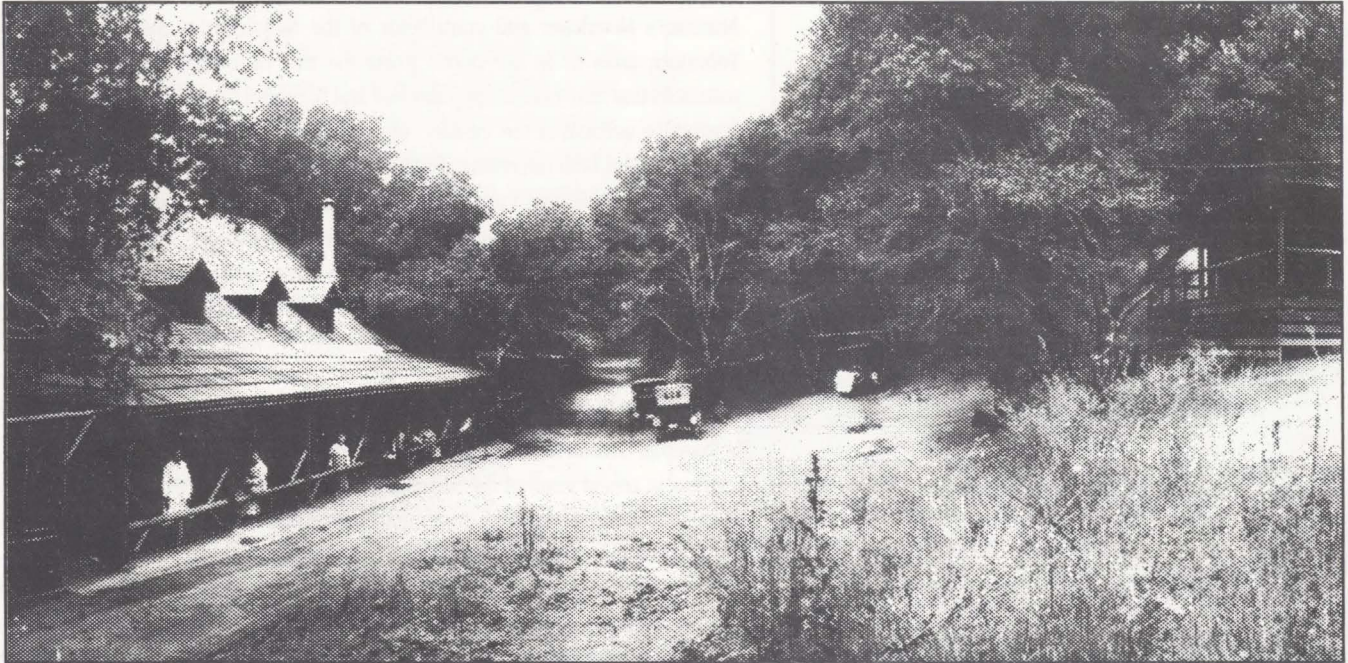


RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

SUMMER 1997

• ISSUE 57



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An Official Publication of the

• **HEALDSBURG MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY** •



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RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

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In This Issue

Summer 1997 !

Summer, with all that conjures, is being reflected in this issue of the Russian River Recorder. Lazy days at the beach, boating, swimming in the river, enjoying a day at the baseball park (now that the Sonoma County Crushers have revitalized regional baseball) and luxuriating in the ambience of a Bed and Breakfast Inn.

June Maher Smith, Langhart award recipient and former editor of the Museum's Newsletter and contributor of the Newsletter's monthly Profile of a Volunteer, gives us in her poetic prose the first of a series spotlighting historic mansions that have become popular bed and breakfast inns. Featured this time is the fascinating account of the history of the Honor Mansion located on Grove Street. You will find it both interesting and informative.

Our very talented curator Marie Djordjevich, in her feature article entitled *Fitch Mountain: Healdsburg's Russian River Playground*, writes about the Fitch Mountain area and how it developed into a popular resort area after the turn of the century. This well written and researched article should create a desire to see the Museum's new exhibit (now through November 9) *Vacationland: A History of the Russian River Resorts*.

Healdsburg has always been an enthusiastic baseball town from the 1800s. This is baseball season and our national pastime has had a welcomed revival with success in recent years of the Sonoma County Crushers. We prevailed upon Francis Passalacqua, retired attorney, community leader and baseball enthusiast to document his recollections of baseball in Healdsburg. Lots of nostalgia.

In this same vein we are deeply indebted to Carl Elze, a very active member of the Healdsburg Community Band as well as the Museum, who researched and found for us, through the local library, a copy of the song long associated with baseball *Take Me Out To The Ball Game*. He also supplied us with many antique illustrations. Thanks, Carl !

Assistant curator Holly Hoods has taken on the task of documenting the main line churches and their considerable influence in Healdsburg. In the first of another series Holly documents the history of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, a look at the church's rise and its subsequent influence on the community. Her research into the subject gives us a first-hand look at a fascinating part of Healdsburg's religious history.

The Museum's curator will be "redoing" the permanent exhibit this summer, moving part of the exhibit and rearranging others. One of the major tasks will be moving one of the museum's prized possessions, Captain Fitch's magnificent desk, to another area in the permanent collection section. She has chosen to feature the desk in our artifacts section and we think you will find her account most interesting.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the Russian River Recorder. We would be pleased to hear from you, both positive and negative.

