

# RUSSIAN RIVER



# RECORDER



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*HEALDSBURG MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY*  
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becomes a shade richer, if visitors can remember  
the days of Colonel Tayman and the other pioneers  
who had a vision of life in the slow lane, a lane that has stretched  
on for years and promises to go more  
without speeding up."*

*Clubhouse circa 1960*

# TAYMAN PARK

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE • *William Mulgrew*



Charles E. Tayman, founder and first president of Tayman Park Country Club, was born in eastern Pennsylvania in 1891. He entered the US Army in 1881 at the age of 20 and served his country for nearly four

decades. Tayman spent part of his career overseas in Cuba and the Philippines. He achieved the rank of colonel in 1917 and retired two years later. He moved to Healdsburg in 1919 and purchased 22 acres of land that he planted in fruit trees. In 1920, at the age of 59, he married Mrs. Mabel Davis, niece of Phillip Hannah, the US Consul General to Mexico, and established their home in Healdsburg.

In 1922 Tayman Park was established as a private country club. All parties interested in becoming members agreed in writing that as soon as 100 members enrolled, each would pay an initiation fee of \$100 per man and wife, or \$50 per single member.

Acceptance was quick among the early, adventurous sportsmen of Healdsburg, and later in 1922 the original membership roll was established at 116.

Many of the names and families were prominent in Healdsburg before the 1900s and have endured proudly. It would be somewhat difficult these days to capitalize a private country club for under \$8,000, but such were Tayman's beginnings.

In addition to the initiation fees, each bona fide member agreed to pay dues and assessments determined by the club treasurer for as long as they were members. Dues were established at the outrageous sum of \$3 per month.

For its money the club purchased 63 acres of land belonging to the Luce tract in June, 1923, Jirah and Margaret Luce being the sellers. Jirah Luce was an original member and reportedly had a master's touch on the greens.



*Clubhouse circa 1948*

After the land was purchased in 1923, volunteers cut down hay to mark fairways or left it standing to constitute rough. The original greens were made of Russian River sand. Real greens were laid later that year, and the original nine holes covered 2,922 yards. Par golfers at that time came in at 35 strokes.

The women members of the club were active golfers and bridge players. Thursdays were set aside as ladies' days, although they could, of course, play any day they chose. In 1925 the Ladies' Bridge Club was accepted into the club.

## 1930-34 DEPRESSION

The effects of the great Depression on Healdsburg lagged the urban areas of the state by a little; but when they reached the area, they hit hard. Memberships fell drastically in 1930, so much so that the club took out a \$9,000 mortgage in order to keep the course in shape. It was plain for all to see that the members planned for the club to outlast the Depression.

