

# RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

Published By  
HEALDSBURG  
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1981



Colonel Roderick Matheson — Civil War Hero  
From Healdsburg. ca 1861



RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

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HEALDSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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\*\*\*\*\* A "KACHINA" SPECIAL \*\*\*\*\*

You won't want to miss the next meeting of the Healdsburg Historical Society to be held Thursday, September 24, 1981 at the town hall, commencing at 7:30 p.m. Whether you're interested in dolls, fine craftsmanship, or the history of Indians, this meeting will hold something special for you. Bud Christensen, retired Superintendent of Schools in Healdsburg, as well as past Treasurer of our Society, will be available on the 24th to share with us his collection of Kachina dolls. Mr. Christensen has researched the background of the Kachina over the past many years and this has resulted in his handcarving and modeling these dolls in their authentic dress. Right down to the most intricate details, these dolls are spectacular. These dolls are much sought after and one doesn't see them too often. We feel fortunate to have Bud speak to us about the Kachina as we have an opportunity to view them first hand. This program is being planned by Verna Lafon. Refreshments will be served under the direction of Frances Etchell. Please put September 24th on your calendar!

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NEW MEMBERS SINCE OUR LAST RECORDER

BANK OF AMERICA - HEALDSBURG  
ALFRED C. BURDICK  
RICHARD DOMITILLI  
TISSIE GOODYEAR  
MRS. BETTY GRECO  
VINCENT R. LEARNED

DELMAS LEWAND  
RAY LEWAND  
LILA J. LEE  
JILL MILLER-ALERT  
ANITA MULGREW  
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

PATRICIA M. OPATZ  
EVA PATCHEN  
ROY PATCHEN  
JANET SBRAGIA PISENTI  
SUSAN E. SCHAEFER  
MARTHA WITCOSKY

THE HEALDSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
GRATEFULLY APPRECIATES DONATIONS  
MADE TO THE MUSEUM MEMORIAL FUND  
IN MEMORY OF  
RICO MASSAGLI  
ERWIN LOWREY

CONGRATULATIONS TO  
MAJOR S. PHILLIPS  
who is now a Patron/  
Life Member of our  
Society

On July 4, 1976 our Society mailed out its first RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER. This newsletter is published quarterly, and its first editor was the late Edwin Langhart, who continued as editor until his death in February of 1979. At that time I became editor and have enjoyed putting together our little newsletter with the assistance of many of our members. It has held a very special spot for me since I have had the pleasure of typing all of its issues since the very beginning. It has been five years now, and it is time to turn this responsibility over to someone else. Hannah Clayborn has accepted this position and she will do well in producing a newsletter with the knowledge she possesses as Curator of the Edwin Langhart Museum. I want to thank all of you for your assistance (and your tolerance with the issues running late at times). It has been difficult for me to find the needed time to do an adequate job, yet I have enjoyed it immensely. I hope all of you will continue to attend the meetings and give your full support to the organization that backs the Edwin Langhart Museum. A special thank you to Major Phillips and Hannah Clayborn, as well as Ann Woltzen for all their help. You're a great membership, and I love you all.

Jan Harrison, retired editor

Hannah Clayborn



## MUSEUM NEWS

NOW AT THE MUSEUM - Early western homemaking and homecrafts are alive and well at the Museum. On display are all types of kitchen equipment and tableware, including impressive collections of graniteware, handpainted Haviland Limoges china, cast iron cookware, sewing and washing machines, quilts, Victorian hand-made laces and much, much more! The majority of these items were used by Healdsburg families. Stop by and see it, and bring your friends. We wish to thank the following people who loaned items to the Museum to help make up the early homemaking and homecrafts show:

SUZANNE GUSTAFSON, GLADYS SMITH, MAJOR PHILLIPS, BUD CHRISTENSEN, FRANCIS RITZ, MARTHA WITCOSKY, JAN WHITE, ISABELLE MARTINSEN, JOSEPHINE MATTHEWS (EUDORA GREENE), PAT SCHMIDT, MR. & MRS. NELSON CARDINAL, ERIC SMITH, BOB JONES, WALTER WILSON AND BERNICE AURADOU.

LOOKING AHEAD - Plans for the third annual Christmas toy and doll exhibit are already beginning. If you have antique or collectible toys, dolls, or Christmas ornaments to include in the exhibit, please contact me. This show opens in November.

VICTORIAN ROOM DISPLAY - We are now beginning work on a Victorian room interior in the east section of the Museum. The effect will be created by constructing stage set panels with authentic Victorian moldings, wall paper, and windows. We are looking for a carpet in good condition from that era and we can always use building supplies and the skill of imaginative carpenters. If you have something to donate that you think might fit in this display, please contact me.

ARTIFACTS ON TELEVISION - Artifacts from the early western homemaking and homecrafts exhibit were featured on the local television channel 50 program, "Afternoons with Afton" on July 9th.

LETTERING MACHINE GETS A WORKOUT - The new Kroytype lettering machine purchased for the Museum by the Healdsburg Historical Society is already tired from all the exercise it got making the labels for our homemaking and homecrafts exhibit! It is working beautifully, and, so far, has not even hinted that it will go on strike for shorter hours and better working conditions.