Arnold Santucci
Editor

Artifacts

The Desk of Captain Henry Delano Fitch

This desk once belonged to Captain Henry Delano Fitch, who, in the early 1800s, eloped with Josefa Carillo, the daughter of one of San Diego's most important families. In 1841 Fitch petitioned for and was granted 48,800 acres of land in present day Sonoma county - the Rancho Sotoyome - which included the area that Healdsburg occupies today.

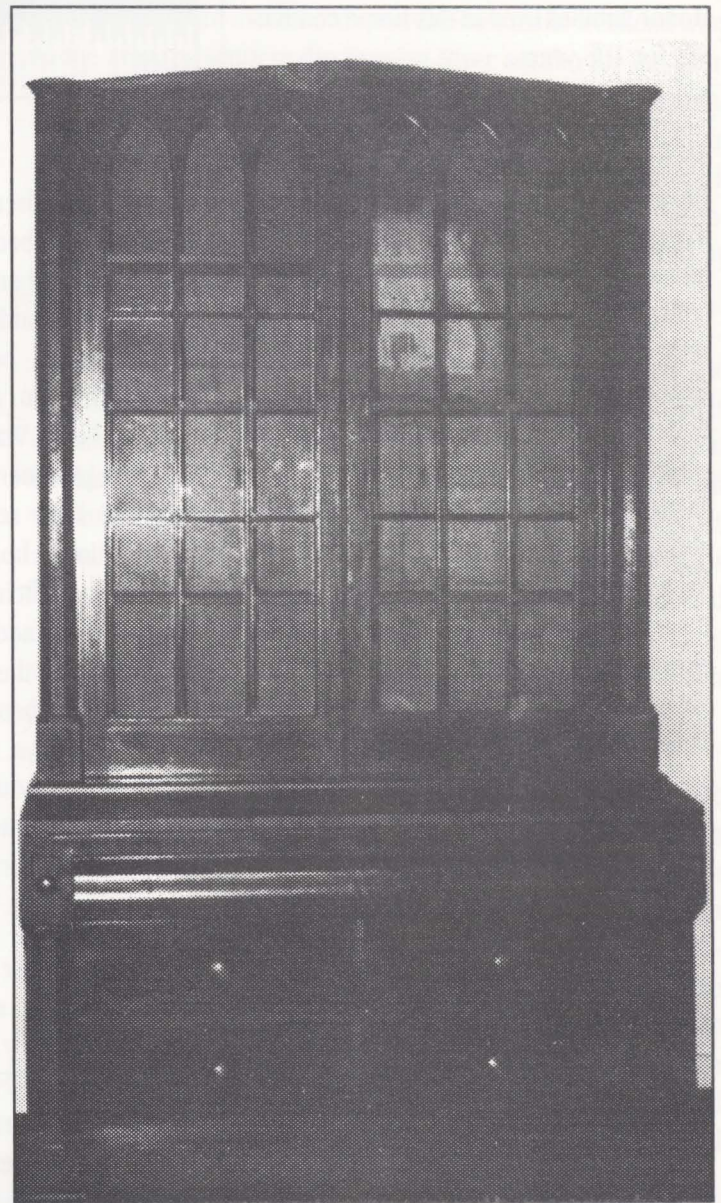
The desk was made in the eastern United States, and came around the horn to San Diego in 1832. It stood for many years in Fitch's San Diego home, the former Carillo adobe. After the death of Henry Fitch his widow Josefa had the desk moved to the Rancho Sotoyome when she relocated here in 1851. It remained in the Fitch home near the present Bailhache Avenue - know to locals as "Fitch's Castle" - until 1938. In that year Josephine Fitch de Geus, Captain Fitch's granddaughter, sold it to Mrs. Genevieve Warfield of Healdsburg.

In 1986 items from the estate of Genevieve Warfield, including the desk, were put up for auction. The Healdsburg Historical Society, backed by an anonymous donor who said to keep bidding until it was in their possession, was able to out-bid all other parties and purchased the desk for \$35,000. As a result, we have at the museum an item of great historical value. A document accompanying the desk states:

"This is to certify that I have this day sold to Mrs. Geo H. Warfield an antique mahogany desk or secretary which was brought "around the horn" about the year 1832 and was the property of my grandfather Capt. Henry D. Fitch and was used by him during his lifetime and later by his widow Josefa Carillo Fitch and by my mother, Anita Fitch de Grant from whom I acquired it.

Josephine de Geus, Healdsburg, California, July 6, 1938"

The desk has been the centerpiece of our Rancho section in our permanent exhibit since the opening of the museum in the Carnegie building in 1990. This summer our Rancho section and our Pomo sections are switching places and are being refurbished. The desk will remain as part of our exhibition, and I urge everyone to come and see the new face on an old subject! ♦



Captain Fitch's Desk

Healdsburg's Historic Bed and Breakfast Inn:

by June Maher Smith

(As you know, our town of Healdsburg is the location of several well-known historic bed and breakfast inns. In this issue of the *Russian River Recorder* we are publishing the first of a series of articles about these gracious homes.)

