

# RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

Published by  
HEALDSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JANUARY 1979



GEYSER LIVERY STABLE  
Corner of West & North Sts.  
1864

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133 Matheson St. Healdsburg, Calif. 95448

Issue No. 11 January, 1979

HEALDSBURG HISTORICAL NOTES

Our good friend, Rosinda Holmes, with an eye to the calendar, submitted four pen sketches to Felix Lafon of the Redwood Empire Press who, by planning in advance, was ready to run the Historical Notes that have been on sale since the middle of December. The art work and the printing are of exceptional quality and the society is very

appreciative of such talent. The Notes, packaged in sets of four, are sold for \$1.00 plus tax. A view of the Plaza as it once was, the railroad Depot in 1908, the Union Hotel, and an old view of the Simi Montepulciano Winery comprise the four scenes that are proving so popular. Inform your friends these are at the museum.

1979 DUES ARE DUE:

Some members have already renewed their membership in the HEALDSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY for the year 1979. If you are one of those who have not, you may send your check to our Treasurer, Mr. Major S. Phillips, 310 Mountain View Drive, Healdsburg, Ca. 95448.

Active Membership	\$ 5.00	(per person)
Student Membership	2.50	"
Sustaining Membership	25.00	"
Patron Membership	250.00	"

Checks payable to: Healdsburg Historical Society

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

H'burg Enterprise: Aug. 28, 1889

The hop pickers employed in the yard of John Born went on strike last Thursday, and demanded an increase from 1 to 1-1/4 cents per pound. The matter was adjusted by the tramps, who had organized the strike, being discharged and only home pickers being retained.

## TENNIS ACE

Hazel Hotchkiss Wightman, known as the Queen Mother of U.S. tennis, was born in Healdsburg on Dec. 20, 1886, just twelve years after a Long Island socialite named Mary Ewing Outerbridge brought through New York Customs, from Bermuda, the first tennis rackets and balls to enter the United States.

She grew up on the W.J. Hotchkiss ranch on Eastside Road (about a mile below the Windsor Vineyards) competing with four brothers at baseball and football. Her first tennis court was a rough rectangle of gravel, divided by a rope stretched from her house to a rose bush. The family moved to Berkeley in 1900 while her brother Homer was attending the University of California and it was there, on the University court, that Hazel developed her game. As there was only one court on the campus she and her brothers usually played on a court in their backyard. "The ball didn't bounce well on the gravel," she said, "so we tried to hit the ball in the air as much as possible."

In 1902, at age 15, she won her first tournament. She went east in 1909 to play her first tournament on grass and proceeded to win the U.S. Women's Singles championship. In the same tournament she teamed up to win both the women's and mixed doubles titles. She went on to win the U.S. Women's Singles championships in 1910 and 1911. In 1911 she graduated from Cal and the following year married George W. Wightman, moved to the East Coast, and went into semi-retirement from tennis to raise a family.

The next twenty years saw five children, another Women's Singles title, sixteen other national titles, two Olympic gold medals (tennis was an Olympic sport in 1924), one Wimbledon doubles title, and three Wightman Cup victories. The famed Wightman Cup was donated by Mrs. Wightman in 1919 for English and American women's team play, although Great Britain didn't send over a team until 1923. She was playing captain of the American team five times between 1923 and 1931 and non-playing captain eight times between 1933 and 1948. In 1952 she shared her ninth Women's Veterans Doubles championship - her 43rd national title.

In later years she turned to coaching tennis and continued to teach youngsters the fine points of the game until her death in 1974, age 87.



## HEALDSBURG TENNIS

An indication that tennis was popular in Healdsburg in the early 1900's is gained from the following news item in the Tribune of April 2, 1908:

"The Healdsburg Tennis Club has been reorganized and have under construction two courts, in the lot at the corner of Piper and Fitch Sts. (now the site of Foursquare Church)

"The next meeting will occur on the first Monday of April, and any of the former members desiring to enter the club may leave their names with the new officers."

Also, in 1908 and 1909, Homer Hotchkiss, brother of Hazel, was singles champion of Sonoma county. Tennis was played on dirt courts laid down by those interested in the game. About 1912 two dirt courts were laid out on the Frost ranch on Westside - where Sunday tennis was something to look forward to. After a few sets of tennis the ice cream freezer was brought out and the day ended in a party.

