

RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

Published by
HEALDSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JULY 1976



West Street, 1864

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P.O. Box 905 Healdsburg, Calif. 95448

HISTORICAL SOCIETY FORMED

The Healdsburg Historical Society has become a reality and it's good to have it occur during our nation's bicentennial year, when our city, in celebration of this occasion, has created a city museum. This is its reminder to future generations of the special effort the city undertook for the bicentennial.

The two organizations, though formed in the same year, are separate entities; the Historical Society being a non-profit corporation guided by a board of directors, the museum a branch of the municipal government but managed by a board of trustees appointed by the Mayor. Each will complement the other.

The purpose of the Historical Society is to record the history of the Healdsburg area through the collection and preservation of all historical materials and to actively foster the appreciation of our local history through programs and activities.

There is a wealth of historical material in the community that should, in time, be made a part of the collection of the museum. All members of the society are urged to look for items that were a part of our local history and to arrange, if possible, for the eventual transfer of this material to the museum.

* * * * *

Officers and Directors of the
HEALDSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

| | | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Ed Langhart | President | Billie Jo Haley | Treasurer |
| Rose Demostene | Vice President | Barbara Beeson | Director |
| Carol Barbieri | Recording Secretary | Robert Hasset | Director |
| Jan Harrison | Corresponding Secretary | Jack R. Relyea | Director |

LOCAL HISTORY NEEDED

There are many descendents of the pioneer families in the Healdsburg area today, families who were involved in the early growth of the community. Some of you may have items of general interest, handed down through several generations, that would be an important asset to the new Healdsburg museum that is to be open soon.

Items donated will be carefully cataloged and recognition of the donor will be given at all times. We hope to become professional in this respect so there will be a continuing relationship between the donor, the gift, and the museum.

Some of the smallest things are the most interesting. An old greeting card, an autograph book, a token from an early day merchant, and of course, all photographs. Furniture, tools, clothing, and household items are all especially suitable for museum display and should be the basis of our collection.

* * * * *

HEALDSBURG, circa 1776

"The Plaza in Healdsburg now occupies the site of an old Indian village called Ka'le (from aka, water, and le, place). Immediately south of this site there was formerly a small lake which gave the village its name."

. . .from S. A. Barrett

Ethno-geography of the Pomo
and Neighboring Indians, 1908

Walking along the west side of Center Street one can see the apparent location of the small lake mentioned by Barrett in the low ground south of Matheson Street, now the site of a number of early day dwellings.

HEALDSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Date _____ 19__

The purpose of the organization is:

To record the history of the Healdsburg area through the collection and preservation of all historical materials. To actively foster the appreciation of our local history through programs and activities.

Name _____ Phone No. _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

Special Interests _____

Occupation _____

| | | | | |
|---|------------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| Check those things you could participate in: | Museum Custodian | _____ | Phone Commttee | _____ |
| | Research | _____ | Membership | _____ |
| | Collecting | _____ | Fund Raising | _____ |
| | Indexing | _____ | Program | _____ |

ANNUAL DUES

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------|--|
| Active Membership | \$ 5.00 | - Members may be called upon to participate in all society activities or serve on committees, as the need arises. |
| Student Membership | \$ 2.50 | - Student members are active members. |
| Sustaining Membership | \$ 25.00 | - Members may participate in all club activities if they desire but shall not be required to take part in programs or serve on committees. |
| Patron Membership | \$250.00 | |

Signature of Applicant

General membership meetings are held the fourth Thursday of every other month, commencing with January.

LET'S START AT THE BEGINNING

"At this stage, let me assume for convenience what will be approximately proved further on, namely, that the Gallinomero tribe, living in the vicinity of Healdsburg on the lower reaches of the Russian River, are the connecting link between California and China; and that their habitat marks the probable site of the earliest Chinese colony in America. Furthermore, that the coast was peopled by two migrations: One, of Tungusic tribes coming by Behring's Straits, or at least by passage much to the north of California; and the other, of the Chinese, coming probably from about Canton across the Pacific; and that the dividing line between these two independent migrations is discernible to this day about on the meridian of Mount Shasta and the Klamath River.

"- - - - it is the Gallinomero language, which prevails along Russian River for about fifteen miles below Healdsburg, that seems to be the link between California and China.