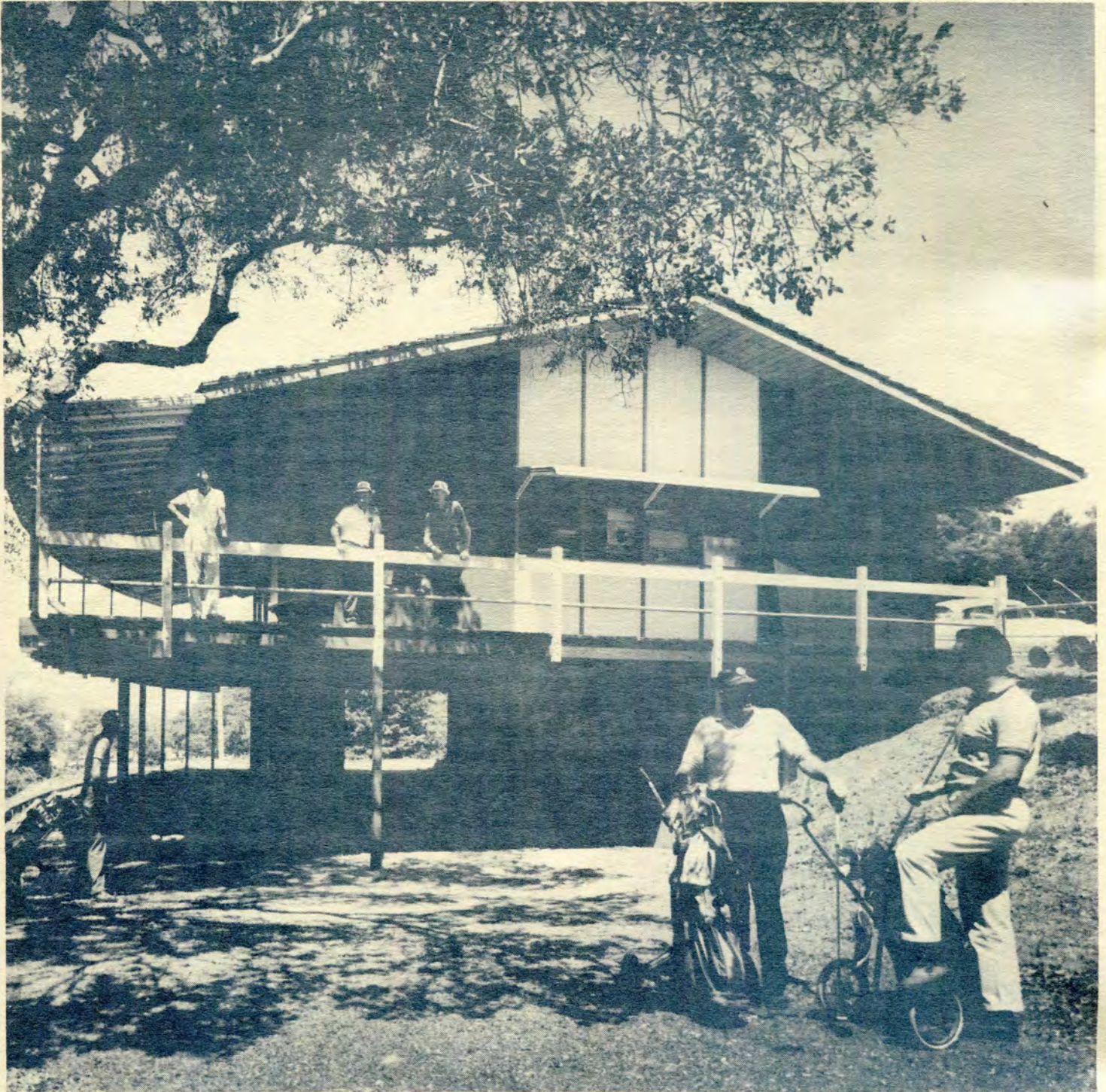
The mortgagor was a local physician, Charles Weaver, who extended the note at 6 percent, secured by a deed of trust payable within three years. Dr. Weaver died in 1933, 18 days before the note was due. By the time Guy Lombardo rang in 1934, the club could list but 25 members.

The Salvation Army Lytton Home was the beneficiary of Dr. Weaver's mortgage, receiving it with the understanding that the eventual monies would be used to establish a children's hospital at the home. The Salvation Army, desiring a hospital more than a mortgage, appointed three members, also Lytton Home trustees, responsible for the recovery of money and interest owed the Salvation Army on the promissory note.

## 1935-50 WAR YEARS

The Salvation Army agreed to accept \$6,000 on the promissory note of \$9,000 owed by the club provided the city would buy the property from the club for use as a public park. The city agreed to buy the course from the club for \$6,010. The purchase was made possible by the passing of Ordinance 240, introduced to the City Council in January, 1935. The ordinance was finally passed and adopted by the council.

In March, 1935 a resolution was adopted to accept the deed from the club conveying the lands to the city that were described in Ordinance 240. Healdsburg



Circa 1960

*"On the left the vineyards bordering Mesa, the second hole, remind that Healdsburg has its roots in agriculture. On the right, the raw beauty of the indigenous foliage helps put our presence in the area into healthy perspective. It is hoped that perspective is carried by all who enjoy the fortunes of Tayman Park."*

took responsibility for the course so that its members and other golfers could still enjoy playing.

Another resolution was passed by the council in March, 1935 establishing operating personnel and fees for the use of the course.

The park was to be named Tayman Park after the founder and first president. A written application by persons who desired monthly or yearly green fees had to be presented to the city clerk with payment in full. A card provided by the city would be given to the application for verification.

A golf professional along with the Building and Grounds Committee of the city set up rules and regulations regarding the use of the course that were to be posted in a conspicuous place. The City Council gave the golf professional power to enforce these rules and to exclude any person disregarding such regulations from using the course.

Many changes to the course were made during the late '30s and early '40s. Projects started by the WPA included bringing piped water to all the fairways, rehabilitating the grass, reconstructing foot bridges over the creeks, modernizing the old clubhouse, building a starter's shack, and installing lighted tennis courts.