In 1913 Crystal Galloway, Margaret Grove and Chris Jennings built a dirt court on the east side of the old red brick grammar school (now a playground for St. John's Parochial School).

The High School's first court was realized in 1914, being a dirt court adjoining the school (then located on Fitch street, where Plaza Court is today). The school annual, "The Sotoyoman", said this:

"Tennis - this is a new sport established in our school only this year. . . . Our team for the year was composed of Charles Frost and Floyd Darby in the doubles and Frost in the singles. The court that has been but a dream for the last four years, was made a realization this year. Here's hoping this sport will continue as long as Healdsburg High is on the map."

However, four years later "The Sotoyoman" said:

"Tennis and baseball died a rather tragic and sudden death. It makes the whole school sad to think about it - so the less said, the better."

One of the first concrete tennis courts was the one built by John Miller in 1918 in the rear of his home on West Grant Street (next to the Miller Fruit Co.) It was on this court that Harold Miller and his girl friend, Eleanor Comstock, took on all comers.

Other popular courts were those at Ben Jones' and at Floyd Darby's, both on Westside Road, and the one at Joe Miller's home on Matheson St.

In 1923 the High School, then located on Grant street, entered its first tennis team in C.I.F. The team was Henry Williams, Ira Anthony and Vern Robbins. Finally in April, 1924, cement courts were installed, the school paying for the materials, with student body volunteers providing the labor. Interclass teams included Leland Cox, Charles Scalione, Ira Anthony, Bob Hasset, Alden Sullberg, Bill Goodwin, Charlie McCutchan, Harold Tucker and Lieuallen Hall.

Since those days tennis has continued to be a popular sport and our schools have turned out exceptional players.

In 1937 the first public tennis courts were built and they were located at Tayman Park, lighted for night games. In 1963 these were removed to make way for additional parking.

Through the efforts of Jean Mazzoni, Faye Seghesio and others the Healdsburg Tennis Club was reorganized again in April of 1972 and today tennis is more popular than ever.

## OUR FIRST WINERY

Certainly many pioneers of the Healdsburg area planted a small vineyard and pressed their grapes to serve the needs of they and their friends. However, the first commercial winery that we know of was established during the Civil War by George Miller, who built the "Healdsburg Fruit Distillery", located where Brown street is today, about a hundred feet north of Grant St.

An advertisement in the Russian River Flag of December, 1868, announces not only his wine but states he is now manufacturing grape brandy, peach brandy and apple brandy.

George first came here in 1853 and bought an interest in the saw and grist mill on Mill Creek. He sold out in 1862 and settled in

town, purchasing about twelve acres of hill land from the Matheson estate, laying between College and University streets and Grant street and Powell Avenue. After clearing the timber and brush he planted out 6-1/2 acres of Mission and 1-1/2 acres of Hamburg grapes.

He built his home and the winery on the southeast corner of the parcel and with the help of his wife Ursula and daughter Celia he operated the plant until 1877 when he sold out to A.E.S. DeWiederhold.

The name was changed to Fairview Winery and it continued to produce quality wines until August of 1892 when the winery burned to the ground. Thus ended the story of the first winery in Healdsburg.

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## 50 YEARS AGO

Appearing at the Liberty Theatre: Joan Crawford in "Our Dancing Daughters".

Mr. and Mrs. George Warfield were spending a few days at the Waldorf Astoria hotel in New York city during their month's trip through the eastern states.

In accordance with traditional custom the members of the Lewis family and their descendants, 45 in all, gathered on Christmas day for their annual family reunion and dinner, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. True Harmeson.

Art Starbuck, then a pilot carrying mail between Oakland and Medford, Oregon, set a new speed record by flying the 323 miles in two hours flat.

Dr. Walter B. Towle, located here for the last seven years, was moving his office to Santa Rosa.

The Pacific Gas & Electric Co. was extending its light and power lines around Fitch Mountain. This was a convenience to the owners of cottages in that resort area.

When a blaze was discovered at the Healdsburg General Hospital there were seven patients in the building. All were quietly removed to the A.E. Bowers home adjoining the hospital property by Mrs. C.A. Jones, Dr. F.E. Sohler, and Dr. J. Walter Seawell, assisted by several others.





