County, California where his brother, J.G. and his family had already settled in Healdsburg. Warren and Mary Olney decided to join them.

The two couples traveled first to Chicago and then to New York City by train, then by steamship to Panama, across the isthmus and up the coast to San Francisco. S.S. Howell's diary reports, "It was Friday, July 24, 1868 when the *Golden Age* steamed into the Port of San Francisco. The passenger list included the Olneys from Pella and the Howells from Iowa City. Warren Olney and wife Mary Craven Olney and baby daughter. S.S. Howell, wife Rhoda Craven Howell and two sons."

The two families were met by J.G., who transported them to Petaluma by spring wagon and on to Healdsburg. Surviving diaries by S.S. Howell were generously shared with the Healdsburg Museum by his great-granddaughter, Patricia Howell Hutchins, in 1990. A few excerpts follow:

Sunday, July 26, 1868

Healdsburg is a little town built of redwood, situated between high hills or little mountains, the Russian River running along the eastern part of town. Live oaks, Pines, Black and White oaks abound, also the Madrone. Have had roasting ears [corn] since July 3. Plums, pears, peaches, apricots in plentiful profusion...

Tuesday, September 8, 1868

Bought Miller's ranch for \$1300 and 100 acres adjacent for \$100. It is government land...



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

J.G. and Annie Howell with children at home on Sheridan [Fitch] St., view east, October 1874. Joseph Downing photo.

Monday, November 16, 1868

Put up rafters. All went to town late in p.m. Stayed all night. John read me some of his Salutory [editor's introduction in the new Russian River Flag]. Took the melodeon to pieces and repaired the trouble which was very slight. Had a big play and sing until 11:00 p.m. and to bed at 11:30.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

1871 Business Card, Howell Brothers, Russian River Flag.

Russian River Flag

In November 1868, J.G. Howell bought John B. Fitch's interest in the *Democratic Standard* newspaper, which was Healdsburg's only newspaper at the time. Changing the name to the *Russian River Flag*, Howell also immediately transformed the political bent of the paper to progressive, even righteously radical, which jolted the community.

Though educated and well qualified as a teacher, S.S Howell found himself blackballed from teaching in Healdsburg public schools because of his pro-Northern views. S.S. began assisting J.G. in the publication of "the Flag."

The Howells produced an engaging, well-written weekly publication featuring local, state and national news, peppered with progressive editorials. It remains an excellent historical window into the news and issues of the day.

In the early 1870s, the Howell brothers bravely advocated unpopular causes. They espoused women's suffrage, education for "Negroes," interracial public schools and scientific training for farmers.

Salutatory by J.G. Howell, Russian River Flag, November 19, 1868:

In politics, the Flag will be of the persuasion popularly known among our Democratic fellow citizens as Black. This term is, perhaps, applied to our political organization to distinguish it from that great constitutional party whose aspect has of late become rather ghostly.

While we differ with many of our countrymen, and even with a majority of our friends in this county

on questions of public policy, yet we propose to accord to every man the same conscientious impulses, and wish him to enjoy the fullest freedom of the thought and speech that we can claim for ourselves.

Warmly we as we may take issue with our political opponents, these pages, while we have the management thereof, shall never be sullied with rancorous utterances, undue asperity or personal abuse. Where a clear and impartial statement of facts and sober reasoning will not answer, we will withdraw from the contract.

Promoting Woman's Suffrage in 1870

A March 1870 *Flag* news article trumpeted the founding of a woman's suffrage association in Healdsburg. J.G. Howell viewed women's suffrage as a moral imperative, so naturally he enthusiastically espoused the cause:

Those opposed to woman's standing side by side with man in all civil and political rights should note that from every corner of the civilized world there are now springing up new advocates of woman's cause; that among them are some of the purest, wisest and most far-seeing statesmen of this enlightened age. History gives no record of a reform which marched with such rapid strides as does this day the grandest of all reforms, the disenthralment of woman and her elevation to the plane of rights and privileges hitherto monopolized by self-sufficient man, that she may indeed be his companion and the sharer in his joys and cares. Such a cause, and one so championed, cannot be stayed by sneers and coarse abuse, nor by the bigoted opposition of ignorance and prejudice.

Susan B. Anthony in Healdsburg

The *Russian River Flag* respectfully covered "distinguished friend of human rights" Susan B. Anthony's visit to Healdsburg in December 1871 to give a speech at Liberty Hall about "The Power of the Ballot." The *Flag* article noted: "Miss Anthony has spent twenty years in the anti-slavery and woman suffrage movements. Her speech indicates that she has mingled with great men and great women, and that she is thoroughly posted in public affairs. Much that she said was very radical and unpopular with the masses of the people..."



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
Susan B. Anthony, 1871

J.G. and his wife, Annie Belshaw Howell, were founding members of the Woman's Suffrage Association in Healdsburg, which met the first Thursday of the month, beginning in March 1870. Annie soon became vice-president of the Association. According to her 1935 obituary in the *Healdsburg Enterprise*, one of her proudest memories was in 1912 when women's suffrage was granted. Annie marched in the triumphal parade down Fifth Avenue, New York.

End of Era in Healdsburg

The Howell Brothers struggled financially for seven years and finally decided to sell the *Russian River Flag* to Leslie Jordan in 1875. J.G.'s farewell was tinged with regret "in resigning the ownership of the paper that we founded and have brought through weary years to its present gratifying position...few could understand the feelings of sadness at sundering the ties that grow between publisher and patron and between brother editors."