### 1950-74 TAYMAN THRIVES

These years could rightly be called the Hanger era in deference to Bill Hanger who was the club professional. Hanger, by virtue of his fervor, experience, professionalism, and demeanor, had both a stabilizing and prospering effect on the course. The rapid growth of Healdsburg into one of Northern California's most desirable resorts did not hurt the fortunes of Tayman Park either. Suffice to say the man and the times were right for each other.

Although each hole had its own descriptive name for years, Hanger is credited as being the first to use the names on Tayman Park score cards.

In the early '60s changes were made to the second and third holes. The green on two was moved down and to the right, making cardiac hill an easier climb for players. Concurrently, the third tee was moved to accommodate the new second green.

A new pro shop was constructed in 1963 to the right of the old shop. The tennis courts were removed to make room for the new shop and increase parking facilities.

Later in the '60s two other topological changes were made. Tee four, basically a rubber mat under a large oak tree, was moved back about 30 yards and to the left of its original position. On the par 3 fifth hole another green was installed to adjoin the original on the right. This became the fourteenth green. It not only provided more challenge to the golfer by increasing distance, it also saved wear on the fifth, while making Tayman Park the only 10-hole course in Northern California.

### 1974-84 TROUBLED YEARS

Upon Hanger's retirement in '74, the city hired Gary Williams as the head golf pro. Williams ran the course much in the manner of his predecessors but had to contend with adversities they did not.

Paramount among those adversities was the passage of Prop 13 which caused severe cuts in state funding to the city. Tayman was among the hardest hit of city operations. Add inflation to this scenario, and you have a situation where prices for needed services increase while the actual dollars available to buy them have decreased. When the '77 drought is factored in, you have a course that, by some estimates, lost as much as \$40,000 annually.

The city made a daring move in '79 when it contracted with Williams to operate the course solely for ten years. In return Williams was to receive all monies from club operation. The city also set aside \$7,500 annually to be used by Williams for any major improvements. The city felt that an independent operator could hire the required maintenance staff at below Civil Service prices, and a profit motive would work to keep the course in optimal condition.

Improvements to the course during these years included laying of sprinkler systems on holes six and nine and the building of a new teeing area for hole eight.

In early '83 members of the Healdsburg Men's and Women's Golf Clubs approached the City Council with a request to terminate Williams' contract on the grounds that he had not maintained the course in good condition as specified in his contract. Then the city entered into an agreement with the Healdsburg Men's and Women's Golf Clubs to operate the course on an interim basis until a full-time operator could be found.

### 1984-87 LATEST CHAPTER

In May, 1984 the Summers-Engen Corporation, doing business as Golfco, became Tayman Park course managers. The lease agreement between Healdsburg and Golfco was for a ten-year period. Golfco would compensate the city according to a set schedule. Golfco was to improve the maintain the course at their expense.



Circa 1948

Initially Golfco was a model operator. The course had been well maintained, and the pro shop was well stocked. Disaster struck Tayman Park, however, at a most ironic moment in late 1985. On December 24 fire broke out in the golf storage area beneath the pro shop, and within minutes the whole structure was ablaze. Even though the Fire Department was on the scene scant minutes later, all records, merchandise, fixtures, and 13 rental electric golf carts were destroyed; and the pro shop was reduced to a charred shell. The department's quick response was instrumental in preventing the blaze from spreading to the new cart shed, club house, and old pro shop. The fire chief suspected arson, but irrefutable evidence could not be obtained.

Golfco carried insurance covering the loss by fire to merchandise, fixtures, and the building; and the city was covered for loss on the building as well. In spite of coverage against fire damage, Golfco informed the city of its intent to terminate its ten-year agreement that allowed for cancellation in the event of fire. Golfco agreed to manage the course until the city found a suitable replacement. Golfco used a mobile home as an interim pro shop until a new building could be erected.

In August, 1985 the City Council established a Golf Course Commission empowered to recommend improvements to be made by the next hired contractor. In August, 1986 a contract agreed to by Silband Sports Corporation and the city for the former to operate and maintain the course was signed. The contract with Silband was for a period of five years.