DONATIONS - In the past weeks, artifacts have been received from:

BOB JONES  
MARY WARD  
JACK RELYEA  
ROY LOWE  
MAJOR PHILLIPS  
FRANK JOHNSON  
MILDRED KECK

PAT SCHMIDT  
MARIE SPARKS  
VIRGINIA JONES HAW  
MARGARET CALHOUN GRAHAM  
FRANCIS BRANERN  
LAWRENCE BIAGI  
BUD CHRISTENSEN

THE MOUNTAIN ROSE PLAYERS

SPECIAL THANKS to BOB JONES and JIM STANFIELD who cut and constructed the new exterior hanging sign for the Museum. The exquisite lettering for the sign was done by RICHARD WARD, a Sonoma County artist. CHARLIE SCALIONE did a fine job of refinishing a bin table donated by BUD CHRISTENSEN. BRAD WITHERELL purchased and constructed a new plaque for the Museum that lists the names of past and present Museum Board of Trustee members. And let's not forget those two who are constantly helping out at the Museum in ways large and small, MAJOR PHILLIPS and BOB JONES.

WELCOME to our new Museum receptionists: ROY and EVA PATCHEN, and BILLIE RAUST.

Hannah Clayborn



On June 10, 1981, Mrs. Naber's Third Grade Class from Fitch Mountain School took a tour of the Museum under the direction of Curator Hannah Clayborn, with the assistance of Museum Trustee Major Phillips. Following are some of the thank you notes received from the students in their own words:

Dear Hannah:

Thank you very much. The museum is a very nice place to visit. I enjoy all the different exhibits. I love to sign the guest book.

Your new friend,  
Adrienne N. Foote

Dear Hannah and Mr. Phillips:

I would like to thank you for showing us around the room. I like the sewing machine the best.

Your friend,  
Lisa Steindorf

Dear Hannah:

Thank you for letting us come and showing us around. I was wondering if they had to make their own "clows". I was glad we went to the museum.

Love,  
Dee Woogerd

Dear Hannah:

I like the baby crib, it was very nice and the Indian "backits".

I am Pomo, Pima, Cherokee and Maricopa Indian. My mother was "bran" in "Air-zone". She lived there all her life.

Your friend,  
Sheyene Young

Dear Mr. Phillips:

I like your rifle and your pump. Then we went to the back "rum". "Ther" I "salla" "cayn".

anonymous

Dear "Mrs" Hannah:

Thank you for letting us go to the Museum. I like it very much, so did our class. I will ask my mom if she would like to go and my dad and sister and brother. Today I might go. O.K.? Thank you for the good time I had.

Love,  
Annette Beltran

Dear "Mrs" Phillips:

I thank you for the sewing and the old fashioned things. I also like the gas "pomp". The iron was very very very "lite".

Your friend,  
Donald Strech

Mrs. Hannah:

I thank you for showing us "aronde" the place yesterday.

Your "friende"  
Billy Joe Stont

Dear "Mrs." Hannah:

I liked the Museum a lot. I liked the thimble. The sewing machine and the quilts were nice "to".

Sincerely,  
Catherine Danner

Dear Hannah:

Thank you for showing us the whole Museum. I liked the Museum.

Anonymous

Dear Hannah:

Thank you for letting "are" class go to the "musseum" yesterday. I really liked the gold thimble.

Anonymous

Dear Hannah:

I like the hand pump and the butter maker. I liked the iron pots and pans. But what I like the best was the sewing machine and the golden thimble.

Sincerely,  
Tim Erricson

Dear Hannah and Mr. Phillips:

I loved the museum and the things that were in it. The quilts were "intresting". I have never been to the museum.

Sincerely,  
Earl Fleckenstein

Dear Mrs. Hannah:

I thank you for showing us around the museum. It was very fun. "Mosed" of all I liked the quilts.

Love,  
Billy Williams

Dear Hannah:

Thank you for "show" us around the museum. It was nice. I liked all of it but I liked the washing machines best. I liked the thimble holder.

Your friend,  
Nichole Birdsall

continued.....



Dear Mr. Phillips and Hannah:  
Thank you for telling us about all the interesting things in the museum. I liked the airplane.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jose Manuel Angulo

Dear Hannah:  
Thank you for inviting us to the museum and "show" us around-the best thing I like is the mini kitchen and the tiny pans and everything and the mouse trap.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Your friend,  
Lina De La O

Dear Hannah, and Mr. Phillips:  
Thank you for telling us about the museum. I hope that I can come some other time to see a new exhibit.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Love,  
Mary Bowers

Dear Hannah:  
I like to go on "fild" trip on a museum again. Thank you for showing us the sewing machine and the little house. The best thing I like is the pump gun. And the water pump. And the way you "keped" it nice. I like the rug the lady made.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Your friend,  
Kyle Corpus

Dear Mrs. Hannah:  
I like the home makers in the museum. The three things I like in the museum "is" the "warshing" machines, sewing machine, and the old fashion "reacerd" "plaiier". I like the museum - so did my class.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Your friend,  
Ryan Krikava

Dear Hannah:  
Thank you for showing room 4 the museum. I liked the "punt" gun, and the gas pump. In the old days people made neat stuff, especially the bowls, pots and all that stuff. I might go there again just to see all that stuff.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Your friend,  
Cajeme Basurto

Dear Mr. Phillips:  
I liked the museum a lot. It was fun to see you. I wish I can stay in the museum all day but I wish I didn't have to go to "scool". But "scool" is almost over.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Thank you,  
Mark Imel

Dear Hannah:  
Thank you for showing us the museum. I liked the big spinning wheel. I also liked washing machines. The sewing machines were neat! I "though" the museum was very interesting.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sincerely,  
Heather Brooks

Dear Hammah:  
Thank you for showing us around the museum. I liked it because you "spinned" and walked back. Thank you for showing us the exhibits.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Your friend,  
Suzy Nieto

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It's always fun to read letters from the younger set.

