RUSSIAN RIVER



RECORDER



Grant School, Circa 1919

Grade School Memories

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Of Special Interest

Coming July 19th:

A special exhibit on marriage and courtship rituals. Recently, the museum received two new wedding dresses to add to our already wonderful collection of bridal attire. So, we thought summer a perfect opportunity to explore some of the customs which surrounded wedding and courtship in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and at the same time, display our new treasures. If you've been curious as to when some of the wedding and courtship customs we follow took shape, be sure to stop by the Museum this summer and explore them with us.

Recorder Staff

Editor: Darla Meeker Assistant: Gabe Fraire Layout: Steve Perkins Printing: Solo Press



Healdsburg Historical Society

Ed Langhart, Founder

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(Curator)

MUSEUM NEWS

Claire Rithner

This was a busy winter at the Museum as we researched and designed the current exhibit, The Hours We Give to Study: a History of Education in Northern Sonoma County. Mary Beth Shaw, who coordinates an association of museums, California Exhibition Resources Alliances (CERA), was hired to curate the exhibit, and in the process, train me in exhibit construction. Researching Healdsburg's schools was a great way to begin learning about Healdsburg's rich history, since the schools have been such an integral part of the town's development.

One of the best aspects of this exhibit was the large amount of volunteer support Mary Beth and I received. Longtime community members such as Earl Osborn, Wayne Barrett, and Bill Caldwell helped us fill in our historical knowledge by answering (many) questions and giving oral histories. Museum volunteers Dawn Moser, Katherine Popich, Judy Babin, Dave Van Winkle, Bob Rawlins, and Ken Mullen all lent their individual expertise to particular tasks. They each saved Mary Beth and me hours of time and worry. Special thanks to Robert and Lavella Hill who drove all the way from Modesto to deliver some prized family artifacts. Darla Budworth acted as the Museum's liaison to the generation of Healdsburg High School students who graduated in the fifties, and remain unconvinced that their memorabilia belongs in a museum yet! And, as always, Bob Jones traveled near and far to retrieve necessary artifacts.

Many thanks to everyone who helped, it was a big job made much lighter by the tremendous amount of volunteer support we received.



Flower Maids at Healdsburg Grammar School (Circa 1920)

The following generous people have donated artifacts to the Museum's collection since our last publication:

Virginia Hall Nunes
Virginia Hall Higbee
June Smith
John Cross
Bob Curtis
Catherine Curtis
Pat Schmidt
Wayne Barrett
Priscilla Colton-Ewing
Bill Caldwell
Robert Hill
Mae Malone
Estate of Cleone Stevens Tilley
Healdsburg Senior Center/ Estate of Anna
Swisher

Jean M. King

President's Address

Nobert Babin

Since the last Russian River Recorder, the Healdsburg Historical Society has taken over the operation of our Museum from the City of Healdsburg. Approval of this change was adopted at our annual meeting in January. We have, with the approval of the membership, amended the by-laws of the Society to reflect this momentous change. The future of the Society and the Museum looks bright, and with your membership, active participation, and donations, it will be even brighter.

We have established several committees to assist the Board of Directors in moving us along into the Twenty-First Century. Without slighting any committee not mentioned, I want to tell you that the membership, fundraising, and volunteer committees are at the forefront of our efforts to ensure the success we all desire and anticipate. The Healdsburg Museum Volunteer Committee (commonly known as HMVA, or "HUMVA") needs your assistance. This active group is involved with the docents, exhibits, the gift shop, oral history, outreach, crafts, and numerous other aspects of the Society's activities.

Under the leadership of Claire Rithner, our Curator, our Museum is now open six days a week, and will provide even more service to the community than it has in the past.

The long-range planning committee will be submitting a report to the membership at the next annual meeting setting forth all of the goals that our Society will want to meet by the turn of the century. With the understanding that the youth of the community are history makers, presently, and in the future, we look toward a goal of getting the younger people more actively involved in our Society. With the long and illustrious history of the Hispanic presence in the Healdsburg area, we will increase our efforts to have that segment of the community become actively involved in the

Society, and push forward to preserve that rich history.

Thanks to all of you for your continuing support and activities on behalf of the Healdsburg Museum and Historical Society.