## FROM 1987

Politics, economics, acts of God, and horrendous slices notwithstanding, Tayman Park is and will remain a lovely, challenging, and amiable setting for the game of golf. Similarly, it will always be a place for

Healdsburg residents who don't golf to congregate for bridge, parties, weddings, or that particular Healdsburg art form, socializing. Tayman Park assumes a bit more life, becomes a shade richer, if visitors can remember the days of Colonel Tayman and the other pioneers who had a vision of life in the slow lane, a lane that has stretched on for years and promises to go more without speeding up. •••



## LYTTON SPRINGS



*Carol Brigham*

located in the hills above the Lytton Springs Road is the soda spring that supplied mineral waters to the Lytton Springs Resort in the late 1800s. Actual discovery of the spring is unknown; but it would appear to have been developed about 1863, judging from the date etched in the concrete enclosure.



*Main building circa 1915*

In 1873 William Lytton and three partners bought 650 acres of land, including the spring and adjoining the Northwestern Pacific Railroad. In 1875 Lytton built a resort hotel on the property for \$75,000. He had the mineral spring water bottled in a wooden shack 20 feet below the spring and carted to the resort for distribution and sale under two labels--Lytton Spring Soda Water and Geysers Soda Water. Currently the spring runs at the rate of about one gallon per minute and is naturally carbonated with a not unpleasant taste of iron and other minerals.

A second spring was developed at the intersection of Lytton Springs Road and the road leading to the side entrance of the resort some time later but apparently was never bottled for sale. Verna and Felix Lafon recall this spring as bubbly water flowing from a pipe as late as the 1930s.

The soda spring and the resort were in vogue until the turn of the century. After several owners the entire facility was finally closed and some time in 1904 was bought by the Salvation Army for \$52,000. Six weeks later the facility was reopened as a children's home, and the springs were abandoned. Today many of the original resort buildings are still in use by the Salvation Army as an adult rehabilitation center; the springs are a relic of the past. •••

# SOCIETY NOTES

## ZINFANDEL HOP RAFFLE

Norbert Babin

### FROM THE PRESIDENT

Phillip Smith

The fiscal problems confronting California cities in 1991 has touched Healdsburg as well. As originally presented to the City Council, the 1991-92 budget proposed to reduce the museum's allotment by approximately \$20,000, from almost \$60,000 budgeted in 1990-91 to under \$40,000 for the upcoming year. (Due to the curator's maternity leave, the museum's 1990-91 operating costs actually were less than originally budgeted.) Had the council accepted the proposed budget, the curator's time would have been substantially reduced, services lessened, and hours curtailed. However, a series of meetings were held with the assistant city manager; and we were able to make a presentation to the City Council. The final result is that while the museum's allotment will be reduced by about \$10,000--better than \$20,000--the museum's activities and hours will not be limited to the extent at first feared.

In order to insure business as usual, the society will have to assume some of the costs heretofore borne by the city, including advertising and printing (publicity), some supplies, and expendable tools and equipment. Fortunately the loan from the city to fund the part-time assistant curator has not been affected.

The above underscores the continued need for your support, particularly financial. The Spring Dinner at Madrona Manor was both a financial and social success. The Zinfandel Hop committee's plans for this year's event insures its social success. The format retains all of the pluses, such as local music, food, beer and wine, and raffle. In addition to Hop Kiln, a number of other local wineries will offer their zinfandels, chocolate will be available, live entertainment will be featured, local art will be for sale, and a dance floor will be installed. It is imperative the Zin Hop receives your financial support. Please buy a ticket, attend, and bring your friends.

Jill Bacon, our part-time assistant curator, who performed that job so well and filled in very admirably for Hannah during her maternity leave, has been offered an advancement in her other career--computers--which she cannot decline. Therefore, she tendered her resignation, which was accepted with regret. Fortunately for us she plans on remaining active in the Historical Society. We wish her well in her new position.

Have a pleasant summer, and I'll see you all at the Zin Hop on Saturday, September 21. •••

The fifth annual Zinfandel Hop at the Hop Kiln Winery, to be held on Saturday, September 21, 1991, is nearly upon us. And within the next few weeks I will be sending raffle tickets to all members of the Healdsburg Historical Society for their purchase or sale. This year there is an added incentive in that tickets will be sold at \$1 a ticket or six tickets for \$5. Each of the members of the society will be receiving two books. Also, this year we will have three winners instead of just one. The first prize will be a three-day, two-night stay at Sutter Creek Inn, along with a dinner at a fine gold country restaurant. Second prize is some beautiful Evans ceramics, and the third prize is \$200 in cash. We hope the change in our approach to the raffle will cause more of you to donate to your museum through the purchase of raffle tickets.

As you know the museum really needs your help in view of the fact that the City of Healdsburg will be cutting the operating budget of the museum this year, and it will be of much greater necessity that the Historical Society provide as much financial support as possible to maintain our museum as the great community project that it has become over the last several years.