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THE EDWIN LANGHART MUSEUM IS CREDITED FOR USE OF ALL PHOTOGRAPHS IN THIS ISSUE  
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HEALDSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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| Pat Schmidt.....Treasurer             | Major Phillips.....Director  |
| Joyce Trowbridge....Recording Sect'y. | Frances Etchell.....Director |
|                                       | Francis Branern.....Director |

Newsletter Editor: Jan Harrison



COLONEL RODERICK N. MATHESON:  
CIVIL WAR HERO FROM HEALDSBURG

Col. Roderick N. Matheson, for whom the Healdsburg Street is named, lived in Healdsburg for only a few years, yet the quality of his contributions here and in other parts of the state and nation make him one of Healdsburg's most interesting and well-documented early citizens.

Rod Matheson was born in Inverness, Scotland in 1825, son of Thomas and Jane Matheson. When he was fifteen years old he emigrated with his parents to America, settling in New York City, where his father became a businessman. Roderick was raised in New York, and in 1844, married Antoinette (Nettie) Seaman, a native of that city.

The young couple moved shortly thereafter to Cleveland, Ohio, where Roderick became a real estate salesman, and then returned to New York where he became associated with a large importing house for a short period of time and then became a school teacher.

In 1849 Rod was stricken with gold fever, and being obviously of a restless nature booked passage on a vessel bound for California via Cape Horn. The voyage was lengthy and difficult, the vessel at one point being forced to dock in South America to avoid shipwreck.

Young Matheson lasted only a short time in the mines, however, and soon settled in the young and wild town of San Francisco, which he adopted wholeheartedly. His native talent soon brought him prominence, and he became involved in any project that would further the interests of that city.

He helped to organize the Mechanic's Institute in San Francisco and became its President. In 1852 he was appointed Controller of San Francisco. He was also an active member of the fire department and one of the founders of the vigilant Engine Company No. 9, and a member of the Marion Rifles, a local militia. In 1854 he was appointed a General of a division of the Mexican Army, and Resident Commissioner of Mexico in San Francisco. As Commissioner he contributed greatly to the success of Alvarez and Comonfort. His Mexican Commission was confirmed by Juarez, then Chief Justice of Mexico, and was still in effect at the time of Matheson's death.

It was in 1856 that Matheson, now 31 years old, moved himself and his family to Healdsburg. He purchased 300 acres of land adjoining the east side of the town and proceeded to cultivate it successfully. As might be expected, however, Matheson also managed to find time to teach in the first school built in Healdsburg, called then, "The Russian River Institute", beginning in March of 1858. Matheson had, in fact, been instrumental in the building of that school, having donated part of the land on which it was built in 1857.

In 1859 the Russian River Institute was taken over by a group of local citizens headed by (who else?) Roderick Matheson, and re-opened shortly thereafter under the impressive name, "The Agricultural and Mechanical University of California".



Matheson also taught in this school, and at least some of the students paid for their education by working on the Matheson Farm which was used for training in agriculture. Since that time the street fronting the school has been called University Street.

As a matter of interest, this University, which Matheson worked so diligently to help found, continued under various owners and principals and with the various names, the Sotoyome Institute, the Alexander Academy, and in 1877 when the new building was built where Plaza Court is now, the Healdsburg Institute. The college was purchased in 1882 by the Seventh Day Adventists and continued under the name Healdsburg College until 1908, when it was sold to the Healdsburg School Board to house Healdsburg High School.

Always active in politics, Matheson had become a member of the Free Soil Party (Oregon and California were the only free soil states in the west), and because of this association he was invited to Washington D.C. in January, 1861, to attend the inauguration of President-Elect Abraham Lincoln. Because Matheson had hopes of gaining political appointment in California, he embarked upon this trip with great expectations.

Once arriving in Washington, however, and becoming embroiled in the political machine that was daily sending out ever more ominous threats of civil war, it became obvious to Matheson that political appointments would be delayed. Matheson was one of five men summoned by Lincoln to discuss California appointments following his March 4, inauguration.

In one of Matheson's letters home to Healdsburg, written March 31, 1861, he expressed the hope that appointments would be made the following day, leaving him free to return to his family, "Yes, home where my Nettie awaits me, where my dear children are looking for their Pa, where my hopes, expectations, desires, and future happiness all center..."<sup>1</sup>

Matheson had fathered six children before he left Healdsburg for Washington in 1861. Only three of these remained alive at the time he wrote the above letter, Roderick Jr. (Rody), the second-born; Nina, the third-born; and baby George, who was born sometime during that year (Matheson could never have seen his sixth child).