Single Woman Homesteader
Peggy Rawlins/Museum Outreach

Leona Dixon Cox, 92-year-old rancher and author of four books, arrived from her Yuba County ranch, minus her usual mode of transportation, a Yamaha motorcycle, which she rides since the loss of a leg several years ago. Cox drove here in a van full of her books to sell and sign at her Healdsburg Museum and Levin & Co bookstore appearances. At the Foss Creek School, Cox spoke to the children on their library day, thrilling them with her tales of homesteading and riding the Sonoma range on her horse during the 1930's

Continuing her two day stay in Healdsburg, Cox spoke on Saturday morning to a full house at the library and then signed her book "Single Woman Homesteader" for admiring listeners. Many Healdsburg residents remember Cox, having gone to school or picnicked with her on her Sonoma County ranch.

Cox was brought to Healdsburg by the new Museum outreach program and, by all accounts, her visit was a success.

Guilford School Memories, Circa 1932

"No matter how far removed, even amid the wildest and most rugged mountains, there will be found the school house."

History of Sonoma County, 1880

Guilford School was one of 25 one and two-room schoolhouses that once dotted the outlying hills and valleys of the Healdsburg area. Erected sometime before 1870, it was first located at 5720 Red Winery Road, where it also served as a Sunday School, until 1896, when the Alexander Valley Church was built.

In 1900, plans were made to move Guilford School to a site alongside Gird Creek, where Highway 128 makes a 90-degree right angle turn, intersected on the west by Wasson Lane. At the time the straight stretch of road from the Alexander Valley Store to the turn was known as Beeson Lane.

Many Guilford School students, as well as one of its teachers, still live in Alexander Valley, or in the town of Healdsburg. Their combined recollections of typical school-day activities more than likely mirror similar experiences of those students who attended other Healdsburg area schoolhouses of the same era, which bore such familiar names as Pine Ridge, Lambert, Felta and Sotoyome. Although Guilford School was demolished, its legacy as an independent school district in the Healdsburg area lives on in the memories of its former grade-school pupils.

Entering Guilford

If My family moved to the Guilford School District from the Sotoyome District in 1928," recalls Ruby Osborn Wasson, whose mother, Reta Frellson

Osborn, attended the original Guilford School, between 1894 and 1900, when it was located on Red Winery Road. "I was 8 years old, in the third grade, and very unhappy about having to change schools".

For Albertina (Nina) Zanzi, her first day as a first-grader at Guilford was awesome and exciting. Citing the eight years she spent at Guilford as the "most memorable of my life," Nina recounts the events that led up to that special first day of school. "In my preschool years, I had floated through a carefree Land of Oz in my Dutch-style coveralls. Then, suddenly, my mother was sewing little blue and white and pink frocks. And my father bought me a lunch pail. Armed with a few phrases of English that I'd gleaned from my older brother, I, too, in time, was able to string together whole sentences."



Guilford School, Circa 1916

The School Building

Unlike most of the one-room schoolhouses in the outlying Healdsburg area, Guilford boasted two rooms. Because of their different

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architectural styles, Ruby Wasson believes that they were built at different times.

"The older room was like most of the one-room schools in the county," she says. "It had a very high ceiling, windows on one side, two doors in front that opened out onto a porch and into two anterooms. The anterooms were at the front of the building. They were small rooms where we hung our coats and sweaters and left our lunch pails. One anteroom also had the rope from the bell in it."

The bell itself was located outside above the anteroom in the belfry. It was rung at 9:00 a.m., to summon the students to class, and then again after each recess and, once again, after lunch.

Another Guilford alumnus, Robert Young, recalls that the only time the school bell didn't ring as expected was the morning after Halloween. "I don't remember that we did any trick-or-treating," he recounts, "but we often would walk out around the Valley and by the school. We'd climb up in the bell tower and tie the bell so it couldn't be rung the next day to call us all to class."

While the older students, fifth through eighth grades, attended class in the older room of Guilford School, the younger children, first through fourth grades, spent their school day in the second, newer room. This room, according to Ruby Wasson, had a lower ceiling, wider and lower windows, and lower blackboards.

A long, narrow corridor, which was used for storage, connected the two classrooms. There was also a back porch and two rest rooms, as well as a well-stocked library and a first aid area.