While we recognize the considerable demands on you for charitable contributions, we hope that you will do your part to make the raffle a glowing success this year, and at the same time have a chance to win one of the great prizes which are being offered. Remember the contribution that you make to this project is one which benefits you and the entire Healdsburg community.

Thanks so much for all of your help and cooperation in making the raffle and the Zinfandel Hop a success. I hope to see you all at the Hop Kiln Winery on Saturday, September 21, 1991. Mark your calendars. •••

### NEW MEMBERS

We welcome new members David Craft and Elizabeth Neal.

### IN MEMORY

We regretfully acknowledge the society members who have passed away: Edwin Hughes, Bill Mulgrew, and Elmer Christensen.

### GIFT SHOP/PRESERVATION AWARDS

We are looking forward to the fall and winter (Christmas) season and are now in the midst of ordering a bountiful supply of appropriate items. With

the upcoming Zin Hop scheduled for September 21, we are planning to have a nice selection of holiday items for sale at the gift shop table--ornaments, toys, and books.

Who could have predicted the smashing success of the museum gift shop. We certainly have been pleased with the public response to our selection of books and gift items. With the continuation of the "Quilt Show", we are carrying a nice selection of quilt books. The emphasis is on the historical element, but there is instruction also.

Last year the Historical Society initiated the giving of preservation awards in Healdsburg. Since there is considerable interest in the preservation and care of historical buildings (commercial and residential), the gift shop is planning to make available books which deal with this subject. These editions will be reasonable in cost and should be on the shelf very soon. We hope anyone interested in rehabilitating an older home would find these books most helpful.

## BUILDING PRESERVATION AWARDS

John Hoag

The Healdsburg Historical Society invites nominations for its 1991 Healdsburg Preservation Awards to be given for commercial and residential categories. The deadline for nominations is December 1, 1991, at which time the nominated projects must have been completed. Only those projects within the Healdsburg area will be considered for the awards. The 1991 award will be announced at the annual member meeting of the Historical Society scheduled in January, 1992.

## MAY DAY FANTASY DINNER

Over 80 Historical Society members and their guests enjoyed the museum fundraising dinner hosted by Carol and John Muir at their lovely Madrona Manor Bed and Breakfast Inn. Executive Chef Todd Muir designed a five-course gourmet menu for the evening which consisted of hors d'oeuvres served with Korbel natural champagne, rock shrimp with green beans and saffron vinaigrette, squab bollotine with pistachios, mustard and chutney, filet of beef stuffed with wild mushrooms and herbs, polenta lasagna, and caramelized lemon tart with sauce anglaise was complemented by Hafner Vineyards 1985 late harvest Johannesburg riesling.

Other wines enjoyed during the evening were generously donated by White Oak Vineyards, Clos du Bois, Davis Bynum, Murphy-Goode, Preston Winery, Jordon, Gauer Estate Vineyards, Foppiano Vineyards, Mill Creek Vineyards, William Wheeler, Geyser Peak, and Alexander Valley. •••

# MUSEUM NEWS

## DIRECTOR'S DESK

### ENDOWMENTS: A TIMELY IDEA

Hannah Clayborn

In July the Healdsburg City Council found it necessary to make some emergency cuts to the City of Healdsburg general fund budget. The general fund finances most of the normal day-to-day operations of the city departments, including the museum. Although the final cuts to the museum budget were substantially smaller than originally recommended by the city manager, the museum will still lose about \$10,000 of its operating budget. Hopefully this year the Historical Society can augment the museum budget enough to keep critical operations going and the doors open. But these cuts will unavoidably effect museum operations this year.

The recent budget crunch starkly points out how vulnerable the museum is to a changing economic and political climate. Museums and other cultural institutions, no matter how efficiently run, are invariably and understandably the first targets during an economic crisis. Until last year all of our fundraising efforts have been diligently directed toward the restoration and remodeling of the Carnegie building as a permanent home for the museum. Those efforts made possible the beautiful museum facility that we now enjoy. Yet the facility is of little use to the community if it is shut down, or its operations (exhibits, programs) are severely crippled.

A healthy and growing endowment would initially sustain the museum through those lean times and hopefully eventually become its sole financial support. It is now time to make a serious planning effort toward establishing an endowment for the Healdsburg Museum, the only way to insure its permanence amidst the vagaries of money and politics. It is an idea whose time has come.