The beautiful Honor Mansion on Grove Street still exudes the love and care with which it was built in 1883 by William S. Butcher. The Butcher and Honor families lived in this home continually for 108 years.

"Squire" Butcher acquired the start of his fortune in the days of the forty-niners. He was transporting a load of potbellied stoves, which he intended to sell to the miners, when the weight of the heavy load collapsed his wagon and exposed a rich vein of gold in the road underneath it. Eureka! He filed his claim and used his bonanza to purchase land near Vacaville where he became a wealthy cattle rancher. As time went on he became concerned about the education of his four daughters. As a Seventh Day Adventist, he wanted them to attend a school operated by the church. He decided to move to our fair town, site of the Seventh Day Adventist College. He had also considered purchasing property on Market Street in San Francisco but the rural location won. He bought land on Grove Street and soon built the imposing Italianate residence now known as the Honor Mansion. He planted orchards and his daughters attended the college.

One of the daughters, Leila Bell Butcher, subsequently graduated from medical school and opened her practice in San Francisco in 1908. Another daughter, Bertha, married Henry Honor, a rancher on Mill Creek. Henry was also a

The Honor Mansion



The Honor Mansion

Seventh Day Adventist. Their son, Herbert Clyde Honor, became a medical doctor and practiced here in Sonoma County. In 1938 Herbert and his wife, Vera, who was also a doctor, became medical church missionaries in the Philippine Islands. During World War II they were held as Japanese prisoners of war for ten months. In 1958 they returned to Healdsburg, moved into the house on Grove Street, and practiced medicine there. Actually, they used the small addition at the south end of the house as their office. This medical annex served them well as it was used for surgeries, x-rays, immunizations, deliveries, etc. The Honors remodeled the home into three apartments. One unit provided living quarters for them and the other two provided income.

In 1991, after the long ownership by the Butcher and Honor families, the home was sold by Dorothy Honor Flynn to Joe and Linda Forest. (Dorothy is the daughter of Drs. Herbert and Vera Honor.) The Forests used the house as a vacation rental and in 1994 sold the property to the present owners, Cathi and Steve Fowler.

The Fowlers converted the three units into a bed and breakfast inn, completely renovating and redecorating every inch of the property. Cathi gave each of the five guest rooms, and the parlor and dining room, her "magic touch." These lovely rooms must be seen to be appreciated. However, just the names give clues to their decor: Magnolia Room, Dogwood Room, Camellia Room, Rose Room, and the lovely Angel Room. The gardens contribute to the restful ambiance of the home. Guests may enjoy their breakfast on deck overlooking the koi pond that features a soothing waterfall.

The next time you drive along Grove Street, take a look at the wonderfully restored historic mansion, standing just beyond the white picket fence, and be thankful "Squire" Butcher chose Healdsburg for his home. ♦

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Fitch Mountain

Healdsburg's Russian River Playground

by Marie Djordjevich, curator

"To be convinced of the immense possibilities of Fitch Mountain as an ideal summer resort with natural resources to attract thousands every summer, one has only to take a drive around that region. A Tribune reporter drove out into that part of "Nature's wild" one day last week. Think of it, in fifteen minutes drive from the Plaza one can be completely shut out from the busy world.

Leaving the landscape, the garden, the orchard, and the vineyard behind, you are ushered at once into the jungles of the forest, where for ten miles around the base of old Fitch Mountain you are shut in from the outside world. You are in Nature's Park, hedged by the solitude and sublimity of Nature's handiwork. At your feet to the right flow the deep blue waters of the Russian River Nature's reservoir for fishing, boating, bathing, and swimming. On your left are deep gulches, shady nooks, quiet retreats, surmounted by lofty peaks, dense forests, tall trees, mountain ferns and blooming flowers. Down these mountain sides may be seen gushing fountains flowing from "horeb's flinty side" - Nature's beverage that quenches thirst, but destroys not the brain of man.

Here is a beauty spot of nature lying at the door of Healdsburg, asking us to step in and occupy."

(Healdsburg Tribune, May 29, 1913)



The Russian River region, from Healdsburg down to the ocean, was once a vacation paradise, a "playground for the world". The region covers about twenty one miles and at one time was lined with a multitude of vacation homes and resorts. Hundreds of families from all over the Bay Area (San Francisco, the Peninsula, the East Bay and Marin), and from the Redwood Empire in the north would either make weekend trips to the area, or settle in the Russian River section for the summer. Many mothers and children spent their vacation in summer homes along the river, the father traveling to be with them on weekends. Local people also enjoyed the river and took advantage of the many recreational activities - such as swimming, boating, sun bathing, fishing, and canoeing - offered by the resorts.

Healdsburg's Fitch Mountain region, through which the Russian River flows, developed into a popular resort area after the turn of the century. 1905 saw the first road built from Healdsburg to the mountain at Camp Rose. Soon after, a road was built from Healdsburg to the mountain at Villa Chantecler, as well as a road from the Villa to the river. In 1921 these roads became public roads and were rebuilt. They were connected on the mountain's east side to form a continuous six mile loop, with both ends reaching Healdsburg. As a result, the mountain became more accessible to the populace.