Not So Happily Ever After

S.S. Howell and his wife Rhoda moved to San Francisco where S.S. taught high school for several years before giving up teaching for good. He became a stockbroker with a seat in the California Exchange. Despondent over stock misfortunes and mounting debts, the sensitive scholar took his own life at age 37

in 1879. He left his widow, Rhoda to raise their five small children alone. She returned with them to Iowa where she had family support.

J.G., Annie and their children moved to San Francisco where J.G. too traded the newspaper business for banking and finance. J.G. and S.S. Howell had started the first money-broker's office on Sansome Street in 1875. Their business broke up two years later over stock speculation. J.G. Howell and his family moved to rural Lander, Placer County where they operated a peaceful country resort.

J.G. Howell did not stay quietly out of the news for long. In 1891, he shot police stenographer Rene S. Colvin, a would-be suitor--turned stalker--of his daughter, Annie. When Annie, an East Oakland schoolteacher, wouldn't date him, Colvin bitterly began publishing slander and innuendo about her in an independent press. Not only was Howell a crack shot, he had once worked as a sheriff. He would not tolerate threats to his daughter. Howell fired five shots into Colvin's body, miraculously sparing his life and somehow avoiding prosecution for any crime.

Years later, in January 1909, the same daughter grimly accompanied J.G. Howell to a mental competency hearing in Alameda County. Howell had become violent and threatening, posing a danger to himself and others, claimed the family. Howell whistled to himself throughout the proceedings as he was adjudged insane and sentenced to Napa State Asylum. He died at age 73 in March 1909.

A respected figure and colorful character in Healdsburg's history, J.G. Howell was an original to the very end. He left an impressive and lasting legacy here in Healdsburg in the pages of the *Russian River Flag*.

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Source: Lorraine Kimes Owen

Lorraine Kimes Owen, 1998

The Satisfying Life of a Country Girl

by Lorraine Kimes Owen

Lorraine Ellen Kimes was born May 4, 1920 in Forestville, California at the home of her parents, Walter Harry Kimes and Blanche Pearl (Meredith) Kimes. An older brother, Calvin Walter Kimes, was born on September 14, 1913. This excerpt is from her 1990 self-published memoir.

The Walker Hop Ranch

In 1922, the Walter Kimes family moved to the Walker Ranch on Eastside Road, not far from Windsor. My father was the field boss in the hop fields that summer and the family camped out in the campgrounds. Later that year when Don Walker decided that he wanted Walter to be his ranch foreman, the Kimes family moved to a big house on the hill. During hop picking season, Pop weighed the hops and hauled them from the fields to the hop kilns in an old Sampson truck. The hops had to be turned often so that they could dry evenly. My mother, Blanche, picked hops and kept the books. My first money earned was \$5 for picking hops. Mr. Don Walker asked me if I wanted to be paid in cash or by check. I chose a check so that I could see my name written on it.

Sheep were also raised on the ranch. It was fun to watch baby lambs frolicking through the fields each spring. There were also sad experiences when dogs attacked the sheep and killed or injured some of them. We had one cow to furnish milk for the family. There weren't any refrigerators in those days, so the milk had to be kept cool in a cellar that had been built above ground. There was a little quiet stream in a gully behind the cow barn. Annie and Alma Mathis and I used to have contests to see who could catch the most polliwogs. We caught them in coffee cans, counted them, didn't hurt them and put them back in the water.

My brother and I used to play "farm." He took care of building the barns, corrals and trucks out of pieces of wood and twigs from oak trees. I built the house and arranged the yard by using moss from

the trees for lawn. We didn't have many toys in those days, so we had to create our own. We used oak balls for animals. The largest oak balls were bulls; medium oak balls were cows or horses; small oak balls were calves, dogs or cats. Cal used large tacks for headlights on the cars and trucks he made from wood. The tacks came from rolls of tar paper used on the hop kiln smoke stacks.



Source: Lorraine Kimes Owen

Lorraine Kimes with dog Laddie on the wagon

It was fun sitting on the "jockey box" (driver's seat) of the high-bed wagon used for hauling sacks of hops from the fields, or hop pickers and their belongings from the campgrounds. I held on tight while the wagon swayed back and forth. One day Pop and I had a really good laugh when one of the "hobos" bounced around so much his false teeth fell out of his mouth and into the deep dust. Pop stopped the wagon, the man jumped off and found his teeth and wiped the dirt off on his pants. He put the teeth back in his mouth and we went on our way.

We didn't have a telephone on the ranch. If we needed to make a phone call, we drove to the telephone office in Windsor. Cora Gutshall, a real character, operated that office. She was a short woman and had to sit on a high stool in order to reach the (switch) board and plug into the proper numbers. She wore headphones similar to the kind that early airplane pilots used. She had a very short temper and frequently would tell people what she thought of them, if she didn't like something they said or did. She also listened in on phone calls and knew all the latest gossip in the Windsor area. She was sometimes referred to as the "Mayor of Windsor."