I call on all members who are interested in serving on a newly formed Healdsburg Museum Endowment Planning Committee to contact me. Remember this is a strategy planning committee. You do not have to be wealthy to participate. Right now your contribution to the museum can take the form of shrewd strategy, solid investments, energy, and good ideas.

Hannah M. Clayborn  
Director/Curator  
Healdsburg Museum  
Edwin Langhart, Founder  
221 Matheson Street  
Healdsburg, CA 95448  
707/431-3325 •••





## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Members night at the museum

On August 30, 1991, from 7 to 9 pm, museum staff and volunteers will host a reception for members of the Historical Society to view two additions to our artifact collections. The first is a charming and dramatic California school painting from 1860 depicting the famous stagecoach to the Geysers. The stage was owned and operated by Sonoma County's most notorious stage driver, Charlie Foss, known for his high speed runs on the harrowing hairpin turns of Sonoma County's most dangerous road. On the Road from the Geysers, painted by Elizabeth Rockwell in 1860, will serve as a backdrop for an entertaining talk about the history of Foss and his infamous stage. The painting is on loan to our museum from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (the DeYoung Museum).

Our second acquisition, which was two years in the making, is a carefully researched reproduction of a "Californio" saddle, the type used by Mexican-Californian rancheros in the 1840s. So few of these saddles exist today that we were forced to commission a replica, but it is a masterpiece of saddlemaking that will enhance the "ranchos" section of our permanent exhibits. The saddle will serve as a backdrop for a description of the stunning horsemanship of the native Californians of that era.

Join us on that evening to view these new treasures, hear colorful historical accounts, and enjoy refreshments. Admission is free to all members, \$1 for non-members.

### TOYS OF THE FABULOUS FIFTIES

The next special exhibit at the museum will be "Toys of Christmas Past", our eleventh annual antique and collectible toy display. This year our show will be very different and no doubt controversial--"Toys of the Fabulous Fifties" (1950s, that is). Why is this controversial? Many people think that the toys of the 1950s just aren't "old" enough for a museum, so we have neglected this era in our last ten Christmas displays. Nostalgic babyboomers may rejoice this year, however, as we make up for that neglect by packing the museum with playthings they will fondly remember. If you have any fabulous fifties treasures in your attic which you would like to loan for this exhibit, please let us know. The exhibit will run from November 26 through January 12, 1992.

### SPRING EXHIBIT CANCELED?

As we go to press (July) the Healdsburg City Council is considering emergency budget cuts that may eliminate up to \$20,000 (roughly one-third) of the museum's operating budget. If these cuts are made, the

museum must cancel its special exhibit this spring. If not, we will proceed with plans for "Engines and Agriculture", a photo essay and exhibit focusing on the use of gasoline and steam engines in Sonoma County's primary Nineteenth Century industry. The excellent photography of Charles Case will be featured along with an exploration of the development of agriculture. This exhibit will run from February 4 through April 28, 1992.

### ARTIFACT DONATIONS

The following generous people have donated artifacts to the museum collection since our last publication:

Bill Sandlin, Paloma Luce, Lois Schwab Bertagna, Remo Galeazzi, Benned Madison, Margaret Dufresne, John Barrett, Priscilla Moore, Lee R. Hamilton, Maye Christman, Maud Cummings

### DOCENT PROGRAM

The museum docent program is doing very well as we enter our second year as a group. We are now able to fill our Tuesday-through-Sunday schedule almost completely. There are 36 volunteers working regularly, one or two on each day. Museum attendance is increasing, and we are meeting people from many different areas--even from other states--making our jobs as docents even more interesting. We still need volunteers for the weekends, the busiest days for the museum. Men are welcome as docents as well, so let's hear from some of you. The museum needs your help.

...

ZIN HOP

Saturday, September 21  
Hop Kiln Winery



...  
STAFF  
Verna Lafon, News  
Curt Sloan, Layout

# A CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE

## The Matheson Letters

### Part V

THIS IS THE CONCLUDING SEGMENT OF THE LETTERS OF COLONEL RODERICK MATHESON, WHO SET OUT FOR CALIFORNIA IN 1849. IN PRIOR SEGMENTS MATHESON JOURNEYED AROUND CAPE HORN AND LANDED IN GOLD-RUSH CRAZED SAN FRANCISCO. WE PICK UP HIS NARRATIVE IN THE MIDDLE OF A LETTER HOME TO HIS WIFE NETTIE, DESCRIBING EVENTS IN SACRAMENTO, WHERE MATHESON IS WAITING WITH FRIENDS TO STAKE A MINING CLAIM. IN ORDER TO CONCLUDE HIS GOLD-RUSH ERA LETTERS, THIS SEGMENT IS SEVERELY EDITED. WE REMIND OUR READERS, HOWEVER, THAT FULL TRANSCRIPTS OF THESE FASCINATING LETTERS ARE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC AT THE HEALDSBURG MUSEUM.