People traveled to the river area by various means over the years. Early it was by stage, then by train to depots, from which horse-drawn buses would take them to resorts. Later, people were met at train stations by autobuses. When people began owning cars, they drove themselves, though in some cases ferrying across the bay was still needed. With the building of the Golden Gate Bridge in 1937, and the development of the Redwood Highway through Healdsburg, private transportation to the resorts became extremely popular. Through it all Healdsburg's Fitch Mountain resort section developed and flourished.

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Mermaids Paradise, Camp Rose

Camp Rose

In 1905 attorney J.W. Rose built a road from Healdsburg to this undeveloped property on Fitch Mountain. He then set up tents, built a boarding house and established a summer camp which he called Camp Rose. That first summer season was successful, with at least 150 visitors by August. Rates that first year were \$7 per week at the boarding house, \$8 per week for boarding and tent care. \$1 per week was charged to those who brought their own tents. Well water was available, and a sulphur spring on the property was used for drinking. Over the next few years the property changed ownership several times, but both the property and the business flourished.

In 1908 new owner Carlyle Ray sub-divided the lots. Cottages sprang up on the hillside, many of them purchased by out-of-towners for summer use. Bus service was provided from the train depot to the grounds for convenience. By 1912 Camp Rose Inn was a permanent fixture on the grounds and included a store, tents, and a dance platform.

Villa Chantecler/Chanticleer

At one time, the Villa Chantecler was the leading French resort north of San Francisco. A Frenchman by the name of Pradel established the Villa in 1910 when he built several cabins and a screened dining pavilion. He then informed San Francisco's French organizations that this was the ideal spot for their vacation. A horse and buggy - and later a bus - was sent to the depot for the arrival of each train to take people up to the mountain.

The ownership of the Villa exchanged hands several times. In 1934 the Villa was purchased by Lucien Delagnes and his wife Madeleine, and they ran the resort for several years. At the start of his tenure, Delagnes deemed his resort "40 Acres of Fun on the Russian River". His new additions to the resort included two cows, which supplied fresh milk, a children's playground, a bridge playing grotto, as well as new light fixtures and new beds and mattresses. The kitchen was remodeled and updated, and chef Robert Layne promised "some fine French foods, served in the real French manner." Over the next few years, Delagnes added new cabins, shower baths, other toilet facilities, and a six room house. Madeleine would cook country French meals for the guests, Lucien would take vacationers down to the river or wineries, they had bands and dances, and a huge crowd was accommodated on Bastille Day. The French flag was flown, and almost everybody spoke French. The Villa remained a very popular summer retreat for Bay Area French families.

In 1945 Delagnes sold the Villa Chantecler to Jack Kent and W. Johnson. They possibly were going to remake it into a private gambling establishment. The Villa Chantecler's French resort days had come to an end.

Fitch Mountain Tavern

In 1908 a new resort was built along the Russian River on Fitch Mountain one mile and a half miles from Healdsburg. Called Fitch Mountain Tavern, it was built by Mr. A. M. Ewing and his wife, who relocated here from San Francisco. The tavern had wide verandas and a rustic look. The property was subdivided, and cottages for summer residents and visitors were built. Many local residents made their home here during the summers. In 1913 a large dining room was added to accommodate the high number of guests. Large automobile parties frequented the tavern, sometimes up to sixty at a time. The Tavern eventually stopped being used, and in the late twenties plans were formed for demolishing the structure and building a 100 room hotel in its place. Plans were made by the Fitch Mountain Development Company, Inc., a Delaware corporation, and in 1929 the old Fitch Mountain Tavern was wrecked and the land cleared.

In 1930 the hotel was started. Foundations were laid, the frame was built, but the money ran out and it was never finished. The property was foreclosed and bought by a Mr. Sherrer. Baseball player W.A. Autry and his wife May bought the property from him. They tore down most of the structure - except the west end, where they built their home - and sold the wood, as well as three lots that were part of the property.

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Del Rio Woods, 1928

Del Rio Woods

The Del Rio Woods property on the eastern slope of the mountain was bought and developed by Robert Cook and Joseph Pohley. They set aside several acres of the property for public and property owners use as a park, and they sold several lots to Bay Area families who then erected summer homes. The remaining land was sold to Thomas Scoble, who built a road to the top of Fitch Mountain. He also sold off most of the public park, where subsequently many houses were built. An office and a store were built on the property. Swimming, horseback riding, and picnicking were all activities enjoyed by Del Rio Woods patrons.

Del Rio Woods became a popular summer resort in the 1930s due to the draw of the dances held at the dance pavilion. In 1927 a large dance platform was constructed in time for the opening dance at the end of May. Also included in the plans was the construction of an adjoining balcony, as a "promenade for dancers and their friends, which disclose one of the finest views of Russian River to be found anywhere" (Sotoyome Scimitar, May 20, 1927). A dining room was planned for construction after the completion of the platform. By the next year - 1928 - the Del Rio dance pavilion was quite popular.

Palomar

In 1937 Earl Frampton purchased part of the Del Rio Woods. Besides setting aside a tract of land for a public beach - which became a very popular spot for swimmers and boaters - he created a large airy dance hall which he called Palomar. In its heyday Palomar was one of the most popular

dance places in Healdsburg, if not the county. Frampton set out to make it a welcoming place. The property was cleared and cleaned, and several redwood picnic tables were added under the trees. A latticed supper room was added to part of the pavilion, and a large porch, also for dining patrons, was added to the building. Lanterns were hung in the interior of the dance hall. Name bands played at the Palomar, including the popular Saunders King and Red Plummer.