Instead of making the long-awaited appointments in April, Lincoln, with war imminent, asked for 75,000 loyal state militias to serve for three months. As we would expect of Matheson, he volunteered, and was almost immediately elected Colonel of the First California Regiment, 32nd New York State Volunteers.

Matheson led this regiment in the first large battle between the states fought near Centreville, Virginia, and for his actions won a commendation from President Lincoln, himself.

The civil war continued, and the First California Regiment, led by Colonel Matheson continued to battle in one location after another, often disheartened by defeat and lack of supplies. To illustrate Matheson's frame of mind at this time, I quote a letter home to Healdsburg, written July 21, 1861:

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1. Matheson Letters, Vol. 1, P. 5



"I am back from battle with my reputation for a good soldier being established. I am held in high estimation by my men and officers, by all the other Regt. around. Netty, my love, what would I do or give if you were by my side, that I could look into your face and get your approving smile for trying to fight and sustain YOUR country and now mine. Do you not think I may, by and by, rank as an American?..."<sup>2</sup>

In another letter home from Alexandria, Virginia, written on October 11, 1861:

"Have I said too much? Out of the heart the mouth must speak or the heart breaks. O my Nettie, my darling, you know not how miserable your poor husband is, in this far off country of contention, discord and strife. This is not the land I left 12 years ago everything is changed but such a change not, by any means, for the better but the worse. Your once boasted country is falling to pieces and destruction. The land of my children is imperilled, her liberties are about to be subverted. My country by every tie that can be held holy, sacred and assumed is assailed. Would you as a woman, an American proud of your revolutionary descent, have the man of your choice prove himself unworthy of your alliance, prove reticent to duty, a coward! No, I think I know my Netty better. I think I hear you say - sorry am I the necessity has occurred that my poor country is torn asunder but my husband is not the man to shrink from responsibilities and duties."<sup>3</sup>

And still the war continued, one bloody battle after another. It was July again, but now 1862, when Col. Matheson and his troops had time to rest for a short time. It was at this point that Matheson had hopes of becoming a General, an appointment for which he was well-qualified, and one that would have stationed him on the Pacific Coast, nearer to his family. His dreams were to make his wife and children proud of him. By serving his country he had won the right to send his son, Rody, to West Point, a thing that would have, "...paid for all I have born."<sup>4</sup>

On the 14th of September, 1862, the Union forces engaged in battle with Confederate troops in a series of skirmishes, one of which was fought at Crampton's Gap on the Potomac River. In this battle, which was won by the Union forces, Colonel Rod Matheson was badly wounded. Accounts vary, but it seems that Matheson was moved after his injury, and one newspaper dispatch from St. Louis, Missouri printed in the "Sonoma County Journal" on Oct. 10, 1862, reported that Colonel Matheson died of his wounds in that city on October 2, 1862.

Col. Matheson's remains were taken to New York City, where they lay in state in the Governor's room at City Hall until October 9th, when the body was taken to an Episcopal church and funeral services held. Many noted men served as pallbearers at these services, among whom were: Generals John C. Fremont and John S. Ellis, F.F. Low, and Samuel B.

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2. Matheson Letters, Vol. 1, Pg. 11

3. Matheson Letters, Vol. 1, Pg. 14

4. Matheson Letters, Pg. 22



Smith. After this the remains were put aboard the California steamer, Sonora, and taken to San Francisco where more funeral services were held, and many noted men were again pallbearers, among whom were: Leland Stanford, Benj. F. Freeman, Eugene L. Sullivan, H.A. Cobb, and Col. W.D. Thompson.

After these services the body was taken home to Healdsburg where it was met by the Petaluma Guard and the Emmet Rifles, as well as the Santa Rosa Military Company. Colonel Matheson was at last laid to rest in Oak Mound Cemetery in Healdsburg on November 9, 1862.

Roderick Matheson was a restless young man who, like so many others, found his energies put to good use in young California. His talent enabled him to rise to wealth and prominence at a relatively young age, and it appeared that he would have continued that rise had he not been swept away from his home in Healdsburg by the winds of Civil War.

Rody, the son that Col. Matheson had wanted to attend West Point, was killed tragically in a threshing machine accident at Davisville on July 27, 1870. "Baby George", the son that Col. Matheson never saw, was killed in November, 1887, at the age of 26. Nina, Matheson's only surviving daughter, lived in Healdsburg for many years, marrying Jirah Luce, a man from a local family. They built a home on the site of the old Matheson home (now the home of Mrs. George Warfield) on Matheson Street. Nina Matheson Luce died in 1920. Her son, Jirah, lived in Healdsburg until his death a short time ago. Her daughter, Nina Luce Rose, still resides in Healdsburg. Antoinette (Nettie) Matheson, Col. Matheson's wife, died in Healdsburg in 1884.

Hannah M. Clayborn

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Davis, Frances D.; Colonel Roderick Matheson: A true American, Report 1969

Langhart, Edwin; "Russian River Institute", in "The Russian River Recorder", January 1977.

Healdsburg Oak Mound Cemetery Records

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JUNE 15, 1981 - a day to remember.....