The Calhoun Ranch

I picked prunes for Mr. Harry Calhoun during the summers of 1928-32. The kids called Mr. Calhoun "Mr. Eyebrows" because he had heavy eyebrows and was grouchy. He paid five cents for a big lug box full of prunes. Families with several children came back year after year to pick prunes on the Calhoun Ranch and we became good friends. They camped in tents in a campground near the Russian River. Some people called prune pickers "Fruit Tramps" because they moved from state to state and from crop to crop during the Depression. I thought they were fine, proud people who worked hard to feed and clothe their children during very hard times. They did not complain about the government not giving them assistance (as some people do today). During the Depression, neighbors helped neighbors.

Pop, Cal and I caught all the pumpkin bugs we could find and killed them in cans of gasoline so that they would not eat the pumpkin vines. I also helped haul and chop pumpkins with a long-bladed knife. Pumpkins were fed to the cows so that they might produce more milk. It was too expensive to buy grain during the Depression.

When I came home from the prune orchard at lunch one time, the cows were out. Someone had left a gate open and the cows were wandering around in the yard, in the barn and hay mow. No one was home and I tried to get them back in the barn by myself. I was really frightened when some of the cows got in the back of the barn where the calves were tied. I started practicing every bad word I had ever heard my father and the hired men use when they were trying to get the cows to go where they wanted them to go. The calves were my special friends and each one seemed to have its own personality. I enjoyed feeding the calves on the bucket morning and night. At one time, I had ten or twelve to feed. It was my way of helping out. If I hadn't done it, my Pop and brother and hired man would have had that much more to do.

I'm happy I grew up during the Great Depression of the 1930s. I learned the value of hard work and simple pleasures. Material things have never been important to me. Love of family and lasting friendships are to me the greatest treasures.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
Walter Snider high school graduation photo, 1935

A Full Life

by Walter Snider as told to Diane Schmidt (Johannsen) Carriger, 1989

Walter Snider was born October 29, 1916 to Annie Francis Campbell and George Lee Snider, perhaps at the family farm on Pena Creek, but probably at the family home on Dry Creek Road. He was the youngest of seven children born over 19 years. Walter married Edith Bertolani. They did not have children. Most of his professional years were spent at Standard Structures and with the Sonoma County Assessor's office.

Upon receiving a diagnosis of cancer, Walter approached the Healdsburg Museum asking if someone could record some of his family stories. Diane Carriger, a longtime Museum volunteer and distant relative of Walter's, was recommended. Over a series of kitchen table interviews, Diane gleaned the following remembrances. Some entries are reprints from Walter's own typed memoirs.

John D. Snider the First

We never knew what grandfather's middle name was until Mr. Morrow, in writing to my mother, said it was "Durham." My father said when grandfather was asked what the "D" stood for; all he would say was "John Dog."

The old mountain ranch was settled [in the 1870s] by John D. the first. He hauled the lumber for the old home that was out there from Mill Creek, over the hills with a go-devil, which is half sled and half wagon. He built the house out there. He also planted 25-30 pear trees and they bore the most

beautiful Bartlett pears you ever saw. No spraying, no fertilizing and no plowing. We used to go out and pick them when they were in season. We had no trouble selling them because they were beautiful, perfect pears. Also, old John D. planted some apricots, apples, and some other fruit trees, and of course, his grapevines. The old press he used for pressing the juice out of the grapes was a big redwood beam cut into a hole in a big oak tree. He cut the hole horizontally through the oak tree, then he'd set the basket of grapes underneath the end of this pole. Then he'd use the wagon jack to put

pressure on it and squeeze the juice out of the grapes. Seemed like they had to have their wine, no matter where they went.

My dad used to tell about his father, John D. the first, driving herds of cattle from Texas to California. When Indians would come by and possibly attack the cattle drive, my grandfather would cut out some of the steers or cows that looked like they might not make the trip and they'd butcher them right on the spot. They'd give the Indians a big feed and that way he never did get attacked. My dad used to tell that tale. He was very proud of his father.

John D. also freighted from Missouri to California by ox team. One of his trips, he brought all of his carpenter tools with him, which are still in the family. That old-fashioned tool box had all the molding planes and shapes. You could build a house, basement to roof, complete with all the fancy trim with just the tools that were in that box.

My grandfather and his friend, Joseph Baugh, freighted from Missouri to California. They also drove herds of cattle from Texas to California.

Seven Children

Mama had her hands full in more ways than one with seven children with which to contend. When one would get the measles, mumps, whooping cough or anything else that happened to be going around, then all seven would eventually get it. Papa even got the chickenpox along with all the kids. Papa hated to have any one of us sick. I think he felt worse than the patients.

Jack [John D. the second] had a pet goat at one time. I guess he didn't like its white color, because he painted it blue.

Another time, Jack got hold of Papa's razor (a straight one, at that!) and shaved off Maude's eyebrows. So she did the same for him. Mama couldn't figure out what we had on our faces until she found out we had no eyebrows.

Kathleen came home from school one day through the back door. As she walked past the stove, she took a piece of meat that was cooking in a pan on the back of the stove. While eating the meat, she told Mama how good it tasted. Mama said, "If you took it from the pan on the back of the stove, it's raccoon meat the boys are cooking for the dogs." It didn't taste so good after that!

One day, Maude decided she wanted to see Grandma and ran away from home to Grandma's house. Grandma's front gate was closed. Maude was too small and couldn't get the gate open, so she tried to crawl under it. Becoming stuck under the gate and unable to free herself, the screaming started. Hearing her screaming, Grandma came running to her rescue. However, Mama also heard Maude. Mama ran down the hill at that time, too. You can just imagine what happened next.