#### SACRAMENTO CITY, NOVEMBER 11, 1849



This, the holy Sabbath day, has been a fine one in more respects than one for it not only has the fine weather and we have had a chance to dry ourselves and our clothing [after heavy rains], but

we have had the privilege of having two first-rate gospel sermons, one in the morning by a Methodist and the other by a Baptist. The Reverend Mr. Wheeler of San Francisco, perhaps you may have heard of him through the newspapers, his congregation gives him \$10,000 a year. Religion is in quite a flourishing condition in this country if we can judge from the liberal manner in which the people subscribe to purchasing timber for erecting places of worship. The Methodists have a good-sized house all enclosed except the roof. We expected to have public worship in it today, but the weather would not permit them to complete it. We have not heard from Wiggins since Mr. Puffer left him at the canyon where we intended to make our diggings and put up our log house this winter.

I received a letter from Stout two days ago. Poor fellow, he has had a hard time of it. He took a whale boat and started from San Francisco for the purpose of trying to raise [reach] the boat. But he had not gotten further than Pablo Bay before he was taken

sick, and he had to return. By the time he reached San Francisco, he had a pretty hard attack of shills and fever; but when he wrote me on the 3rd, he had pretty much recovered and thought he would be able to join us in about eight days and bring up my letters if there are any!

You can imagine my anxiety of mind when you remember that I have so much interest in you all, the cholera being in your midst. How has it been with you all? But, pshaw!, what is the use of asking questions that take six months to answer.

#### SAN FRANCISCO, ALTA CALIFORNIA JANUARY 24, 1850

[After a lengthy explanation about why Matheson did not send an expected two ounces of gold dust home to his wife in New York.] When I wrote you last I told you that I was in prospect of going into business and that I had had some good offers. I am afraid that I shall not be able to come home before this fall. This is a long time and to me it appears an age, yet I cannot help it. I am compelled to make the best of a bad bargain. Now that I am in this scrape I am determined to make something of it. I have changed my mind somewhat and think now that I can accept all of them (the offers I mean) instead of one.

I wrote you that I had in company a young man from Brooklyn named Puffer. He brought out a large invoice of merchandise and upon his arrival here bought a lot of ground which has improved so much in value that some parties are disposed to dispute his claims. But the trial comes off tomorrow when it will be finally settled. Then he will be able to sell and put his goods and money in with my offers. We intend to open a commission house in Sacramento City and a store in the mines, say at Yuba City. I hope that by the time the steamer sails that I will be able to give you all the information that you must be anxious to hear. Poor Stout has not yet heard of the loss of his wife and child. I am just going to write him the painful intelligence. I would that some other man had it to do. So goodbye my own little wife for this night.

#### SAN FRANCISCO, JANUARY 25, 1850

My Dearest and beloved Netty, I have no doubt you feel interested in what concerns me so I will give you the decision of the court in the case of my friend Mr. Puffer which came off this morning. He made purchase of this lot at sea from one of his fellow passengers who had been in this city, but upon his arrival here, there being no place of register, the deed was not made out, and when a register was opened Mr. Puffer was with me in Sacramento. In the meantime the person that he bought from was in a business rather too expensive and before our return he had failed and all their property had been seized upon by the Sheriff

and was about to be sold for the benefit of his creditors. He at once got out an injunction and stopped the sale of the real estate. This morning the trial came off. But it is all in vain. He lost the suit but thinks something of carrying it to another country but costs of court are so high that there is some doubt in my mind if anything else will be done with the case.

This is the Sabbath evening (27th) and I have no place to go. It is dangerous to go out after dark as the roads are so muddy that in some places a person would sink two to four feet. You can have no idea, my Dearest, what a deplorable condition our city is in.