Some 90 people gathered at Robert and Frances Etchell's home to view wedding gowns of yesteryear, as modeled by members and friends of the Healdsburg Historical Society. Dresses ranging from the late 1800's to the present day were modeled. Homemade ice cream and wedding cake was enjoyed by guests. A special thank you to June Jones for her efforts in coordinating the affair, and, of course, the Etchells for all their work.





Home of Colonel Rod Matheson in Healdsburg,  
built in 1857  
Once located on the site of the present  
Mrs. George Warfield home on Matheson Street



"Sam the Cheerful Liar"  
Who wrote scandalous articles for the Healdsburg Tribune, and kept his last name secret at the turn of the century (see article this issue)



Colonel Roderick Matheson in Union uniform, ca. 1862





THE ALBANIAN LITERARY AND MILITARY SOCIETY — NOVEMBER 20, 1885

(some members also members of G.A.R.)

FRONT ROW (L to R) Minnie McMullin, Emma Petray, May Shaw, Artie Griest  
 STANDING (L to R) Emma Beeson, Millie Phillips, Sara Ross, (drummer unidentified).



DECENDANTS OF THE "SATIYOMIS" or "SOTOYOMES" THAT GEN. MARIANO VALLEJO CLAIMED  
 POPULATED THE HEALDSBUG AREA BEFORE THE TIME OF THE WHITE SETTLERS?

(see artical this issue)

SOUTHERN POMO OR WAPPO FAMILY LIVING NEAR HEALDSBURG 1910



REFORM AT GEYSERVILLE

Healdsburg Enterprise  
Thursday, January 16, 1879

Researched by Jan White

Eds. Enterprise: The little village of Geyserville is marked by a strong disposition tending to a reformation of her past evil ways. Until recently, the stealing, shooting and prostitution here seems not to have been perceptibly decreased. However, things may turn to the better now, since at least one individual, who, with his disreputable wife, played a conspicuous part in the neighborhood for the past few years, has found the road to the county jail. After a long career of thieving, blackmailing, and procuring, he has, through the combined exertions of a dozen of the respectable class of farmers, who could not stand it any longer, at last been indicted by the Grand Jury for steeling a steer. The deed was committed in plain daylight, on Russian River. So much had the fellow become emboldened by the long forbearance of the peaceful class of settlers, he would put out in daylight for his numerous depredations and the shameful support he and his interesting family had received from certain quarters. Unless compelled to, we refrain for the present, for charity's sake, from giving the names of the parties, who, for reasons best known to themselves, did their best in harboring the worthy couple and brought all these losses and vexations upon their more decent neighbors. But we hope they will take warning by this finale, and the atrocious murder just committed at the Geyserville Hotel, to keep free in the future from associations which have made Geyserville a rendezvous for roughs & tramps, and stop allowing their thresholds being polluted by a woman whose faded charms even digger Indians began to reject with disdain.

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\*\*\* CURATOR GOES TO COLORADO \*\*\*

In the first week of June I attended a six-day long seminar in Denver, Colorado, sponsored by the American Association of State and Local History entitled, "Re-examining America's past: The New Social History". Twenty-four applicants were chosen from the western United States to participate in this information-packed seminar for archive and museum professionals. Nine hour a day class sessions (not including several evening sessions) included many eminent speakers from the



history and museum fields speaking on a wide variety of topics, including such things as interpreting family, rural, urban, architectural, agricultural, and labor history, as well as the formulation of museum policy and exhibit construction.

The participants for the most part were from large museums and historical agencies, such as state historical societies and state museums. Coming from a small local museum, I was expected to raise the concerns and problems of such organizations, which I did without fail and repeatedly.

Although a thoroughly exhausting experience, this seminar provided our historical society and museum with a wealth of information and updated written materials concerning the history and museum fields, and through contact with fellow seminar participants, I was able to learn how larger museums and societies function successfully.

The American Association of State and Local History provided a \$200.00 fellowship to offset the \$500.00 total cost of the trip, \$300.00 of which was paid by the Healdsburg Historical Society.

Hannah Clayborn

(Hannah is to be congratulated for her selection as a candidate to attend the Denver seminar)

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#### THE MEANING OF THE WORD "SOTOYOME"

One of the questions asked most often at the museum is: "What does the word 'Sotoyome' mean?" "Rancho Sotoyome" was the name given to the 45,000 acre parcel of land granted to Captain Henry Delano Fitch in 1841 by the Mexican Government. The Rancho Sotoyome included the present site of the City of Healdsburg and much of the surrounding territory. Since that time the Rancho Sotoyome's name has generated a considerable amount of controversy.