One day Jack and George got into some kind of trouble at home. They ran from Mama, out the front door, heading for the corral. Mama was right behind them. One of the boys made it over the corral gate, but Mama caught the other one and he got it for both!

Ellen, or "Sister" as we called her, used to hold her breath until she would pass out. One day she did just that as we were out in the yard. Mama grabbed her and dunked her in the watering trough. I don't think Sister ever held her breath again.

Mama made all our clothes, even the boys' suits when they were small. All white, with lace, and starched. Mama would say that they were our "Sunday-Go-To-Meeting" clothes.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Teacher Grace Butler and students with Oscar LeBaron's auto in front of the Dry Creek School, c. 1914

School Days

We all attended the Dry Creek School, which was a one-room, one-teacher school. Our teacher was Grace Butler during my school years there. She taught all of the classes, from grades one through eight. We all graduated from this school.

During classes we studied, and during recess we played! Recess games were a variety. They included: anti-over-the-schoolhouse, tag, run-sheep-run, hide-and-go-seek, marbles, baseball and red-line.

There was quite a slope on the north side of the school yard. We would pour water down this slope forming a "slide." Then, taking turns, we would ride down the muddy hill on a board. I can't remember if anyone ever made it to the bottom of the hill still on the board.

We all walked to school, packing our lunch in paper bags, or, to be fancy, in tobacco buckets. When our neighbor Oscar LeBaron bought one of the first cars in Dry Creek Valley, it was a miracle for the school kids. He would drive up the Valley at school time and pick up all the school-agers along the way and take us to school in style. It was a big thrill, but not for Grandma Snider. She would run in the house and hide when she heard the car coming. Grandma wouldn't come out until Oscar was out of sight. In a few years, she got used to it and, after a ride or two, she bought one for herself!

Not All Fun and Games

When the Snider youngsters were old enough to "do," we all had our chores. We had to pick prunes, pick grapes and sulfur and prune the vines. All the sulfuring was done in the early hours of the morning - beginning at four o'clock!

We also had to get up in the middle of the night in prune season if it rained, to help Papa stack the trays full of drying prunes. In those days, prunes were dried in the sun. They were dipped in a hot water and lye solution and then spread out on redwood trays. The trays were carried to a flat, sunny area of land left clear of vegetation. This area was called a "drying yard."

An unseasonal rain (and, believe me, for being called "unseasonal," it happened quite often!) would cause the drying prunes to bloat and rot. One summer it rained and rained. When the rain finally let up, we had to sort them all in order to save the remaining good ones. This was not only a difficult chore, but a substantial loss in income, too.

Vacation Time

During our older-younger years, when school was out for summer vacation, and before the crops were ready for harvesting, we'd go to the coast for a

vacation. Papa would get the spring-wagon and team of mules or horses (whatever he had at the time) in readiness and everything that would be needed for the trip shipshape. Mama would prepare all the food and clothing necessary for all the family members that were old enough to go. On the night before we were to leave on this long journey, as one might guess, no one slept. We were all up and ready to start at four o'clock in the morning. Every year one or more was added to the list of those old enough to go.

At daybreak, about six miles out, the kids would think that we were almost there. Actually we would be about at Cozzens' Store in upper Dry Creek Valley. It would take us two days to make the trip. We would reach the Lee Nobles Ranch by nightfall, so we would camp there the first night. On the hills, to save the team, Papa would let the older ones out to walk. On the second day, we would get to the Archie Richardson Store at Stewart's Point.

After all the greetings, we would go south to the Anderson Ranch, which was not far south of Stewart's Point. We would spend our vacation there. We had lots of fun. We gathered shells, plants and ferns. We ate different kinds of fish, and, of course, the abalone was delicious.

On one of the other trips to the coast, Grandpa Campbell was along. Grandpa liked his nip. But Grandma didn't want him drinking on those narrow roads going out to Stewart's Point even though it was the horses finding the way. They stopped to water the kids and the animals at the spring by Las Lomas.

When Grandma went behind the tree, Grandpa reached around behind him and got the jug and took a fast swig. When they got started up the hill, Grandma said, "Thomas, I think the coal oil jug is leaking. Can't you smell it?" "No, I can't smell it." Well, this went on for quite a while and finally he said, "Why don't you shut up? It's just your damned imagination!"

John D. the Second

When Jack (John D. II) was still living at home, he was the livestock man out at the old mountain ranch. This one time he was going out to take care of the cattle and watch over them and see that they didn't get rustled. He met his old friend, Bill Jacobsen, up on the ridge. Jack was in the spring wagon with a team of horses and Bill was on his saddle horse. 'Course Jack had his jug of wine with

him, and Bill was awful thirsty. He wanted a drink pretty bad, but Jack wouldn't give him one unless he got in the wagon and rode with him. Finally, his thirst overcame him, and Bill gave in and got in the wagon. Jack slapped the leather to the old team and away they went, down the hill. As they hit the bottom, there was a sharp turn and the horses went one way and the jug of wine went another. Nobody got very badly hurt, except the wagon. They saved the jug of wine, of course.