After the era of Big Bands, attendance dwindled, and Palomar was turned into a roller skating rink.

Fitch Mountain's resorts are gone now and private residences dot the area. The memories of those times remain imprinted not only in the minds of individuals, but in history as well. And the Russian River still flows through the mountain. ♦



Fun in the Russian River at Villa Chantecler

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The Prophetess of Powell Avenue

Ellen G. White and the History of the Seventh Day Adventists in Healdsburg

by Holly Hoods

Of the many churches with deep roots in Healdsburg, the Seventh-day Adventists' ties to the area are especially strong and interesting to trace. Healdsburg was once the home of Ellen G. White, one of the pioneer founders of the Seventh-day Adventist faith. For over seventy years until her death in 1915, Ellen White served as the primary spiritual counselor to the Seventh-day Adventists, striving to communicate the will of God in speeches and writings. Inspired by miraculous visions and healing trances, Ellen White's prophesies and admonitions shaped the spiritual direction of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Her influence was also strongly felt in the development of Healdsburg College, an institution she helped found in 1882, which is still thriving today in Angwin, Napa County, as Pacific Union College.

Seventh-day Adventism arose out of the ashes of the "second Great Awakening," a multi-denominational evangelistic movement that captivated the nation in the 1830s and early 1840s. William Miller, a Baptist preacher and former War of 1812 army captain, convinced thousands of people that Jesus would return to earth on October 22, 1844, based on his study of the Bible prophesy of Daniel. When Jesus failed to keep the appointment, thousands of Miller's followers left the revival movement deeply disillusioned. A few, however, turned to their Bibles to try to understand why they had been disappointed.

Ellen Harmon and her not-yet-husband James White were among the handful of earnest Christians who refused to give up their belief in a second coming of Christ. Based on their own interpretation of the Bible and their abiding faith in Miller, they concluded that his calculations had actually predicted a different significant event: the date of God's creation of a special ministry in Heaven for His (Adventist) followers. From this core group of believers in New England came the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.



Ellen G. White

Teenage Missionary

In 1844 Ellen White was still Ellen Gould Harmon, a sickly 17-year old, whose Methodist family in Maine participated avidly in the popular revival meetings of the 1840s. It was at age 17 that Ellen experienced her first vision. According to one biographer, "it was seen by those acquainted with her that this and subsequent visions benefited the emerging church, harmonized fully with Scripture teachings, and gave sound evidence of being a fulfillment of Bible predictions of the last-day renewal of the prophetic gift as set forth in Joel, Ephesians and Revelation." Throughout her life, Ellen reported experiencing over 2,000 divinely-inspired visions and dreams. Reticent at first, Ellen became a powerful orator, compelled to deliver messages from God to the Adventists and any others who would listen. Speaking for hours without benefit of notes or microphone, she held large crowds spellbound. She also became a prolific writer, whose combined books, treatises and articles numbered over 100,000 pages. Many are still in print today.

Although the name "Seventh-day Adventist" was chosen in 1860, the denomination was not officially organized until May 1863. The members chose the name because of their

strong faith in the second coming of Christ, and their shared commitment to observe Saturday, the seventh day, as the Sabbath, a day of rest and religious duty. By 1863 the movement consisted of 125 churches and 3,500 members. That same year Ellen White received a comprehensive vision about healthful living, diet, and temperance. She began to advocate the benefits of "Bible hygiene," a lacto-ovo vegetarian diet, and abstinence from alcohol, tobacco and other harmful drugs. She and James were leaders in the health reform movement and worked closely with Dr. John H. Kellogg to establish the Health Reform Institute in Battle Creek, Michigan. Her teachings about health remain central to the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventism.

Sonoma County Adventist Beginnings

The first of the Seventh-day Adventist camp meetings was held in September 1868 in Wright, Michigan. The camp meeting format met with great success in the east. Later that year, D.T. Bourdeau and J.N. Loughborough traveled from the Adventist "capital" in Battle Creek, Michigan to San Francisco to organize Adventist activities in the west. They held the first camp meeting west of the Rockies that year in Petaluma. By June of 1869, camp meetings were being held nearby in Windsor, Healdsburg and Santa Rosa. The Russian River Flag gave the meetings a favorable review:

The New Adventists began their tent meetings here last Thursday evening and have kept them up every evening since, besides preaching twice in the daytime on Sunday. At each meeting the audience has been large and attentive. The discourses are dignified, earnest and impressive, showing the speakers Revs. J.N. Loughborough and D.T. Bourdeau to be men of great research in sacred and profane history.