**W.J. HOTCHKISS RESIDENCE**  
10642 Eastside Road -- About 1890



**TELEPHONE EXCHANGE - 1923**  
Ed Elliott, Lucile Bowers, Lillian Clement, Thessel Garrett, Pearl Newland, Josephine Matthews,  
Cleone Kels, Olive Stone





**FRESH VEGETABLES**  
Ed Passalacqua's Wagon



**HEALDSBURG CITY HALL**  
Also Library and Post Office  
About 1890



## THE LOVE OF LEE LAUGHLIN

Many years ago Mr. and Mrs. Silas Shinn lived on a ranch, five miles south of town, known as the old Calhoun place. Mary Shinn, their daughter, was thirteen years of age when her young Lochinvar, Leonidas Laughlin, courted and won her affections. The manly lover made known his heart's desire to the parents of the girl, but his zeal met with a rather cool reception. However, the young man was undaunted and told Mr. Shinn that he intended to marry the girl. The old man was then intending to go on a hunting expedition to the mountains, but fearing lest the young couple would elope in his absence he gave up the hunt, much to his dislike, and went to work on the ranch, although the ardent lover of his daughter promised that he would not take the girl during his absence.

That night our hero went home but sleep had forsaken him. Early Monday morning, May 3rd, 1858, he mounted his horse and hurried away to execute his resolution of the previous evening. He well knew the danger of the undertaking and was prepared for the worst. Arriving, he easily made known his intention to his betrothed, who at first could scarcely believe it for joy, but when she saw a revolver in the hands of her gallant, she began a hasty preparation for flight, while he saddled her a horse, which he had ready.

With a sunbonnet on her head and a toilet rather hurriedly made, she mounted and the two were soon away. The enraged father, who was plowing in the fields, was notified by his wife of the event transpiring at the house, and he, pulling the harness off the horses, mounted one of the animals and soon was in hot pursuit. Being well mounted, the young people gained on the irate parent, who lost

some time getting a revolver from the house, and being mounted without a saddle he was at a further disadvantage.

The father was almost blind with rage. He urged on the laboring beast as best he could, and for a time seemed to gain upon the youngsters, but they turned off the road and took to the trackless woods, for they did not desire to be killed, nor to kill anybody. They only wanted to marry. At full speed the lovers kept on their way with a sharp lookout behind, but young Mary failed to see a grass-grown ditch in her path, and the horse, losing his footing, threw the young girl from the saddle into the ditch.

The young man in his eagerness to catch the maid's horse, let his own escape, and it was only with the assistance of some horsemen who were passing by that they succeeded in capturing the runaway animals.

The angry father visited Healdsburg and Windsor in quest of the runaway couple but not finding them he returned home.

The two kept on their way until they reached Knight's Valley where they were joined in marriage by a minister, who doubted the young girl's testimony that she was over eighteen, but when she insisted she was, he tied the bonds. In order that she might say she was over eighteen the youthful bride had pieces of paper placed in her shoes, upon which the number eighteen had been written. The bride's father was laid up for a week due to the long bareback ride, but in time he became fully reconciled to the disobedient but devoted couple.



## FIRE ALARM SIGNALS

Healdsburg was divided, in 1905, into four districts so that the people could locate the direction of a fire more quickly. The public was admonished: "Those sounding an alarm should be positive of the fire and give the correct district. For chimney fires it is seldom necessary to call out the department. A pound of salt will usually suffice." The fire districts were:

District No.1 - One loud tap of the fire bell after rapid ringing. Bounded on the north by North St., east by East St., south and west by the railroad tracks.

District No.2 - Two taps of the bell after rapid ringing. Bounded on the north by Powell Ave., east by East and Johnson Sts., south by North St. west by the railroad tracks.

District No.3 - Three taps of the bell after rapid ringing. Bounded on the north by Powell Ave., east by the east line of the city limits, south by North St., and west by East St.

District No.4 - Four taps of the bell after rapid ringing. Bounded on the north by North St., east by the east line of city limits, south by the railroad tracks, and west by East St.

"Fire Out" Taps - Whenever a fire was extinguished or a false alarm accidentally sent in the signal consisted of three taps repeated three times, a pause between each three taps. This prevented many needless long runs for the firemen and allayed the anxiety of the public.