One of the "glowing" features that was found in both rooms, and mentioned by both Ruby Wasson and Nina Zanzi, was the standard wood stove, with a circular metal shield surrounding it. "It was supposed to circulate the heat," remarks Ruby, "but we all sat around it on cold days and 'kept the stove warm' instead."

She also remembers that the wooden schoolroom floors were impregnated with oil, which, if you fell on them left "... an oil stain on your clothes forever."

A Typical School Day

Il Days at Guilford School started with the 'Pledge of Allegiance'," according to Dorothy Ackerman Ruonavaara, who, along with her brother, Eldon, attended Guilford School. After a patriotic song was sung, the students, who were lined up in rows in front of the school's main steps, filed into their respective classrooms.

Nina Zanzi remembers that one of her teachers, Mrs. Georgianna Norton, "revved up" her students by asking them to report on a brief newspaper article, or to tell a good joke. She also fondly recalls ". . . my little desk with its iron-scroll design, and blond, hardwood surface. "Now and then," she muses, "I meet one in some antique shop where it stands in patient dignity, holding a potted plant."

Befitting the times, Guilford School provided its students with a broad curriculum: History, Geography, Arithmetic & Mathematics, Physical Education, Grammar, Penmanship, Arts & Crafts, Literature, and Music. "Music was supplied monthly by a district teacher who traveled from school to school, " reports Dorothy Ruonavaara. "The one I recall most vividly was Mrs. Close, a very proper and exacting lady. One day, as she was demonstrating in song what she wanted us to learn, we heard an additional 'howl' from Fido, who was waiting outside the door. Although we tried to suppress our giggles, it was embarrassing for our teacher."

Shirley Osborn, who entered Guilford in the fifth grade when his family transferred from Sotoyome District, mentions that "Kick the Can", "Annie-Over", and marbles, in season, were among the recess and lunchtime games favored by Guilford students. He also notes that "...Guilford had a tennis court and a basketball court that we hadn't had before, at Sotoyome."

Built by Guilford parents, the asphalt tennis court was used on weekends as well as during school. This early start on tennis, Dorothy Ruonavaara believes, was the basis of a strong tennis team when Guilford students entered Healdsburg High School, upon completion of the 8th grade.

Meanwhile, after a rousing lunch-time game of tennis, softball or basketball, Guilford students returned to their classrooms to rest their heads on their desks as they listened to their teachers read aloud the continuing episodes of the current story or poem, with Longfellow, Stevenson, and London being well-represented during this peaceful and relaxing interlude of an otherwise full and busy school day.

A typical Guilford school day, which began at 9:00 a.m. for the entire student body, ended at 2:00 p.m. for second and third-graders. Third and fourth-graders

were dismissed at 3:00 p.m, while the four upper grades remained in school until 4:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. But, on Fridays, according to Ruby Wasson, they got out at 3:00 p.m.

While both Ruby and her brother, Shirley, remember hearing how their mother walked along the fence railings to get to school when the ground was wet and muddy, they usually rode their bikes to school and home again, as did many of their classmates. "On the way home we often stopped and played in Gird Creek," says Robert Young. "It had a lot of beautiful trout, so we'd bring along a burlap bag or two, prop open the end with boughs, and then chase the fish into what looked like good hiding places, but which were really our bags. We caught quite a few that way."

Guilford boys and girls, alike, also played basketball with Geyserville Grammar School, according to Shirley Osborn, as well as baseball with Alexander, Lytton, and Maacama schools, during after-school hours.



Photo Identification - Guilford School, 1931-32 (Photograph courtesy of Dorothy Ruonavaara and Nina Zanzi)

<u>Back row left to right:</u> Max Smith, Shirley Osborn, Wilber Hart, Robert Young, Floyd Eachus, Fred Wasson, George Griffith <u>Middle row:</u> Dario Zanzi, Marion Young, Ruby Osborn, Dorothy Ackerman, Eleanor Fambrini, Nina Zanzi, Gladys Kitchen, Mrs. Mabel Eachus (teacher), Eldon Ackerman

<u>Front row:</u> George Wilson, Phil Wasson, Elmer Hart, Charlie Hart, Lorenzo Cavallo, Olga Cavallo, Lorraine Frandenburg, Elva Frandenburg, Hart, _____? Hart, ?