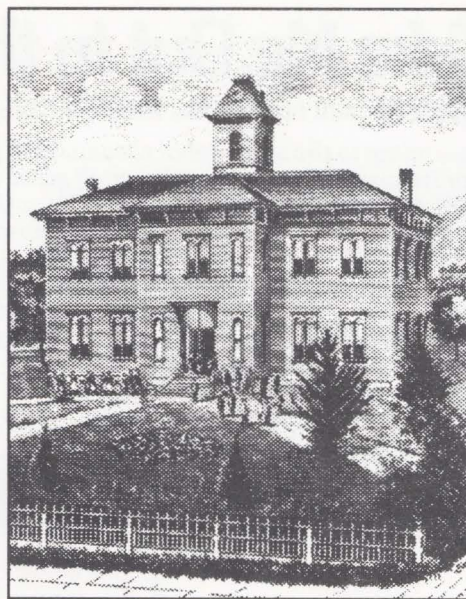
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By November 1869, a meeting house, 30 x 60 feet in size, had been constructed in Santa Rosa. This was the first Seventh-day Adventist meeting house established in California. The first Seventh-day Adventist church in Healdsburg was built in 1871 on land donated by Cornelius Bice.

Elders James and Ellen White first came to California in 1872, but they were barely able to settle down. Church responsibilities continually pulled them back and forth across the country. Within the next two years, James established the Pacific Press, an Adventist publishing house in Oakland, and also a weekly journal, *Signs of the Times*. Both of his projects--expanded and relocated--are still flourishing today. In late 1877, the Whites purchased a modest farm at 1950 West Dry Creek Road, about 4 miles from Healdsburg. They hoped that rural semi-retirement in a mild climate would restore James' flagging health. Unable and unwilling to completely retire, however, James never fully recovered. He died in 1881. Shortly afterward, Ellen and her son William became instrumental in the establishment of a new Seventh-day Adventist college in Healdsburg.

Healdsburg College (1882-1908)

The idea of creating an Adventist school in California was first seriously proposed in 1881 at the 10th annual session of the California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, held near Sacramento. Most of the California members agreed on the importance of a Christian education, but felt that the denominational college in Battle Creek, Michigan was too far away for their children to attend. The search for a suitable school site in California focused primarily on areas where Seventh-day Adventism was already established, including St. Helena, Napa, Santa Rosa, Petaluma and Healdsburg. In November 1881, William C. White secured a large, furnished building in Healdsburg, formerly the site of the Healdsburg Institute, a private academy which had failed financially earlier that year. The school was located on Plaza Street, bounded by Fitch, University, Matheson and North streets.



South College Hall

The school opened as "Healdsburg Academy" in April 1882 with 26 students. At the request of the Healdsburg community, the name was changed to "Healdsburg College" in May. By July 1883, "North Hall," a large 4-story dormitory building had been constructed at the corner of Fitch and Grant streets, with money donated by Mary Scott, a friend of Ellen White's. Today this is the site of the Healdsburg Junior High School. In addition to the basic courses offered in history, mathematics, natural sciences, languages, and Bible study, there was a strong vocational slant to the College. Students devoted 2 1/2 hours a day to the vocational pursuit of their choice. Boys could study carpentry, printing, agriculture, shoemaking, blacksmithing or painting. Girls could choose plain sewing, dress cutting and fitting, printing, laundrying, cooking, or general housework. By 1884 the school had 200 students enrolled.

When the school opened in 1882, Ellen White purchased a home at 201 Powell Avenue to be closer to it. The two-story dwelling stood on a two and 1/2 acre tract of good land with an orchard of various fruit trees. Until she went to Australia in 1891, this was her home when she was on the west coast. Here she completed two of her most important books: *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (in 1888) and *Patriarchs and Prophets* (in 1890). She also wrote many textbooks that were used by the Seventh-day Adventist church schools in the early 1900s. Today the house is owned by Dan and Jan Stebbins, who plan to open it as a bed and

breakfast inn.

As parents moved to Healdsburg to educate their children at the College, the number of Seventh-day Adventists grew until eventually one fifth of the city's population was Adventist. To serve the needs of the burgeoning congregation, a new, larger church was built in 1884 just south of the main college building, at the northeast corner of Fitch and Matheson streets. As the school continued to grow over the next decade, however, officials were unable to purchase adjacent property. It was decided in 1907 to relocate to a larger site in Angwin, Napa County. The name was changed to Pacific Union College in 1906 in anticipation of the move.

In 1907 the Healdsburg College property was sold to the Healdsburg High School district. The College building (South Hall) served as Healdsburg High School until a new high school was built in 1918. After the College moved to Angwin, the Seventh-day Adventist population in Healdsburg declined significantly. In 1921 the church property was sold and the building was demolished for its lumber and building materials. A new church and day school was built, smaller, at the corner of Fitch and Piper streets. Currently the Healdsburg church is located on Terrace Boulevard, and Adventist schooling is available locally at the Rio Lindo Academy.

In Sonoma County today, there are Seventh-day Adventist churches in Healdsburg, Cloverdale, Sebastopol, Santa Rosa, Petaluma, Sonoma, and Rohnert Park. There are over 8 million members of the Seventh-day Adventist faith worldwide, and the church is engaged in missionary work in 209 countries. Adventists are still drawn to Healdsburg to visit this important place in their history. ♦

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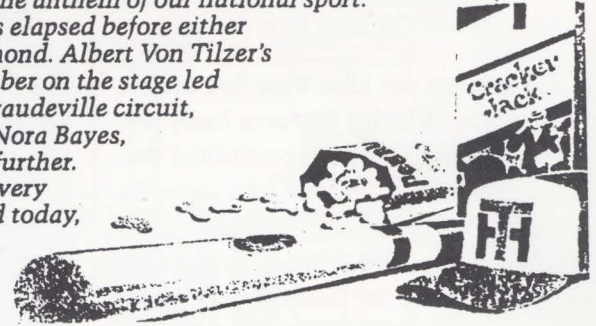
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Thanks to Jan and Dan Stebbins.