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Sonoma County Journal  
March 25, 1859:

A REBELLIOUS PEOPLE - The people of Healdsburg and Petaluma have actually dared circulate and sign petitions to the Legislature, asking for a county vote to determine if that part of the county lying north of Mark West Creek and the mouth of Russian River shall be formed into a new county, to be called Sotoyome . . . the people of these ambitious towns are highly censured . . .

The Healdsburg Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the generous contributions made by thoughtful members to the Museum Memorial Fund:

In memory of SELMA PLASBERG

In memory of HAROLD "BUD" ROSS

In memory of BERNICE SHERRER

### JANUARY PROGRAM

The Early Days of Sonoma and Stories of its Landmarks will be presented by Beecham Alexander, State Ranger at the Mission San Francisco Solano in Sonoma. We are fortunate to have this well-known speaker who is presently publishing a book about the adobe landmarks in the Sonoma valley.

This next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 25th, at 7:30 p.m. in the Healdsburg High School Library.



## EARLY DAYS OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH

The first Baptist church in northern Sonoma county was constituted on June 12, 1854 by Rev. S.S. Riley and the twelve charter members were "Felta" and Catherine Miller who lived on Mill Creek, Mr. and Mrs. Cardwell Clark living on the other side of Dry Creek, Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Miller, Mr. James Miller, Mr. and Mrs. M.J. Bice, Mrs. John Dillingham, all living in the Manzanita district, and Mr. and Mrs. Buck Kogar, living in the Westside area.

Their first meeting was held in the newly constructed school house located on the east side of Westside road near the land of McClish, and later known as the Mill Creek school. (This school was moved to the west side of the road in later years.) The records of the church, the First Missionary Baptist Church of Russian River, have been lost, but years ago some of the charter members pieced together the facts we have. Rev. Riley (Santa Rosa) was soon succeeded by Rev. J. D. Bonner who headed the small church until 1861.

Services were held in the school house of the Manzanita district until a church building was built in Healdsburg, on the northeast corner of Center and Mill streets. This building was complete, except for a pulpit, when Mart Hooten moved here in 1858. The church worshipped in this building until June of 1868 when some 30 of the members organized themselves into the "First Baptist Church of Healdsburg" under the Rev. J.B. Saxton.

The new group met in the chapel of the Alexander Academy (on University street) but in January, 1869 they took a deed from Dr. J.J. Piper for a lot on Sheridan (Fitch) St.

and within a year were proceeding to build their own church, which was dedicated January 22, 1871. The Missionary Baptist church on Center street was led by Rev. Wm. Skaggs who was Pastor from August 1868 to October 1869 and by Elder C. Sperry from November 1869 to May 1871. Soon after this the matter was brought up of re-uniting all of the Baptists of Healdsburg and on April 13, 1872 the union was consummated.

Before this time seven Pastors had served as follows: Rev. S.S. Riley 1854, Rev. J.D. Bonner 1855-1861, Rev. Wm. Skaggs 1861-1862, Rev. J.A. Barnes 1862-1863, Rev. C. King 1863-1864, Rev. A. Gould 1864, Rev. J.B. Saxton 1864-1872.

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H'burg Enterprise, Oct. 23, 1889

W. Rosenberg has selected Seattle as the city in which he will establish a branch of his dry goods business. The clerks have been busy during this week packing and shipping. Eli Bush will assume the management of the house in this city, while Mr. Rosenberg goes to Seattle to look after that branch of the business.

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RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW
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ODD FELLOWSHIP - Healdsburg Lodge, No. 64, an early history.

Bloomfield was one of the earliest settlements of Sonoma County and in 1857 was a very prosperous and thriving little community. On the 12th day of January of that year, nine Odd Fellows applied to the Grand Lodge for a charter authorizing them to institute a subordinate Lodge at that place. The charter was accordingly granted and it was known as Analy Lodge, No. 64. B.B. Berry was chosen as the first Noble Grand, G. Lindsey, Vice Grand, and N.R. Shaw as Recording Secretary.

The Lodge prospered, both in membership and in accumulation of property, for several years, but the Humbolt mining excitement broke out and many of the male population quickly drifted away to the new land of promise, leaving the little hamlet almost deserted and the little Lodge of Odd Fellows all but broken up. The proverb that misfortunes never come singly, was verified here, as the Treasurer of the Lodge took a journey and forgot to mention the little matter of paying over the funds in his possession. The few remaining brothers of the plundered Lodge became discouraged and were about to yield their charter and discontinue the Lodge.