"- - - - we may set down Healdsburg as the approximate site of a Chinese colony planted in the far past, voluntarily or involuntarily, which spread into the interior, south, east, and north, meeting an earlier Tungusic migration near Mount Shasta, that is, on the southern-most of the great watersheds between the Columbia and the Sacramento. This would make the California Indians proper, and possibly also the Arizona and Mexican Aztecs, of Chinese origin; and the Indians of Oregon, the Plains, and the Atlantic States, Tungusic."

. . . .from Stephen Powers

Aborigines of California, 1874

Stephen Powers, 1840-1904

Robert F. Heizer states "Powers was not only California's first true ethnologist, her first anthropological theorist, and her pioneer ethnobotanist, but also the man who drew the first map showing the distribution of native linguistic stocks (as then understood) and tribal territories."

The earliest exploration into this area was made by Ivan Kuskov in 1811, who traveled up the Russian River 70 versts, i.e. 45 miles, in search of a suitable site for the Russian settlement (which he eventually founded a year later at Fort Ross).

In 1821 a Spanish expedition rode through here under the leadership of Capt. Luis Arguello. Another expedition in the area was led by Karl Schmidt, the commandant at Fort Ross. It is described as follows: "In 1823 Mr. Schmidt, his assistant Dorofeyev, and some Aleuts left the fort in baidarkas (Kayaks) on a journey along the Russian River, which flows into the sea halfway between Bodega Bay and the settlement. They traveled a distance of more than 100 versts, and there they discovered beyond the mountains beautiful valleys adorned with forests and densely inhabited by Indians."

In 1833 two groups visited here. The first was a Mexican contingent under the leadership of Mariano Vallejo, who stated on his return to Sonoma that "it was his eager desire to colonize all the valleys bordered by the Russian River". The second was twenty-four horsemen headed by Baron Ferdinand Wrangell, general manager of the Russian-American Company. He states that he reached a point on the Russian River 18 miles straight from Fort Ross (near Mark West Creek). From here he went six miles in an unspecified direction to visit an Indian village. Since most of the old Indian villages were located on a roughly north-south axis, extending from Healdsburg to Sebastopol, chances are he went north, to the area of Windsor or the mouth of Dry Creek. At any rate he provides probably the best early description of the north Santa Rosa plain.

"Before evening we reached the largest of the plains. At first it is unforested, perfectly level, luxuriantly overgrown with fragrant plants, and so vast that its distance was no less than 25 miles across. To the right and left mountains rise again whose familiar contours we could notice not far from Fort Ross, where they are also right before one's eyes. We were about 18 miles from Fort Ross as

the crow flies, but between us lay insurmountable mountains and ravines which to circumvent we traveled at least 50 miles. The Russian River here nestles up against a westerly mountain range and absorbs a stream which meanders through the middle of the plain (Mark West Creek?). We now turned aside and came back along the meadows which lay on both sides of the river.

I expressed the wish to take a look at the village of our (Indian) friends. They hurried to prepare their kinsmen for our visit, and as this was happening they led us about six miles, going on ahead with such agility and incredible speed that we had to trot our horses to be able to follow them. We found the Indian village on sandy ground, secure behind shrubbery and dry ditches. It was inhabited by five or six families related to one another."

* * * * *

DRY CREEK VALLEY

While celebrating our 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, it causes one to reflect on our past. Try envisioning what Dry Creek Valley was like in 1776--or even 1676: Probably the span of those 100 years showed little change. Tucked in between the hills northwest of present-day Healdsburg, the floor of the valley was covered by giant oaks and madrones for the most part, and open grassy fields criss-crossed by tiny creeks which all flowed into Dry Creek itself. It was an ideal spot for the Indians who inhabited the area. Many sites have been located where their encampments stood. Game, grain, berries and fruit were readily available for the gathering, and materials for basket-making abounded near the creeks.