Take Me Out to the Ball Game

Words by Jack Norworth; Music by Albert Von Tilzer

According to the apocryphal chronicles of popular music, neither composer nor lyricist had ever seen a baseball game when the two men sat down in 1908 to write what was to become the anthem of our national sport. In fact, the story has it that 20 years elapsed before either man spent an afternoon at the diamond. Albert Von Tilzer's successful introduction of this number on the stage led to a contract to tour the Orpheum vaudeville circuit, while Jack Norworth and his wife, Nora Bayes, helped to popularize the song even further. It has been used since in virtually every motion picture about the game, and today, Norworth's first draft of the lyrics is in the Baseball Hall of Fame at Cooperstown, New York.



Baseball - A Healdsburg Favorite since the 1800s

In an editorial in the Sonoma County Tribune of April 2, 1891 the Editor castigated the townspeople for not having a baseball team - the national game.

Healdsburg should be ashamed of itself, the editor wrote.

"There is scarcely a town of its size in the state which but has a good baseball team. Even the little town of Geyserville surpasses Healdsburg in this respect. Last Sunday the Geyservilles came down to play a game with the Healdsburgs and when they arrived at the grounds they were astonished to find boys only 14 and 15 years old who would play. The Geyservilles immediately turned on their heels and left for home in disgust. We have several good players here and they should take an interest in the national game and keep pace with the times."

Four weeks later, April 30, 1891 the Sonoma County Tribune reported the following:

Incessant clamor for a baseball club in Healdsburg by the Tribune has resulted in the organization of a good, firm Association of Ball Tossers who are powerful, surpassing and determined and hereafter the people of Healdsburg will have no occasion to go elsewhere to seek pleasure on Sundays for the home team will play regularly.

Last Friday evening a well attended and enthusiastic mass meeting of ball players was held at Nosler's Hall. Walt G. Hall, chairman, Louis Meyer, secretary and Henry Cummings, manager.

Browsing through the newspapers of that era baseball was seen to be an important phase of the community.

In the April 25, 1895 Tribune the headlines heralded the fact that "The Season To Begin With Eclat" and that Healdsburg and Sebastopol will contest for supremacy and honors.

And we are advised "that there will be baseball this year in Healdsburg is a foregone conclusion and what will facilitate the best exhibition of nelding ever witnessed here is the fact that good baseball grounds have been secured in a most excellent condition.

One of the more interesting games reported occurred on September, 4, 1909. The headlines read:

Most Remarkable Ball Game

Healdsburg Eagles Get Fat End of Tally Sheet.

Beefers Was a good name.

Kicking and Making errors seemed to be strong card of the visiting boys who went down to awful defeat.

The report:

One of the most remarkable amateur games of baseball ever played was played over the home diamond last Sunday when the Healdsburg Eagles put the soup over the White House of San Francisco with a bunch of figures that would stagger the "Vernons", even as used to getting the small end of the score as they are, the final count being nine in favor of the Eagles and two for the "Beefers" the nickname given them during the progress of the game, for there wasn't a play or a run made by the home boys that wasn't contested by the outsiders.

Gaddy, our new pitcher, had everything the White House couldn't see, striking out 12 men without a pass. He wore a smile that wouldn't fade, even when Reblymer of the White House, sapped him on the bean with a hard put ball which was heard all over the diamond and bounced from his coco a quarter of a mile in the air. It made Gaddy feel kind of funny in places, and he wanted to substitute for the rest of the run, but an unfortunate smile from his broad visage caught the eagle eye of one of the "beefers" and he was forced to do his own running for the rest of the inning. It is generally supposed that it pays to smile but Gaddy says there will be no more of it when he has been cracked in the head with a cannon ball.

McCord (Rollin) has certainly got his eye with him this year, hitting about a four hundred mark. The old reliable Jack Guilfoxy played the same old way and "Scat" (Scatena) tried another slide, but Melbourne saw bim first and he couldn't quite make the plate.

Baron couldn't quite get onto Gaddy's curves, but was fast on the pegs to bases. The Eagles all did remarkably well, and not an error made by them although the White House bunch made four.

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History of Baseball In Healdsburg:

Recollections of The Game

by Francis M. Passalacqua

The original baseball team before the 1920s was called the Prune Packers in keeping with the economy of the Healdsburg area which consisted mainly of prunes. The original baseball team known as the Prune Packers consisted of several ex Coast League players who migrated to Healdsburg each Sunday. The Bay Area players were led by Arthur Arlett who formerly pitched with the Oakland Coast League. He brought several other players with him each Sunday to play in Healdsburg. Some of the local players consisted of James Shinn, Roland McCord, Chick Autry and Harlan Rimmel.

The original Prune Packers played semi-pro teams from the Bay Area, and large crowds, averaging 800 people, were drawn to Recreation Park. They played for several years and each season the Packers would end up playing the Santa Rosa Rosebuds, also a semi-pro team. This event swelled the crowds to 1000.

