



RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

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Mrs. Charlotte Francis Gordon Lowery at the linotype, Healdsburg Tribune, circa 1912

**Nothing But News:
A History of Healdsburg
Newspapers from
1860 - 1950**

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RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

*The Official Publication of the Healdsburg
Museum and Historical Society*

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IN THIS ISSUE

This is the first of four issues for the year 2001, and the publication staff has come up with three very interesting articles.

June Maher Smith delved into the archives and interviewed a number of people for her fascinating account of the men - and later years, women - who took on the task of being mayors of our fair city. I particularly enjoyed reviewing those who served in the 1950s and early 60s because those were the years I covered the city council in my capacity as editor and publisher of the *Tribune*.

And, of course, the feature article by Curator Marie Djordjevich chronicling the long history of newspapering in Healdsburg was of special interest to me. And she did a wonderful job detailing the many changes in the industry without which our community's history would be lost. Newspapering has undergone so

many changes and still the industry's mission has not changed. A chronicle of things past.

In this same vein research curator Holly Hoods has come up with an oral history of a man and his family who exemplify all that is great and good about our community. I know you'll enjoy "The Life and Times of Francis Passalacqua". Incidentally Francis is the third recipient of the Museum's Pioneer Award, an honor very well deserved.

Arnold Santucci

Editor

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Edited by Holly Hoods

HISTORY OF



SERVICE

THE MAYORS OF HEALDSBURG 1867-2001

By June Maher Smith



Col. Lewis A. Norton, second from left, circa 1900

(By my count, Healdsburg has had 54 Mayors over the past 134 years. Of course, many are gone, and it seemed impossible to talk to all those who are left. So, this article is not a complete history. I talked with several former Mayors and have mentioned a few of the city's accomplishments during their terms. Perhaps these will trigger personal memories for some of you. --J. M. S.)

In February of 1867 the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors approved the incorporation of Healdsburg as requested by a majority of the more than 200 persons living here. Attorney Lewis A. Norton was the first president of the City of Healdsburg Board of Trustees. (The Board was the forerunner of our present-day City Council.)

The first meeting of the Board was held at Norton's office. Money surfaced as a problem right away-within a month President Norton was asked to negotiate a loan of \$200 to meet city expenses. Meetings were held at one or another of the trustees' offices until the grand three-story City Hall was completed and dedicated in 1886. During the years since 1867 many civic-minded men and women, 54 to be exact, served as Board President or Mayor. This article will highlight just a few of those. It would require a book to report our history as viewed from the mayors' accomplishments.

After Lewis Norton's tenure the following men led the city government during the next ten years: W. A. C. Smith, John D. Hassett, John

Mulligan, A. M. Church, R. H. Gilman, R. F. Gilmore, T. W. Hudson, H. K. Brown, and Henry Fried. The Museum has a complete list if you're interested. Now on to the 20th century.

Roy Haley was mayor from 1934 to 1942. His son Fred tells us that during his father's term the city built a new sewage disposal plant-the best in the county. The city bought a new 1938 Ford V8 fire truck which was the most powerful pumper in the county. It is still with the Fire Department. Fred says he learned the hard way about the lines of communication within the community. One day while riding his bike to school, he didn't wait for the traffic patrol student to give him the O.K. to proceed. This "crime" was reported to the school principal, who contacted Police Chief Dutch Flohr, who told Mayor Haley, who then disciplined his son. Fred was not allowed to ride his bike for three weeks.



Mayor Roy Haley

Art Ruonavaara, who served 16 years on the Council and was mayor from 1954 to 1963, says there was a lot of work for the councilmen to do themselves, because there was no City Manager then. His fellow councilmen were a good bunch to work with and they all served on different committees. Among the accomplishments during those years were: a new City Hall was built, the freeway opened, and the city bought the Villa.

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Doug Badger was Mayor in the 1960s. His widow, Florence Fiege Badger, says he worked hard on the formation of the Northern California Power Association. (In today's power crisis, we are grateful to him and the others responsible for their foresight.) After Doug passed away, Healdsburg's Badger Power Station was named in his honor; and now we have Badger Park, also named for him.