At about this time the Odd Fellows residing in and about Healdsburg began to make arrangements to institute a Lodge in this place. T.F. Bayless, an enthusiastic worker in the interest of the Order, was at that time District Deputy for this District, and as the Lodges numbered over two-hundred in the State at that time, he urged that Analy Lodge at Bloomfield be removed to Healdsburg, thus retaining the advantages of the comparatively low number, 64, and at the same time getting the benefit of paraphernalia and Lodge property. Accordingly in August of 1863, H.M. Willson, Ransom Powell, George Allison, John Young, and D.N. Lamphier proceeded to Bloomfield, joined the Lodge and, being then a majority of the numbers present, carried a motion on the same night for the removal of the Lodge and all its funds and property to Healdsburg. They remained in Bloomfield until the following morning when they loaded the Lodge belongings onto a wagon which they had taken with them for the purpose, and drove back to re-institute the body under the name of Healdsburg Lodge, which was duly recognized by the Grand Lodge.

## LITTLE CHINA IN HEALDSBURG

Joe Wah Lee was the proprietor of the Chinese Laundry located in an old wooden building adjoining the City Hall on Center Street. The other was operated by Sing Lee, and was on posts or pilings over the swampy ground near the slough on West street, just south of the present Healdsburg Bowling Lanes. Many local people patronized these two celestial laundries and, in fact, they were an institution in the town. There was a bit of a rivalry between the two wash houses as to which turned out the best work.

There was always four to six "pig tails" employed in each establishment and both turned out perfect laundry at a very nominal sum, seventy-five cents to one dollar was the usual price for a whole weeks wash per family, and that was something in those days of many flounces, voluminous skirts, ruffled dresses and drawers, to say nothing of the stiff starched shirts, collars and cuffs worn by the men. Those simple honest heathen sure earned their money for they worked twelve to fifteen hours a day.

They used gigantic irons, as heavy as twenty pounds. First they would spread out the garment on the board, take a sip of water from a bowl and spew this water in a fine spray all over the piece to moisten it, and then proceed with the ironing, at the same time keeping up a string of conversation in Chinese sing-song.

The town was rather well divided between those who took off Jo Wah Lee and those who followed the banners of Sing Lee. Each Chinese New Year the laundryman always left bags of candies and nuts for their customers. These laundrymen were the town's Walter Winchells, and at times, the Dun & Bradstreets of the community, for they saw all, heard all, and told what they thought best.

From Jo Wah Lee's wash house a countryman named Ah Sing Lee conducted a fruit and vegetable business. He carried his wares about town in two large baskets suspended by a bamboo pole which he balanced over his shoulder. He would stop at a house, open up his baskets for inspection and call off his goods, "flute, cabbagie, spalograsse, stlaw bellies, carrotie, ladish, splouts, alle same eibly ting", and on Friday he would have "fushie and slimps". His business prospered for he was honest and friendly, and always appreciated a sale.



Besides the laundrymen and the vegetable peddler there was quite a number of their cousins employed as cooks at the two hotels and in private homes, and they always did the buying for their employers, so the underground information bureau of the local Chinese had wide ramifications.

At certain holidays they would fly beautiful kites with hummers, and shoot off long ropes of firecrackers, all of which gave the small boys of the town a great thrill.

About 1875 a campaign was started against the Chinese, who were beginning to do most of the labor in the state, culminating in the Chinese Exclusion Act by Congress, the measure being put through by our own congressman, Thomas J. Geary. Rocks were thrown at Chinamen on the streets, sometimes when they were delivering clothes they would be assaulted and the clean clothes scattered in the dirt. At other times gangs of young men would collect rotten eggs and decaying vegetables, and at night gather in front of the laundry, have one of their number rap on the door, so that when the Chinaman opened the door the rest of the mob would give him a volley of garbage, much of which would get inside and foul up everything it came in contact with.

The lives of the "Heathen" were made miserable, the old feeling of mutual trust and confidence faded. A steam laundry was started and the Chinese wash house, along with the vegetable peddler, gradually became a thing of the past, and by 1900, the last of the old-time Chinese laundries closed its door forever.

. . . Taken from an article by  
Dr. William C. Shipley

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