Jack, for some reason, didn't come home for a long time, and my dad got worried about him and went out to check on him. He went out there and Jack was all right. Dad said, "I didn't see the spring wagon. Where is it?" Jack said, "Oh, it's down at the barn." The next time my dad went near the barn, he looked for the wagon. Anyway, my dad went around the lower side of the barn and he happened to look up underneath the barn: there was the wagon all right - in pieces! Jack had gotten another wagon from the ranch, hauled the wreck home and hid it up under the barn.

For years, my brother Jack had what we called "winos" in those days. He'd take a crew of "winos" out to the mountain ranch, make grape stakes and fence posts out of the redwoods and haul them into the Dry Creek Valley ranch where they were sold. That was no small operation for those days.

For many, many years, they cut oak firewood out there and that served two purposes: it brought in some income from selling the firewood and cleared the land for better pasture. The firewood was hauled in first by a four-horse team. Then came the old Model T Ford truck and they started hauling firewood with it. They put a transmission in the old Model T some way. I think it was in backwards, so it would give them more lower gears. They were forever flying out of gear going downhill, and when they flew out of gear, they had no brakes. You were all set for a wild ride down those hills.

Grandma Snider

Before Grandma Snider [who died in 1924 at the age of 104] bought a car, she always had a very fine horse and a very fashionable buggy. She always had a fancy and embroidered buggy-robe - one for summer use, and a heavier, pretty one for winter. It was a lot of fun wrapping ourselves in it. She would

always take one of the grandchildren with her on Saturday when she would go into town. She made it a rule to always be home by dark.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
**Grandma Snider's (Jane Allman Miles Snider)
 home on Dry Creek**

Now that Grandma had her very own car, her son George (our father) would drive her to town on Saturday to have lunch and to shop. As the youngsters grew older, and could drive a car, one of us would drive Grandma to town. However, just as in her horse-and-buggy days, she would insist on getting home before dark.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
**Barbeque at St. John's Country Fair, 1966
 Walter Snider is first from left**

Walter would have been extremely happy to have been born a century earlier. He was a master of many skills necessary to live in the 1800s. One of his favorite hobbies was gunsmithing. A perfectionist, Walter made all his own gun parts, therefore manufacturing authentic replicas.

For a number of years, Walter also raised different species of quail that he acquired from all over the world. He bred and shipped these birds to many faraway places.

Walter had many other projects, including raising his own vegetables. Walter could be counted on to help his neighbors and many friends whenever they were in need of anything - cooked, frozen, built or repaired!—Diane Carriger



Two views of Daisy

Source: Kelly Korte

Treasure that Surrounds Us: Discovering Daisy's Diary

by Kelly Korte

Gertrude Daisy Nosler was borned (as she would say) in Healdsburg on May 6, 1884. One of ten children born to Harrison E. Nosler and Martha E. Saville, Daisy's footsteps covered the whole town of Healdsburg during her lifetime. She worked hard in hot fields picking hops to help contribute to her family's earnings. Her summers as a Russian River Valley resident were filled with warm, bright days and community social events. I really wouldn't know this had she not written it all down in beautiful longhand cursive on the pages of a blank book, priced @ 10 cents.

The Discovery

In March 2014, I decided to take my time one day and browse through an antique shop in my father's hometown of Graton, approximately 20 miles from my home on Sherman Street in Healdsburg. A large round table that held books of all shapes and sizes sat in the center of this shop. The book closest to me caught my eye and quite literally left me with an open mouth. Post-it notes were stuck to some of the book covers as a summary for perspective buyers. This one read:

Kelly, Powell Ave.

Healdsburg, CA 1901-1907

I opened the cover and glanced at the writing and this was the first time I read the name "Gertrude Daisy Nosler."

A few pages later as soon as I saw University Street --"Hey, I know where that is!" -- mentioned in one of her entries, I realized that 20 minutes had passed. So with that, I ran my fingers across the cover and promised myself a gift for my upcoming birthday in May. I just hoped no one would get it before then! With six children and no antique safe in my house, the only good excuse for this purchase was my 35th birthday. It had my name on it! That was my excuse!

On May 6, 2014, I returned and finally brought this treasure home. From the moment I started, I couldn't put it down until I had finished reading it.

In child's handwriting on the cover it is entitled "Dear Dairy." I loved that so much! And so, she was "Dear Daisy" to me from then on.

The Search Begins

I decided to visit every entry that had a street name. After all, it was right here where I walk and drive every single day!

These diary entries were gold to me. Proof that we inherit the street names from our early settlers to walk upon and enjoy the abundance they set up for us.

I began to photograph the places she mentioned. I researched and found Daisy's resting place. Suddenly it dawned on me that this diary had been written one block from the back of my house and Daisy had been laid to rest one block from my front porch.

I eventually found the graves of almost all of Daisy's family and friends whom she had written of so highly. Daisy's grave is in Healdsburg's Oak Mound Cemetery.

Daisy's Family

Omer was Daisy's big brother, and his wife Effie was one of the most mentioned of all her family members. I was touched by how much time they spent together and the things that Daisy got to do with them as a sister. She helped care for their children, as she never had any of her own and was never married.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Daisy's brother, Omer Nosler, as an adult

She took trips to Petaluma in Omer's buggy to have ice cream and "ponder the dwellings." Her cousin Bell Sullivan lived along the river there and they would often watch as boats went up and down delivering their harvested products to growing towns along the way.