Elma Goodman, who taught at Guilford, still remembers the time she piled her pupils into the back of a flatboard truck with sideboards, and traveled to Grant School, which is located south of Healdsburg near Foppiano Winery, for their very first volleyball game. "Back then you didn't think about insurance," she says with a laugh. "And we were nervy enough to say that we'd come back again for another game."

Along with Elma Goodman and Georgianna Norton, there were several other teachers that are remembered fondly by Guilford students: Mabel Eachus, Lois Neugent, Gladys Wasson Smith and Vivian Wasson.

Guilford's Christmas Plays

I Christmas was the big time of the year," according to Nina Zanzi, "when the entire student body became a Hollywood production company... creating the set, the decorations, making the costumes (with the help of moms), rehearsing the cast for the 'Opening Night' presentation of the selected play to family and friends."

Looking back, Nina wonders who was most nervous on Opening Night: The pupils or the parents. Whatever the case may have been, she adds, that "...the evening was always received with great enthusiasm."

Ruby Wasson also enjoyed these Christmas programs, and particularly remembers a play called "The Sleeping Beauty", which Mrs. Georgianna Norton directed.

The cast included Elizabeth Norton as the Sleeping Princess; Lloyd Patterson as Prince Charming; Ruby's brother, Myrl Osborn, as Blue Beard (who borrowed a sword from friends to look the part); Shirley Osborn, as an animal trainer; and Max Smith as the "trained bear." "I was Cinderella," Ruby recalls, "and I got to wear

a beautiful dress. And Nina Zanzi was my 'Fairy Godmother.'" Louis Wasson, who served as one of three Guilford school board trustees for fifteen years, played the part of Santa Claus for many years at this annual event.

Play Day/End of School Activities

Play Day was held once a year in the spring at one of the following participating schools: Alexander, Maacama, Rogers, Lytton, and Guilford.

According to Dorothy Ruonavaara, Guilford students studied wildflowers in preparation for the annual "Play Day" wildflower contest. There were also games, skits, and a picnic lunch to look forward to.

One year, Ruby Wasson remembers that several Guilford students performed a dance entitled, "Tip-Toe Through the Tulips", for both the May Day celebration at Geyserville and at a Play Day presentation. "Two girls were dressed as Dutch children," she reminisces. "The boys were green leaves and several other girls were the tulips. We wore green skirts and colored petals up around our faces. Mine were red."

Throughout the school year, Guilford parents were very active, and held a P.T. A. meeting once a month in the evenings, at the schoolhouse. "After the meeting, our parents played cards," Shirley Osborn remembers. "In bad weather, the kids played in the other room and, in good weather, we usually played hide and seek outside. We always liked P.T. A. nights."

On the last day of school before summer vacation, there was a baseball game between the fathers and the students at Guilford School. The mothers provided lemonade and, sometimes, ice cream.

There were three students in Dorothy Ruonavaara's eighth grade graduating class. "The time at Guilford School, " she says, "was a good basis for future schooling and establishing lifetime friends."

Even Ruby Wasson, who as a thirdgrader, was "very unhappy" about moving to Guilford, now looks back on all of the fun times she had there. In fact, she married one of the boys she went to school with at Guilford, Fred Wasson.

In 1949, the Guilford, Alexander, and Maacama districts consolidated their efforts to form the Alexander Unified School District. At the time of unification, two Guilford alumni, Robert Young and Fred Wasson, were school board trustees for their grade-school alma mater.

Elizabeth Norton Marchand, whose mother, Georgianna Norton, was one of Guilford's teachers as well as its principal for four years, sums up the way Guilford students felt about their school. "We all loved it," she says, "and enjoyed our time there very much. It was just home."

Contributors to this article include: Dorothy Ruonavaara, Ruby Wasson, Shirley Osborn, Elma Goodman, Robert Young, Albertina (Nina) Zanzi, Fritz Kennedy, Elizabeth Marchand, Lorraine Kimes Owen, Dick Hafner, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Voss.

Compiled by Darla Meeker.

Please Take Note

We did not feature as many photos of Guilford School as we would have liked to, because we have very few in the Museum's archive. If you or someone you know have photos of Guilford School, we would like to borrow them and make a copy. Please call Claire at 431-3325.