Mayor William R. Lucius

William R. "Bill" Lucius was first elected to the City Council in April of 1966. He served four terms as Mayor—the first three in the early 1970s. One of his proudest accomplishments is the successful bus system which continues to operate throughout town. Many of our citizens depend on this transportation for appointments and shopping. During his tenure the city bought the land where the power station and the senior citizens' housing complex are now located, and the city's Corporation Yard was completed. In 1986 Bill was selected by the Council to fill the unexpired term of William Proctor who was physically unable to serve. Lucius then served another term as Mayor in 1987-88. After that term Healdsburg named him "Mayor Emeritus."

Jerry Eddinger cites some of the changes in city administration during his time on the Council; he was Mayor in 1976-78. The first Design Review Committee was formed. The Council noted that other cities had City Managers, so Edwin Langhart was appointed our first City Manager. Kurt Hahn joined the staff during that time and soon brought the city into the computer age. Fitch Mountain Terrace came into being, bringing affordable housing to 44 older citizens. The Council also slowed down the building of apartments in the downtown residential district. And the city bought the building at 131 Matheson Street to provide space for the first Healdsburg Museum displays.



Mayor Art Ruonavaara, dedication of City Hall, 1961



Mayor Doug Badger, left, with retiring City Attorney Jess Ratchford, circa June 1967

Ben Collins remembers that the golf course management was changed from municipal to a private firm during his term, 1986-87. The Museum moved from its original site to a building next door to City Hall, and the Senior Center was brought into being at 131 Matheson Street. He considers the community separators allowing for open space between cities established by LAFCO to be a most important accomplishment during those years.

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City Council meeting, 1900. Mayor W. H. Barnes presiding.

Bob Haviland served 12 years on the City Planning Commission before being elected to the Council and serving as Mayor twice during the 1980s. He lists several highlights for those years. The Council established the Community Redevelopment Agency; the new library was built; bonds were passed for new Police, Fire, and City Hall buildings; utilities were undergrounded; and buildings on the west side of the Plaza were razed. Bob says those structures were in such poor repair that the bricks that tumbled down did not need cleaning—the grout had turned to sand. Bob says it was lots of fun being on the City Council and he met many fine people.

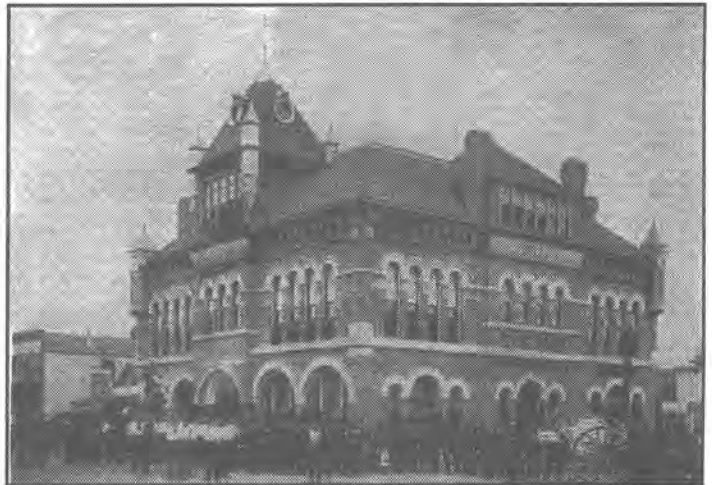
Carla Howell, who served as Mayor twice during the 1990s, lists the dedication of Healdsburg's new City Hall as a bright spot during her terms. On the other hand, one of the low spots was losing the lawsuit brought against the city by Housing Now. The Council was forced to change the general plan to increase housing densities in order to meet state guidelines for affordable housing. Carla was the second woman to serve on the Council; Rita Schroeder was the first. Rita was Mayor in 1983-84, and Cathleen Harvey was Mayor in 1994-95 and in 1998. Two more women are currently serving on the Council, Leah Gold and Lisa Wittke Schaffner.