The Search Grows

I eventually expanded my research of the Nosler family through some online resources. On one occasion I came across a post on an Ancestry.com website from the Healdsburg Museum in regards to Harrison E. Nosler. This was an entry from his journal describing a Petaluma Barnum and Bailey Show he attended. I headed straight for the Museum's Research Center and dove headlong into their history.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

The Nosler family – Daisy is wearing the hat.

Finding the pictures and finally putting a face to the feelings and ideas I had been reading was such a surreal experience. I was amazed by the amount of information kept over all the years and saw how precious this addition was.

A gentleman by the name of Irving Blabon had submitted hundreds of pages to the Nosler family files, including the journal of Daisy's father (Irving's great-grandfather) and sister-in-law, Elzada Nosler (his grandmother). I read every word and devoured the stories they had written. The Nosler family lived through such a rough era. I felt blessed to read from a few perspectives. One thing is clear: they all loved each other very much.

Daisy's Father

The knowledge that Irving generously shared made me even more interested in the earlier homesteads above Healdsburg along Mill Creek, as this was where Harrison Nosler described his daily life as Daisy's father and a jack of all trades.

Further research revealed that before finding more work outside the city limits, he was, in fact,

arrested for laundering. And by that I mean actual clothes washing! Anti-Chinese discrimination during the late 19th century led Healdsburg and many other California cities to ban commercial laundries from operating within the city limits. This type of ordinance was directly aimed at Chinese-owned businesses, but occasionally non-Chinese laundry owners like Harrison Nosler were also impacted.

But this obstacle did not detour Harrison from making an honest living. He loved and provided for his family in several ways: by opening a roller skating rink on the Plaza in 1880; peeling cords of tanbark (which he loved bringing the boys to teach and camp along the creeks); a brief quilt business; and last but not least, he assisted in building the now historic Daniels schoolhouse of the Venado community on Mill Creek, ten miles southwest of Healdsburg off Westside Road. Martha, his wife and Daisy's mother, was one of their first teachers.

Next Steps

I was so inspired to honor Daisy and her family that I began to harvest antique picture frames from local shops to hold the photographic images that I had taken over the months of researching her steps.

In August, my growing collection of photos entitled "Dear Daisy" was featured in a Forestville coffee shop. Later that month I displayed them in the Antiques, Arts & Collectibles Fair sponsored by the Healdsburg Museum. I set up the morning of the Fair following an earthquake that had jolted Healdsburg awake. I couldn't help but look up at the buildings and the town that had once belonged to the faces of our past. I recalled an entry of Harrison's in which he tells of how frightened Daisy and her mother had been in an 1898 earthquake that raised roads here in Healdsburg. Silently I thanked them for the foundation to my work and went on to have a great day among our community.

Just as the day was nearing an end, I heard a voice behind me. When I turned around, I felt my face get red. Here was June Nosler's daughter. (June was the daughter of Claud and Elzada Nosler. I had just finished reading Elzada's diary that Irving had submitted to the Museum.)

June had saved a family trunk containing many family keepsakes from a fire at the University Street house decades ago. (I had just decided the previous week to send Daisy's diary back to be stored in that family trunk.) I felt a little silly fighting back tears,

but I couldn't help but want to hug her. I was so honored that what I was doing was being recognized by the Nosler family. Irving had made my day by letting June know what I was up to!

At times I find myself desiring no end to this research. The strings of energy we leave behind for others to learn from and grow after we leave is a reminder that indeed the treasure we seek is around us all the time. The names and faces of our past are very much still a part of our community today, through the love we have for our town and our family. Every time I drive by the brown apartments along University Street and see the towering trees Claud planted for each of his babies, I am reminded that everyone leaves a part of themselves to be remembered.

Some Examples

Here are a few entries from Daisy's diary. I think they give you a sense of her charm:

March 1st 1907

Out at Omer's. It is lovely here. The house is set on a ridge that is set out alone. You look right down the gulch from either side of the house. From the west you see four or more miles up the canyon & from the east window you see over the valley to where Santa Rosa is nestled at the foot of the mountains. Just at the top of the mount at the front of the house, you can see from Healdsburg clear to Mt. Hamilton below Petaluma. One of the most beautiful views I ever saw. Can see all over the valley.

Omer, Effie and I went to Auckland's [J.P. Ecklund's resort] in the buggie. Auckland has a summer resort [at Sweetwater Springs]. His dining room is built over a creek.

March 7 1907

Effie and I went down to see the men picket. I cross a slanting wet log over a high gulch. Just got about cross down & went with my pan of cookey's. It's a wonder I didn't break my neck. Guess I would if it wasn't made of rubber.

April Fools the 1st 1907

Got up. Claud put something in my shoe. Got my mush salted instead of shugared. Claud put salt in the water pitcher.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
Josephine Del Sarto, 1931

Life on the Farm

by Josephine Baiocchi Del Sarto, November, 1987

I grew up on the family farm about one and one-half miles north of Geyserville where a group of predominately Italian immigrant farmers and their families had formed a small community. The only official identification of the location was a small railroad depot named Chianti.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
An Asti vineyard

Grandfather Baiocchi was one of the first of this group. Like many of the other men, he had emigrated from Italy as a young man, leaving his family behind. Many of them were ultimately

employed by Italian Swiss Colony in the winery and vineyards at Asti. After they got a job and saved enough money, they sent for their families. This frequently took five, six or even ten years. I don't know how they did it. All they got was a dollar a day!