Healdsburg Grammar School Memories, circa 1927-1933

June Smith

June Maher Smith, whose childhood home was directly across Tucker Street from Healdsburg Grammar School, is a contemporary of the Guilford School students featured in this issue.

June entered kindergarten in 1927, and really enjoyed going to school each morning as well as the happy hours she and her brother spent playing on the playground equipment with the other kids in the neighborhood. There was "... sliding on the slide, swinging on the bars and rings, up and downing on the teeter-totter, and getting dizzy on three different merry-gorounds."

There was also plenty of room for games of all sorts, including basketball, which became a favorite after-school sport when someone left a basketball for repair at her father's leather shop and forgot to pick it up. The schoolyard itself was lined with locust trees, recalls June, and ". . . their fragrant blossoms in the spring and their cooling shade in the summer were also a part of my school experience."

Built of red brick and gray stone, Healdsburg Grammar School was a "handsome" building, three stories high. "There was a wide flight of stairs from the front entrance to the principal's office and some of the classrooms," June notes. "But we always used the side entrances, with boys lined up on one side of the schoolhouse and girls on the other."

There was also an east wing and a west wing, both one story tall, on the sides of the main building and connected to it with covered walkways, according to June. "The east wing housed the kindergarten room and three primary classrooms. The auditorium, complete with a real stage, including curtains and a balcony on three sides, was in the west wing."



Healdsburg Grammar School, Circa 1927

Along with her Guilford School counterparts, June fondly remembers participating in musical productions. There was an operetta at least once a year, involving all of the classes, from kindergarten through eighth grade. "I can remember my mother sewing my costumes out of crepe paper," June says. "Once I played a Dutch doll, once a sunbeam, and another time a pansy."

In 1933, when June was in the sixth grade, a disastrous earthquake struck southern California, destroying many school buildings and, as June remarks, ". . . causing every school trustee in California to have nightmares."

Soon after, the local school board closed Healdsburg Grammar School, and June attended half-day, afternoon sessions at the American Legion Hall on Center Street. Meanwhile the old brick and stone threestory schoolhouse, was torn down, brick by brick. The single-story wings, however,

remained intact.

In September 1935, the brand-new Mission -style Healdsburg Elementary School was opened at the corner of First and North Streets. "It was really hi-tech for those days," June recalls. "When we gave reports, we went to the principal's office and spoke into a microphone, and our words reached our classroom via intercom."

Cooking class met once a week in the modern cafeteria. But the only things June remembers cooking were cream of tomato soup and stewed prunes. "After all," she says with a laugh, "Healdsburg was 'the buckle of the prune belt'".

Several years ago, the last remaining vestiges of Healdsburg Grammar School disappeared, when St. John's School, which now occupies the Tucker Street site, razed the original one-story wings that once graced the imposing three-story structure. "Now nothing remains of the old school, " says June. "Not even the locust trees.

Barn Volunteered

Jim Fagan, member of The Historical Society Fund-Raising Committee, has volunteered his barn (next to Madrona Manor) and his leadership for a barn sale on Saturday, June fourth. This is just two months away. They say, "Don't call it rummage," but we need all your "excesses" from your attic, basement, closets and garage. Let's call it "Barnage". Please call Jim Fagan, (431-2252) to arrange for pickup or drop-off after May 1. This could be a great fundraiser for the museum.

HMVA - Volunteer Report

Betsy Bippart, Volunteer Coordinator

In the last installment, Winter '93, Susan Bierwirth reported that a potluck luncheon planned for docents and volunteers might lead to organization. And it did. In December, our group was approved as a museum support organization to be called "The Healdsburg Museum Volunteer Association" or HMVA.

HMVA Committee Roster:

Elizabeth Neal Assistant Coordinator June Smith Secretary, Newsletter Community Outreach Peggy Rawlins Susan Bierwirth Docent Calendar Catherine Curtis Floral, Barn Sale June Jones, Rhea Bain Hostess Mailings, Volunteer Hours Carol Clark **Bob Rawlins** Mr. Fix-it Shirley Davis Museum Training Alice & Jack Grove Oral History Geri Meyers Handbook roster Nanci Gunnerson Ways and Means

Board Liasons:

Eleanor Zak Gift Shop
Betty Reukema Membership
Susan Bierwirth Museum Administration
Ginny Canfield Public Relations

Meetings

HMVA meetings are on the 2nd Monday of each month at the Senior Center, 10-12 a.m. All members are invited.