The Prune Packers played until the late '20s. In 1931, the Healdsburg Eagles Lodge fielded a team that won the Redwood Empire League, which consisted of semi-pro teams from Novato, Ukiah, Santa Rosa, Petaluma (Leghorns) and Occidental. The team roster included such players as Dan Modena who managed the team, Nick Scatena, Francis Passalacqua, Leland McCord, Bruno Della Maggiora and Les Whaley who moved from San Francisco to Healdsburg strictly to play baseball. The pitcher and catcher were from St. Mary's College, Moraga - Fred Caveglia and Bill Smaker.

After 1931 the Healdsburg Odd Fellows fielded a team for several years that played similar teams. Waldo Iversen managed the team, was the pitcher and at times played first base. Other players included Art Ruonavaara, Len Williams, Doug Badger and Frank Mott.

The Prune Packers came to life again after World War II, with Dan Modena serving as manager. At this time the Lighting Committee was formed to install and construct a lighting system at Recreation Park. Members of this committee were Francis Passalacqua who did the legal work, Arthur McCaffrey, Ernie Demostene, Clarence Ruonavaara, Morris Ruby and Ernie Biasotti. After the lights were installed Passalacqua endeavored to have the San Francisco Seals train their team in Healdsburg. Previously the Seals had trained in Sonoma. However, it soon developed that the Seals were no longer going to exist. The major league team called the Giants was going to move to San Francisco. Passalacqua was introduced to Joe Orengo, the manager of the Yakima, Washington team, a farm team of the Seals. Orengo came to Healdsburg, viewed the local park and elected to bring the Yakima Bears to train in Healdsburg. At that time, Healdsburg had a hotel known as the Plaza Hotel (located across from the Plaza Square on Healdsburg Avenue) and the Yakima team stayed at the Plaza Hotel. They played approximately eight games with other semi-pro and college teams and drew large crowds. The



Prune Packers, 1923

Back Row: Albert Bidwell, Bob Weston (Mgr.), Bob Vellou (Ump), L. J. Hall, Quim Seawel;

*Middle Row: Harlan Rimmel, Frank Meisner, Pep McDonald,
Jim Shinn, Pop Arlett (Captain), Gus Smith, Ben Begier:*

Front Row: Red Corrick, Chick Autry, Hank Cortade. - Langhart Photo.

Yakima Bears trained in Healdsburg for two years and financially the venture was a success. They played under the new lights and the main diamond had a turf at that time which was mainly cared for by the baseball enthusiast, Waldo Iversen who worked for the City of Healdsburg. The Prune Packers, however, continued playing during the regular season after the training season for the Yakima Bears ceased.

One of the outstanding baseball games ever played in Healdsburg pitted the Prune Packers, managed by Dan Modena, assisted by Dolf Camilli, former professional major league player, against the San Francisco Seals, managed by Lefty O'Doul. One of the features of that particular ball game was a batting contest between Camilli and O'Doul. Camilli hit many balls over the right field fence while O'Doul kept hitting straight singles and doubles. Another semi-professional team from Vancouver, Canada was brought in to train here, with Dewey Soriano as manager. The Canadians trained here under the same circumstances as the Yakima Bears and played semi-pro teams from the Bay Area including college teams from St. Mary's College and the University of San Francisco. The crowds were very large and the Lighting Committee acquired considerable funds to pay off the bonds that had been sold to install the lights at the ball park. Following the Vancouver team, teams from Medford, Oregon and Twin Falls, Idaho came to spring train in Healdsburg.

During the spring training years at the local park and following the five years of semi-professional teams coming to Healdsburg, the Prune Packers continued playing baseball. The Lighting Committee bonds were paid off but some bond purchasers donated the amounts that they had originally invested.

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It should be noted that while the Healdsburg Prune Packers and the Odd Fellows gained new lights for Recreation Park, one of the best pitching arms in Healdsburg's history, was lost. Clarence Ruonavaara while helping to string the underground lighting cables, pulled his shoulder out of its socket and was never able to regain his previous stature. Others who played ball after the lights were installed included such luminaries as Bob Mascherini, Bob Lebsak, Lou Bertoli, Thomas Passalacqua, Pete Shriver and Len Williams.

Lighting Committee members worked the games collecting tickets and turning the lights on and off. Among the old timers recalled were John Gromo and Gus Consiglieri.

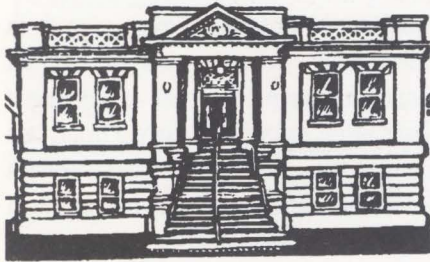
After the baseball bonds and expenses incurred by the Lighting Committee were paid off, the functions of the Healdsburg Recreation Park were turned back to the City of Healdsburg who has operated Recreation Park since that time. ♦



1941 I.O.O.F. Champs

Back Row: Len Williams, Frank Mott, Art Ruonavaara, Lou Bertoli, Bob Lebsak, Waldo Iverson, Clarence Ruonavaara, Henry (Cotton) Williams:

Front Row: Willie Guibilo, Elmo Barbieri, Bob Mascherini, Dan Modena, Morris Ruby, "Red" Baumeister, Doug Badger.



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