White men arrived and during the 1850's most of the valley was settled. One look and they knew the land was fertile and the weather, kind. One of the first recorded celebrations of the settlers took place in 1857 as follows:

"Citizens celebrated the 81st anniversary of the American Independence in the beautiful and fertile Dry Creek Valley. 800-900 persons of all ages and denominations, all richly attired, gathered and were appropriately welcomed by a salute of 31 guns. Mr. Bird introduced a young gentleman of Dry Creek, who read the Declaration of Independence. Mr. Richard Harrison of Dry Creek was orator of the day. A. J. Gordon and Lindsey Carson (half-brother of Kit) of Russian River (Healdsburg) were invited to stand and addressed the audience. The ladies then marched double file to the table which was abundantly laden with the choicest products of our rural district, as well as a bountiful supply of confections, wines, etc. Later they listened with deepest interest and emotion to Messrs. Forsey and Argrove and were favored with a National Glee by the Russian River Oral Club, followed by about two dozen amusing volunteer toasts. The success of the day was credited to Mr. W. Capehill and other valley residents."

By 1876, the area was well-settled. Large families populated the Valley. Farms were quite self-sufficient, raising mostly grain and a newly planted crop, grapes. Fruits, vegetables and meat were raised by each family for home consumption. Barn dances and weddings were important in their social life. One-room grammar schools dotted the valley approximately every two miles up one side of the creek and down the other. On Sundays, a preacher or a local farmer held Sunday School in one of the schoolhouses.

Here in 1976, the Valley visually is little changed. Agriculture is still dominant: Grapes are "in" again, following 80 years of mostly prune growing. Automobiles pass swiftly by, big tractors hum in the fields. Many of the large ranches have been divided and many more homes built for those who enjoy country living. All in all, however, our valley remains beautiful, rural and peaceful. May our past give us insight as we look forward to the next 100 years!