Research, an inventory of artifacts and newspaper indexing continues. In addition, there are plans to involve school children and senior citizens with outreach and tours. In the works are a volunteer handbook, an in-museum study course for our docents, and plans to exhibit individual and group collections in the west display area.

We are directing our thinking toward ways to increase visitor attendance, museum membership and, most important now, projects to raise money. Nanci Gunnerson is working with the Historical Society's Fundraising Committee to improve old ideas and develop new ones.

Everyone is looking forward to another of Todd Muir's fabulous dinners at Madrona Manor, Wednesday evening, May 11th. This will be a very special celebration. Space is limited. Make reservations early.

Two new ideas are under way. The Barn Sale is described elsewhere in The Recorder and The Healdsburg Museum Instant Wine Cellar details will follow in a few weeks.

Here's the bottom line: We need "Barnage", members and money, not necessarily in that order.

<u>Healdsburg Historical Society</u> <u>Membership List</u>

As of March 30, 1994

If you are a member, please check the other side to make certain that your name is listed below. If you don't see a name of someone you think may be interested in joining, why not invite them to become a member today? And remember: gift memberships are available.

Our Mission

The purpose of the Healdsburg Museum and Historical Society is to record and document the history of the greater Healdsburg area through the collection and preservation of historical materials; to foster the appreciation of our local history and culture through programs and activities; and to provide for, and manage the Healdsburg Museum, Edwin Langhart, founder.

Listed below are some very concrete ways in which we are currently implementing the mission statement:

*Our special exhibit, which interprets aspects of the history of education in the Healdsburg area, and our upcoming exhibit on wedding and courtship rituals which will feature many local wedding dresses.

*The "flashback" column in the Healdsburg Tribune, which chronicles events of days-gone-by, as reported in the local newspaper.

*The availability of on-site research facilities.

*Cataloguing and conservation of artifacts relating to Healdsburg's history

New Members

Charlotte Damkroger Nancy Campbell Kurt & Joandell Hahn Bernice Young Bob & Elizabeth Hawthorne Betty Tyler Keith Olsen J.R. & Darlene Ferguson Richard Lehrmann Mildred Gagliardo Robert & Mae Malone Ann Devincenzi Karen Thomas Lee & Gladys Engleke Myrtle Powell Richard & Donna Garvey James & Barbara Fagan Emma Rice Bill & Dawn Moser Jim Brush Mr. & Mrs. Alvie Rochester Eric Drew Mr. & Mrs. Edward Reynolds Lvn Starr George & Joy Wolfe Russ Naber Root & Eastwood - Wine & Spirits Carole Strech

Steve Perkins - Solo Press Gary Watson Gloria Christensen Amy Neel Gordon Patty Melim Michael & Carol Herbert Dee & Bill Anderson Walt Weggenmann Darla Meeker June T. Anderson Vivian Nunes Hollis & Pat Black Sandy Hagan Kaye Rogers Ied Mitchell Muriel Holmes Doris Lorenz Eugenia Ohman Marda Mitchell

Memorial Donations

Thank you

In Memory of Gladys Jacobsen: Lois and Guerdon Miller

In memory of Eloise Prince Liston: Jack and Helen Anderson Joseph and Margaret Otterson

In Memoriam

We regretfully acknowledge the following society members who have passed away:
Edna Wilson McDowell
Eloise Prince Liston

Gift Shop News

Eleanor Zak

At this time of year, I find myself doing lots of planning and ordering for the Museum Gift Shop. Co-manager, Marty Pogue, is currently searching the local area for appropriate and unique items made by crafts people and artisans. We are particularly looking for items of historic interest, such as old-fashioned dolls, toys, and jewelry. If you, or someone you know, makes such items, please contact Eleanor Zak, 433-3059. Please note that the shop has limited space so large pieces are not appropriate.

Gentle reminder: Do plan to shop at the Healdsburg Museum Gift Shop. All monies are used to ensure that the Museum remains the jewel of Healdsburg.