This controversy has been continuing since at least 1906, when differing accounts of the meaning were published in the Healdsburg newspapers. One of the most interesting and detailed of these accounts was written by George Madeira for the September 27, 1906 issue of the Healdsburg Tribune. Although all such accounts must be viewed with skepticism since the word was apparently in use in some form at the time of Spanish and Mexican contact in the 1820's, making all accounts second-hand, Madeira's version contains many items of interest. It is reprinted below:

#### LIGHT ON THE MEANING OF THE INDIAN WORD

THERE BEING SOME DISCUSSION IN THE PRESS RECENTLY REGARDING THE DERIVATION AND MEANING OF THE WORD SOTOYOME, GENERAL VALLEJO SHOULD BE GOOD AUTHORITY ON THE SUBJECT. WHILE ENGAGED IN THE COLLECTION OF INDIAN LEGENDS, I IN-



INTERVIEWED HIM AT HIS HOME NEAR VALLEJO IN 1883, AND HERE IS THE INFORMATION HE GAVE ME REGARDING THE SOTOYOME INDIANS:

THE SATIYOMIS, SOTOYOMAS, GUAPAS, OR WAPOES ARE THE VARIOUS NAMES GIVEN THE SATIYOMIS, FROM WHENCE THE NAME SOTOYOME HAS BEEN DERIVED. THEIR HOME WAS LOCATED IN THE DRY CREEK AND ALEXANDER VALLEYS, AND THEIR DESCENDANTS ARE THE INDIANS AROUND HEALDSBURG TO-DAY. GENERAL VALLEJO SAID:

"ON THE 7TH OF JUNE, 1836, A BATTLE WAS FOUGHT BETWEEN THE CINAMEROS, WHO HAD THEIR HOME IN THE VICINITY OF SANTA ROSA, AND THE SATIYOMIS. TWENTY OF THE CINAMEROS WERE KILLED AND FIFTY WOUNDED. VALLEJO WAS APPEALED TO AVENGE THEM, AND THIS HE PROMISED TO DO. ON APRIL 1ST OF THE FOLLOWING YEAR, WITH FIFTY SOLDIERS AND ONE HUNDRED INDIANS, BESIDES THE CINAMEROS FORCE, HE MARCHED TO THE VALLEY OF DRY CREEK, AND A BATTLE WAS FOUGHT WITH THE SATIYOMIS ON THE SPOT NOW THE BLOCH RANCH, TWO MILES AND A-HALF FROM HEALDSBURG.

THE SATIYOMIS WERE DEFEATED, WITH GREAT LOSS, AND THE NEXT DAY THEY WERE PURSUED INTO THE MAACAMAS MOUNTAINS, WHERE THEY WERE AGAIN DEFEATED. THE EXPEDITION THEN RETURNED TO SONOMA MISSION, NOT HAVING LOST A MAN."

JUNE 7TH GENERAL VALLEJO CONCLUDED A TREATY OF PEACE WITH THIRTY-FIVE TRIBES. I HAVE THE NAMES OF ALL OF THESE TRIBES, TOGETHER WITH MANY LEGENDS FOUNDED ON THEIR HISTORY.

THE SATIYOMIS ADORNED THEMSELVES IN SEASON WITH WILD POPPIES, AND FROM THIS HABIT UNDOUBTEDLY THE TERM "VALLEY OF FLOWERS".

SONOMA, THE VALLEY IN WHICH THE CINAMEROS LIVED, WAS CALLED BY THEM THE "VALLEY OF THE MOON" HENCE SONOMA.

SATIYOMIS IS PURELY AN INDIAN NAME. EVIDENTLY THE SPELLING IS SPANISH, AND IF TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH IT WOULD BE SOTOYOME, SINGULAR; PLURAL SOTOYOMIS. IN SPANISH THE "A" IS FREQUENTLY PRONOUNCED "O", THE "I" IS ALWAYS PRONOUNCED "E", AND THE "O" IS SOMETIMES SOUNDED AS "A", HENCE SATIYOMIS - SOTOYOMES. SOTO IS PURELY A SPANISH NAME, AS DE SOTO, DISCOVERER OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

THAT YOME IS THE INDIAN TERM FOR HOME, AS SUGGESTED BY A LOCAL WRITER, IS QUITE FAR-FETCHED. WHICH ONE OF THE THIRTY-FIVE TRIBES COLLECTED AT THE SONOMA MISSION USED THE TERM YOME TO DESIGNATE HOME? SURELY NOT THE GUAPAS, WHOSE DESCENDANTS RESIDE RIGHT HERE ON THEIR OLD HOME LANDS.

AS TO SOTOYOME OR SATIYOMIS MEANING "VALLEY OF THE FLOWERS", THIS MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE INTERPRETATION GIVEN IT BY ANY PRACTICALLY DISPOSED PERSON WHO VISITED THIS SECTION IN THE EARLY DAYS. I FIRST SAW THIS VALLEY FORTY-SIX YEARS AGO (1860), WHEN IT WAS A VERITABLE VALE OF FLOWERS, GOLDEN POPPIES AND LUPINES CARPETED THE VALLEY, PRESENTING A SHEEN OF PURPLE AND GOLD.

GEORGE MADEIRA  
1906



No matter what Madeira's opinion was concerning the suggestion that Sotoyome means the "home of Soto", we find another good source, namely Anita Fitch Grant, daughter of the original land grant owner, Henry D. Fitch, who thought otherwise. Mrs. Grant, who was reputed to be a "linguist", and a "student" of the native tribes in the area, claimed that the latter portion of the word, "y-o-me", means "the place where one stays". "Soto", she claimed, derived from the name of a Spaniard, De Soto, who was sent by the priests at San Rafael to gather Indian laborers to assist in building the Mission there.

While the Spaniard, De Soto, was in this vicinity, he lived at the headquarters of the tribe on Maacama Creek, and so the Indians supposedly named the country over which their tribe ruled "Sotoyome", or the place where De Soto stayed.