In 1889, my grandfather purchased forty acres of undeveloped land, paying \$300 in gold coins for the property. It was covered with a wild growth of trees and scrub brush. Using horses and hand tools, the men worked together to clear the land and little by little planted vineyards. Eventually, most of them had their own wineries. People talk about so many wineries now, but that's what they did then.

Our Farm

Our farmhouse was large with a porch on two sides and five bedrooms. There was no indoor plumbing. (We had running water, but no bathroom until I was in grammar school.)

Three generations occupied the house: my grandparents along with their married sons, daughters-in-law and grandchildren. We frequently had as many as fifteen people living in our house.

My two sisters and one brother were all born in that house with the attendance of a doctor from the town of Geyserville.

We were somewhat self-sufficient in that we ate whatever we raised and whatever we grew. We had chickens, cows and hogs so there was a ready source of eggs, milk and cheese. We made our own salami, prosciutto, salt pork and sausage. We also had a very large vegetable garden.

There were two local grocery businesses that come around with groceries in their wagon. They would sell them from house to house.

Our meals were prepared on a wood burning stove by my mother and aunt and sometimes my grandma who often felt pushed out of the kitchen. Bread was made once a week and baked in an outside brick oven built by my grandfather. Grandma tended the oven. She knew exactly the right temperature by testing the oven with her hands. Unfortunately, the toasty aroma of fresh baked bread was usually all we were to enjoy as we had to finish the leftovers from the last baking before starting the fresh batch.

Children at Play

Children learned to play together peacefully and, because we were usually outdoors, the farm provided many interests. We dropped everything and ran barefooted toward the smelly pig pen just to witness a snorting, squealing quarrel between two pigs. Our four dogs occasionally cornered some small animal and we wouldn't want to miss that excitement either. We also had the pleasure of finding the fresh egg just laid by the cackling hen.

There were no store-bought toys, so we created some of our own playthings. Our make-believe doll, for example, was a flat stick to which we nailed or wired a piece of raveled rope on top, forming head and hair. We dressed it with any scraps of material we could find. We combed, braided, curled and shampooed that piece of rope until it all fell out. Then we started over again.

Daily chores were assigned to us as a group. It was our responsibility to feed the chicks, gather the eggs, slop the pigs and milk the cows. I confess that we did not always do them willingly.

Sundays were for Family, Fun

Occasionally our Sundays would begin by attending services at the little Catholic church at Asti

along with any parent who was not occupied with morning chores on the farm. The rest of Sunday was a fun day at our home when many friends and their families came visiting. I remember frequently having a yard full of people.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
Asti church, c. 1920

The men enjoyed playing bocce ball, a game played on a long narrow court with wooden balls. Most of the Italian farms had a court for their favorite entertainment. As the men played and women visited, children grew noisy and hungry, consuming loaves of home-baked bread and homemade jelly. Some visitors would linger long enough to be invited to the evening meal, knowing the women were prepared to feed them all.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
Rimmel General Merchandise Store

Going to Town

We rarely went to town. My grandfather and my dad would ride to the town of Geyserville with horse and wagon or buggy when some farm supply was needed. They traded at the only general store there which sold everything from groceries to animal feed. The owner was George Rimmel who was very kind to my grandfather and respected the problem of

a language barrier. (A lot of the local immigrants did not trade in Geyserville because of the language problem. They couldn't make themselves understood.)

The children only went along if they needed something personal or to be fitted for things such as shoes. Trips to Santa Rosa were very rare for children as it required planning ahead for a whole day trip with horse and buggy.

My grandfather would go to San Francisco once a year after the harvest and buy supplies for the whole year. He would come back with sacks and sacks of flour, polenta, sugar, beans, dried codfish; great big cans of tuna - anything that didn't need refrigeration.



Source: Frank Pastori

Washington District Grammar School

A One Room School

Our education began in a one-room schoolhouse at Asti. It was the Washington District School. It was primarily established for the education of children from the Italian immigrant families.

We spoke Italian at home, but we were taught in English. We had a very strict Irish-American teacher named Miss Kate Geohegan. She lived at Asti, not far from the school. I remember she wore a reddish-brown wig shaped like a beehive. Sometimes it was worn on her head a little off to the side, which told all the children, "Beware she is in a bad mood!"

Chianti was approximately three miles from the school and children walked the distance, leaving at 7:30 in the morning and returning around 4:00 in the afternoon. We walked along the back roads,

gathering other children along the way, arriving with a group of approximately twenty students.

Rides to school were provided only on very rainy days. Grandpa at the reins piled our buggy to capacity with children needing rides. He commanded and our patient horse pulled the loaded buggy safely through muddy, dirt roads. We arrived at school smelling like a bunch of wet puppies.

Usually, however, we were bundled up and sent on our way. We stepped into every puddle and crossed thin ice over little creeks along the way, arriving at school with very wet shoes. Our teacher knew her students well. She would have a blazing fire in the old pot belly stove ready to warm our cold little bodies. We would remove our wet shoes and socks and place them around the stove to dry. Then she would serve us all a small cup of hot black tea (something we disliked totally), but we had no choice. We gulped it down. We were not allowed outdoors until our shoes were well toasted – and ready for our trip back home.