But I will give you a description of a Sunday in San Francisco to the best of my ability, and I can assure you that it is very different indeed from one in New York. In the first place it is true that the principal stores in the city are closed, but by far the greater number are open and perhaps doing more business than any other day of the week. Then almost every other house is a \_\_\_ Palace and gambling hall. These are all open and in full operation. In each one of these houses there is more or less music. In one two violins; in another, part of a brass band; in another a piano or flute, etc., etc. These are all playing at one time. As you pass through the streets (heaven forgive me for calling them such) whatever reflections may be passing in your mind are difficult to retain. But this is the worst side of the place.

We have in this place a Methodist Church that was got out and built in Oregon and made present to the Society here as some slight return for the kindness to them by their eastern brethren in days that have gone by. Their pastor is a first-rate, plain, old-fashioned man and is liked very well, and I think will do much good. Next we have the Baptist Church, a very nice one. Their preacher is the \_\_\_ San Francisco. His salary is \$10,000 per year, but it can in no wise compare to our second-rate preachers in New York. In fact I would rather sit under the Methodist (not because I am of the same denomination as himself). There is the most friendly feeling existing between the Methodists and Baptists. I heard Mr. Wheeler this morning in his own church. This afternoon I heard Mr. Owen, the Methodist preacher of Sacramento at Mr. Wheeler's church, and this evening Mr. Wheeler preaches in the Methodist Church.

But, my dearest and beloved Netty, although I am not deprived of ale, the means of grace, and some gentle comforts of socialized life, yet there is a void, a vacancy, which nothing but your presence can fill. My own love you wrong me much when you hint at such a thing as coldness on my part. What do you suppose detains me here deprived of Society as well as of most of those things which you deem necessary and we call luxuries such as potatoes and onions. I have not spoken to a female for at least two months. Last Sunday I had a lady look at Me! This I consider a good omen. In fact it is as great a wonder as it would be to

find a four-leaf clover.

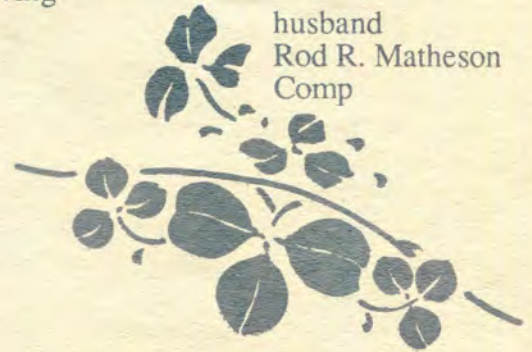
[The letter above, written in January, 1850 is the last letter we have from Matheson until February 14, 1852. The intervening letters, if they once existed, have been lost. In the meantime he became involved in local politics. In 1852 Matheson was instrumental in founding the Farmers and Mechanics Institute (the first college in San Francisco) and was made comptroller of the city of San Francisco. Finally on January 31, 1853 Matheson writes joyously to his wife, Nettie, whom he has not seen since January 22, 1849.]

### JANUARY 31, 1853

My Dearest Netty, not knowing as to whether you will ever get this or not I shall write but a very few lines. Another reason that I cannot write as much is that I have been moving the City officers into the new City Hall. It is a very fine building. By the way this is pay day, so I will have my hands full. For once I feel tired and worn out, but I could not forego the pleasure of writing my darling for another time, although I have nothing of consequence to communicate.

But I must conclude and now accept my love and I shall write you no more until I see you. Oh! darling could I express to you my feelings when I reflect upon the importance of the thought of seeing my wife Netty and my own darling child. Why attempt to put upon paper what the heart is too full to express even to its own understanding. I shall burn until I hear that you have started. Everyday I shall grow more impatient until you arrive. Now goodnight and may God keep and preserve you well until we meet in the prayer of your loving

husband  
Rod R. Matheson  
Comp



[Antoinette (Nettie) and son, Roderick Jr., did join Matheson in San Francisco in 1853. They all moved to the town of Healdsburg in 1857, where they flourished until Matheson went to Washington, DC to attend President Lincoln's inauguration in 1861. Becoming embroiled in the Civil War politics, Matheson became the first colonel of the First California Regiment. He was killed in battle in 1862. His series of letters home to Healdsburg during the early years of the Civil War are touching and worthy of historical study. For more information about Colonel Roderick Matheson and his writings, please visit the Healdsburg Museum research library.] •••

twelve



V E N T S

*August 1991*

*New Artifacts Reception*

*September 1991*

*Zin Hop*

*November 1991*

*Toys of Christmas Past Exhibit*

*January 1992*

*Healdsburg Preservation Awards*

*February 1992*

*Engines & Agriculture Exhibit*

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