We might assume that Mrs. Grant got her information from her parents who were the original grant owners. However, Josefa and H.D. Fitch came on the scene much later than General Vallejo. On the other hand, Vallejo was in Sonoma, not the Healdsburg area, and he arrived in Sonoma County in 1833. The mission at San Rafael was founded in 1817, long before the two smallpox epidemics that decimated the "Sotoyomes" in the late 1830's and early 1850's. If the Sotoyomes gained their name in 1817 as Mrs. Grant claims, then the meaning may have been lost by the time Vallejo arrived.

The entire question of place and group names is a complex one owing in part to the Spanish influence on the pronunciation and spelling of such Indian names. In An Ethnographic Survey of the Mahilkqune (Dry Creek Pomo, by Theodoratus, Peri, Blount, and Patterson, 1975, there is much discussion regarding such names in this area. Stephen Powers, a late nineteenth century ethnographer, and S.A. Barrett, an early twentieth century ethnographer, are quoted in this report as follows (pg. 22):

IN RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY, FROM CLOVERDALE DOWN TO THE REDWOOD BELT AND SOUTH TO SANTA ROSA CREEK, AND ALSO IN DRY CREEK VALLEY, LIVE THE REMNANTS OF A TRIBE WHOM THE SPANISH CALLED THE GAL-LI-NO-ME'-RO NATION. THE GALLINOMER'-RO PROPER OCCUPY ONLY DRY CREEK AND RUSSIAN RIVER, BELOW HEALDSBURG; WHILE ABOVE HEALDSBURG, PRINCIPALLY BETWEEN GEYSERVILLE AND CLOVERDALE, ARE THE SI-SAL'-LA MA-GUN, OR MU-SAL-LA-KUN, AND THE KAI-ME. THIS NATION MAY BE CONSIDERED A BRANCH OF THE GREAT FAMILY OF THE POMO... THE EARLY SPANIARDS NAMED ONE OF THEIR CHIEFS GALLINA (A COCK), FROM WHOM THE TRIBE DERIVES ITS NAME.

(POWERS 1877 : 174)

The "Gallinomer'Ro" mentioned by Powers may be the "Cinameros" mentioned by Vallejo (as reported by Madeira). Another version:

THEY SAY THAT THE NAME KAINOM'RO WAS GIVEN BY THE SPANIARDS OF SAN RAFAEL MISSION OF THE INDIANS OF HEALDSBURG AND SANTA ROSA UPON THE OCCASION OF THEIR BEING BROUGHT INTO THE MISSION IN THE EARLY PART OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. THEY HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME, AND

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Heald, William Thomas, "The Heald Family That Settled Healdsburg", unpublished manuscript, 1917.

Tuomey, Honoria; The History of Sonoma County, Vol. I; S.J. Clarke Publ. Co.: Chicago, S.F., Los Angeles; 1926



CANNOT GIVE ANY NAME USED BY THEMSELVES PRIOR TO THEIR TAKING THIS ONE, APPLIED FIRST TO THE INDIANS FROM THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF HEALDSBURG AND SANTA ROSA, THIS NAME HAS NOW A BROADER USE, BEING MADE TO INCLUDE THE REMAINDER OF THE PEOPLE SPEAKING THIS DIALECT, AND FORMERLY LIVING ABOUT CLOVERDALE AND ON THE UPPER COURSE OF DRY CREEK.

(BARRETT 1908: FOOTNOTE 213)

In reviewing the lists of place names and linguistic groups mentioned in the 1975 Ethnographic Survey mentioned above, I find no word that resembles "Satiyomis" or "Sotoyome". The closest is a linguistic group of upper Dry Creek which is listed as "Shah-Kow'-We-Chum'-Mi" (pg. 29). It is conceivable that the Shahkowwechum'Mi were the original "Satiyomis" that Vallejo speaks of in Madeira's account. Madeira claims that Vallejo "Marched to the Valley of Dry Creek" to do battle with the Satiyomis in 1837. Although the site of the battle was only two and one half miles from Healdsburg, the village site of this group may have been further up Dry Creek.

Vallejo's account of the tribal names in the 1830's would predate the information given by both Powers, 1877, and Barrett, 1908, if George Madeira reported his words accurately. Further, since it sounds as though the Satiyomis sustained great loss of lives in the battles that Vallejo speaks of, the Satiyomis as such may not have existed by the time of the later ethnographers, or did not return to the Dry Creek Valley.

We have seen the drastic effects that Spanish pronunciation and spelling had on the Indian names, and it must be remembered that Cyrus Alexander, a scout for the original owner of the Rancho Sotoyome, Captain Fitch, claimed that the area of the proposed grant was called "Sotoyomi". Fitch used this name when requesting the grant from the Director of Colonization of the frontier of the north in August of 1841 (Mexican Archives of the State of California).

There exists in General Vallejo's personal and historical recollections, Manuscript 3, page 224, at the Bancroft Library (see "Russian River Recorder", October, 1976, pg. 6) a treaty made between Vallejo and Succara, Chief of the "Sotoyomis", dated April 4, 1836, following a battle in the "Geyser Hills". This coincides perfectly with Madeira's account except for the fact of the date, which is exactly one year earlier than Madeira claims.