At times our walk home was a cross cut through fields covered with poppies and lupines. Sometimes we were surprised by a large gopher or king snake slithering across our path. We even watched with awe as a newborn calf feeling out its wobbly legs tried to reach for its dinner. Occasionally on our way to school in the morning, we would come upon a stray horse or cows which had escaped their pens during the night. We also skirted around the fenced-in field where an enormous bull stood leering at our noisy group. We relished the first ripe cherry, peaches or bunch of grapes picked from someone's orchard or vineyard without asking. We sensed the owners were aware of our sneaky tricks, yet no one complained.

The most interesting sight, however, was the occasional band of gypsies who traveled from place to place in covered wagons drawn by large, beautiful horses. They would be camped along the roadside. The women would hang their big, colorful skirts over the barbed wire fence and were visible a long distance. During their short stay in each place, the women walked to most of the farmhouses and begged for money or vegetables. On occasion, they stole chickens or vegetables. Fortune telling was done by very clever gypsy women. They would go to farmhouses pretending to be pregnant and beg for money, offering to read palms in return.

We began our school day by standing outside in front of the school, recite the pledge to the flag and then sing a song or two chosen by the students. Lucky was the student who chose an Irish tune. He was teacher's pet for the day. Some mornings started with sit-up exercises and then we marched very quietly to our assigned desks.

Our studies included Grammar, Arithmetic, Reading, Spelling, Geography and History. Penmanship was important and also Hygiene. We memorized parts of literary works and many poems. Our lessons were read or recited standing up in front of the whole school, which was a bit scary if you hadn't done your homework. If you had trouble solving an arithmetic problem, you were sent to the blackboard to work on it in front of everyone.

During recess we had a large yard with places to play baseball, hopscotch and a game called Red Line.

No one was ever abused physically, but a student wasting time instead of studying would receive a surprise shaking by a sneaky teacher. Punishment for not doing your homework was staying in during recess, for days or more depending on the student's reaction. The punishment could also be isolation in the schoolyard during recess. Boys were also punished for disturbing classes by having to share a double desk with a girl. This caused much embarrassment and teasing.

Occasionally, when a rather active boy got into trouble, Miss Geohegan would send him out for a strong stick to beat him. After several tries, when she did not approve the chosen sticks because "each was too small," he finally came back with a baseball bat and waited for his punishment. It never happened (only a good talking to) and more homework.

School activities were few as parents were not able to be very involved with their children's education, but a program was always planned at Christmastime. With the assistance of a mother who played the old grand piano, Miss Geohegan taught us Christmas carols. Our teacher alone (and with lots of patience) coached us through Christmas skits, poems and added special acts so every student had a part in the program.

This was the coming together of teacher and parents, filling the school to capacity on the Sunday before Christmas. We children were scrubbed clean, hair curled, shoes polished and wearing our Sunday

best. I remember that we were very nervous. The program was always pleasing to the parents, since for some it was the only time to visit their child's school. Christmas carols were sung and candy was given to everyone.

It was also a custom at Christmas for the teacher to purchase a gift for each child, for which we each gave her twenty-five cents. Every year, the girls regardless of age received a stuffed doll with painted-on hair, while the boys received the same little car.

Summer Fun

All of my city cousins would come to spend the summer on our farm. I can't imagine it happening now, but their parents would just put them on the train and send them up for the entire summer. It must have made a lot of extra work for our mothers, but we were happy to have them visiting for the duration.

We learned many strange things which were happening outside our little world. We, in turn, educated them on the natural setting.

Evenings were early to bed as there was no radio or phonograph. I remember sleeping on a mattress made of corn husks. Our grandfather, a great storyteller, entertained us with exciting tales of his childhood in Italy.

Harvest Time

At harvest time, all the farm children worked along with the family. When you were big enough to carry a small bucket, you picked prunes. When you were old enough to use a knife, you cut grapes. There was no monetary reward, only the possibility of a new sweater or other necessary clothing.

Most small farmers crushed their own grapes and made wine in their own winery. It was enough for their personal needs. For others, large wagons drawn by horses brought the grapes to the winery. It was a busy place with motors running the network of belts that ran the crushers and pressers squeezing the juice from the grapes. When the wine was processed and ready to sell, most farmers would contact their customers in the Bay Area.

Once a year, our father would get on the early morning train at the Chianti station for his selling trip to San Francisco. We eagerly waited to hear the train whistle in the evening bringing our dad home with some surprise goodies for all the children.

It was exciting when before winter really began someone would plan a get together in a winery or home large enough to hold dancing. Wagons loaded with our neighbors and friends would gather to enjoy good food and wine. Someone playing an accordion, a mandolin or a harmonica would supply music for dancing.

Farmers now prepared winter wood piles and provided shelter for the animals. The equipment was collected and stored in sheds.

Farmers in our small area helped one another, sharing work, also sorrows and joy; always ready to help and continued to be lifelong friends. The families in this small community were hard-working people; some with many hardships and language barriers who nevertheless survived and succeeded to become good American citizens.

A Promise Kept

In 1926, I became too ill to complete my junior year of high school, but I got enough credits so that I only had two left in my senior year. I

remember thinking I was going to have a ball, but I didn't go back. It's something that has stuck in my craw all these years.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Geyserville Union High School students and teachers, 1926
(Josephine third row, sixth from right side end)*

At age 79, Josephine Del Sarto returned to school and completed the two outstanding credits. She became the most senior member of the Geyserville High School's Class of 1988.



Third Class

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