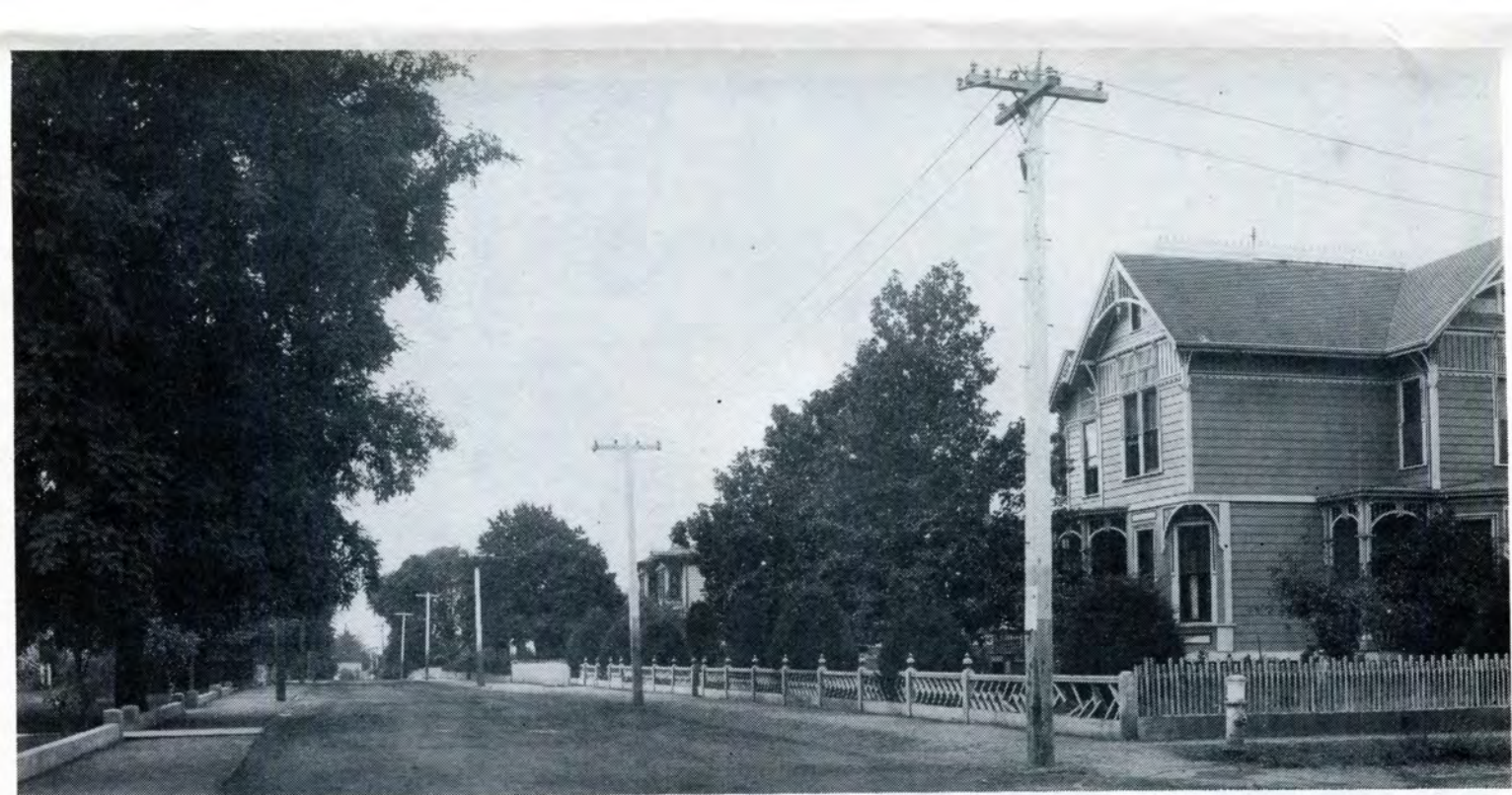
by: Pat Schmidt
Dry Creek Valley



Home of Jos. B. Prince, 1908, on Piper Street at Prince Avenue



View north on Center Street from Mill Street, 1908



Tom Merchant home at Johnson and Lincoln Streets, 1908



West Street, 1908, view north from Matheson Street

FARO

Of the many games of chance played in the west before and during the turn of the century, perhaps "FARO" was the most exciting. This was a banking game for any number of players, one of whom was the banker. The players put their money or chips on a layout, which is a complete suit of spades, enameled on a green cloth with space enough between the cards to allow bets to be placed. Playing was referred to as "bucking the tiger".

All cards were kept track of on a case-keeper, which looks like a miniature layout and has four buttons attached to a rod extending from each card. As soon as a turn is made the buttons are pushed to the opposite end of the rod. This was done by a person who sat directly in front of the dealer and was sometimes referred to as the "Hearse Driver". By a quick glance of the eye, all of the players could see how many of each card remained in the deck.

Fifty-two cards are shuffled and placed in a dealing box face up from which they are drawn in pairs by the dealer, one card at a time. The first card in sight on top of the box is called a soda. When it is drawn, after all bets have been made, it is placed on the dealers right, a little way from the dealing box. The next card to come out to complete the turn is called a loser and is laid close to the right side of the box. The card which is now in sight on top of the box is a winner. For that turn every card must win or loose except the soda, and the last card in the box which is called Hockelty.

Faro was probably played in every town in the early west as gambling of all types provided entertainment for the adventurous. It is Dodge City, Kansas that boasts as having the most famous Faro dealer, Wyatt Earp, the Marshal, who more than doubled his peace officer's salary by moonlighting as a Faro dealer.

by: Brad Witherell
Healdsburg, Calif.

List of Names, Russian River, 1855

Russian River, Sonoma County, C.

Hon. J.W. Denver

Dear Sir,

In compliance with your request I send you a list of names of persons who live in this part of the county who would be glad to receive such documents as you may be pleased to send them. I have nothing of interest at present to communicate. If you should become acquainted with Mr. Barber of Indiana please give him my respects as he and myself used to go and see the Girls together when I lived in Indianapolis.

Resp. yours, Henry M. Willson

| | | |
|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| T.W. Hudson | A.B. Aull | H.G. Heald |
| G.T. Espey | J.G. Dow | Wm. Bell |
| I.C. Laymance | Jackson Gordon | John Bidwell |
| Jas. Miller | E.W. Green | P.A. Forsee |
| G.W. Sparks | M.L. Jones | H.M. Sansbury |
| J.R. Peck | Thomas Heald | Wm. T. Allen |
| J.R. Gibson | Jacob Heald | Geo. Story |
| H.T. Walsworth | H.P. Mollison | |

* * * * *

A list of all the members of the Society will be featured in the October issue of the Russian River Recorder.

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A membership application is included in this issue. If you have not yet completed one of these forms, do so now and return it to P. O. Box 905, Healdsburg, 95448. If you know someone who would like to belong to the Society, pass this form along.

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Appreciation is extended to the Healdsburg Fire Department for the use of their mimeograph machine in the reproduction of this newsletter.