This treaty would seem to establish the fact that Vallejo called this group the Sotoyomis. It does not, however, preclude the possibility that this name was largely a Spanish/Mexican colonial invention.

The question of the meaning of the word "Sotoyome" may never be definitively answered. If it is "purely an Indian name" as Madeira claims, then it would hold some meaning in that particular dialect, or would have long ago. If it was invented by the Spanish who established the Sonoma Mission, it might have held some meaning for them.

At least we can now answer to those who question the meaning of the word Sotoyome: "It has definitely been established that no one really knows."

HANNAH CLAYBORN



WOMEN'S LIBERATION IN HEALDSBURG  
AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

Excerpt from the January 13, 1898 edition of the Healdsburg Tribune, article written by a local character "Sam, the Cheerful Liar", who wrote regularly for the Tribune, but who, for obvious reasons, kept his last name a well-guarded secret. (SEE PHOTO THIS ISSUE)

THE NEW WOMAN

As the men are now to take the places of the women, we will show women work from sun to sun, and their work will be never done...I had business out in Alexander Valley and as I rode along in my landau behind my spirited flyers, knocking off the miles, I came around a point of the hill west of the bridge, and what did I see? There was a wagon upset with a cord of four-foot wood, and MRS. WILLIAM POWELL, with a pair of overalls and a jumper on, standing there crying. Of course I had to stop and render assistance and give some advice. Mrs. Powell said she had a contract to furnish one thousand cords of wood to MRS. JOSEPH MAYO of the Electric Light Works, and this was the first load. I told her if she was going to be a man she must not cry. Men don't do those things. Mrs. Powell thanked me, assisted me into my landau, and I drove off.

I met MRS. MICK YOUNG with a load of hay, and wearing a suit of Mick's clothes. The hay was for MRS. CHARLES EMERY, who is now running the Sotoyome Stables, while Charlie attends to the children, cooks, washes, and makes the fire in the morning. Mrs. Young asked me why I did not help Mrs. Powell load the wood on the wagon. I told her I was perfectly willing for the women to have all the privileges of a man, so she could load her own wood. No woman ever helped load a cord of wood for me.

...As I drove on the Russian River Bridge I saw a team standing there and MRS. JOHN FERGUSON in front of it. I stopped and spoke to her and asked what the trouble was. She said her horses were sick and she would have to return home... Mrs. Ferguson had a load of hogs for MRS. T.S. MERCHANT, who is running the Healdsburg Market. If not delivered by noon she said she would forfeit the whole load. I advised her to borrow a team from MRS. W.P. WARREN. She asked me for a chew of tobacco, which I reluctantly gave her. When I arrived at Jimtown I found a lot of the residents looking at a dead mule. As I never had seen one before, I pulled up and alighted from my landau. I found MRS. D.C. FRANK with a load of eggs



for MRS. JOHN MCDONOUGH, who is now sole proprietor of the Sotoyome House (Healdsburg Hotel). John is doing the chamber work, looking after the children and building the fires mornings. I walked around the mule to get familiar with the situation, and soon found the cause of this mishap. Mrs. Frank, I want to give you a little advice: When you put a collar on a mule, horse or your forlorn husband, don't put it on upside down...take a cigar with me, I must be off.

As I drove up the long lane I met MRS. NED PATTESON with some chickens for MRS. VOSSBRINCK of the Union Hotel. She is sole proprietor. Her husband is second cook and dishwasher, assisted by DR. J.R. SWISHER.

...On my return MRS. F.W. COOKE, Editress of the Tribune, directed me to take a trip down the Guerneville Road. I was hungry and tired, but I sallied out, determined to starve or die. I had arrived at the foot of the MRS. BICE HILL, when I looked up and here came MRS. JIM MCCLISH on a bicycle, with Jim's best suit on. She said as she passes: "Sam, Jim is awful sick." I passed on down as far as the Walters Ranch, but as Mrs. Walters was out talking the "new woman" among her neighbors, I did not see her. I drove back leisurely, and when I arrived at MRS. JOHN MCCLISH'S out came MRS. DR. SWISHER. I pulled up and she told me that Jim had had quite a spell of cholera morbus. While his wife went to town he had been washing and ironing, got overheated and ate too much. As Jim and myself have always been the best of friends I went in. Although it is best not to let visitors in to talk to patients, the new woman will let you talk to them, no matter how sick they are. You see if they can keep us men sick a long time, the bill goes along just the same. Dr. Mrs. Swisher said to me: "The price for looking at your tongue will be \$3.00, and for visits we will charge according to your standing in the community. It won't cost you a cent, Sam." Jim recognized me without any trouble or expense. I told him he ought to be careful of what he ate. He said he made three pies and ate one. I looked at them, and he invited me to take one. An idea struck me: I'll make a stove lid of it, as the one in the Tribune office is lost, and as the other looks lonesome, I'll eat it, which I did.

I have just received the following notices: "The new woman's club will meet December 18th. None but women admitted. By order of the President." "The new man's club will meet December 19th. None but men admitted". Well, yes, I'll take them both in and give it next week.

SAM  
(The Cheerful Liar)

Researched by  
Hannah Clayborn