As you probably know, as we progress into the 21st century Jason Aliles is mayor of the City of Healdsburg. Whether or not we agree with all the decisions made, and to be made, by these mayors, including the ones not mentioned in this article, we citizens owe them a vote of thanks for taking time from their private lives to guide Healdsburg's destiny.

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February 2001:
Fred Haley
Art Ruonavaara
Florence Fiege Badger
William R. Lucius
Jerry W. Eddinger
Ben T. Collins
Robert J. Haviland
Carla Howell

Centennial 1867-1967 City of Healdsburg, Healdsburg, CA, 1967



City Hall dedication of May, 1886, Matheson and Center Streets.
Cost of the building was \$12,500.



First City Hall. The first Board of Trustees meetings were held in Col. Norton's office located on Center Street across from the City Hall dedicated in 1861.

HISTORIC



INDUSTRY

NOTHING BUT NEWS: A HISTORY OF HEALDSBURG'S NEWSPAPERS FROM 1860 TO 1950

By Marie Djordjevich

newspaper: a paper that is printed and distributed usually daily or weekly and that contains news, articles of opinion, features and advertising (Webster's)

When researching the past a good source of primary information comes from an area's newspapers. Many things about a community can be gleaned from the pages of journalistic endeavor: "The relative attention given to international, national and local news may provide clues to community concerns. Social and sports pages may provide insight into community interests and activities. A careful examination of advertisements offers many clues to readers' tastes, style of dress, entertainment preferences and other cultural characteristics. Classified ads may provide insights about housing arrangements, occupational shifts (what skills are in demand and surplus), and other matters. Letters to the editor may offer a crude gauge of public opinion on contemporary issues. Detailed biographies may be found in the obituary columns. Business pages provide descriptions of new products, factories and business activities. Reports of the construction or remodeling of local buildings, social activities, labor negotiations, school curriculum reforms, and other important local news will come to light." (*Kyvig and Marty*)

Through newspapers we can help piece together the collective memory of a community. In some instances there will be more than one newspaper, with differing ideological slants, that will further enhance our understanding of the past. Healdsburg's newspaper history is long and varied and multiple. While we can discover much information about the community and development of Healdsburg throughout the years from her newspapers, the story of the newspapers themselves are a part of that history, and provide a piece of the historical puzzle.

While the Healdsburg Tribune and Enterprise is purely a country newspaper, it will be seen by the foregoing that it is far from being a one-man institution. It maintains a year round payroll and performs a public service of great value to the entire community. There are three elements in a community of equal, though different, influence on the people. These are: the church, the school, and the press. (*HT Diamond Jubilee edition*)



ESTABLISHED 1860.
RUSSIAN RIVER FLAG NEWSPAPER
AND GENERAL PRINTING OFFICE.
LESLIE A. JORDAN, PROPRIETOR.
GRANGER BLOCK, HEALDSBURG, CAL.

Earliest News

Healdsburg's first newspaper was established in January 1860 by A.J. Cox, and was called the *Review*. In June 1864 it was replaced by the *Advertiser*, published by J.E. Fenno and Warren, with Cox as editor. One year later, in June 1865, the name was changed to the *Weekly Advertiser*. But by August the paper's ownership again changed hands - it was now owned by A.J. Cox and L.W. Boggs - and they published the paper under the name the *Democratic Review*.

A new rival paper was established in October 1865 under the masthead of the *Democratic Standard*. The owners were William R. Morris and

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Company. Soon after, the *Democratic Review* was sold and taken to Lake County, where it became the *Clear Lake Courier*.

William Morris in his Salutatory address of the *Democratic Standard* stated, "No apology is necessary for our presenting claims for patronage as a public journalist. It will not be questioned that a very powerful influence is exerted by the press of the country upon the character, intellectual and moral, of its inhabitants" (*DS 10/4/1865*).

In October of 1865 William Morris became the sole publisher of the *Standard*, and promptly transferred a half-interest to John B. Fitch. Fitch had ideas of his own concerning the running of the paper that differed from Morris. He offered Morris 45 acres of land - part of the original Sotoyome land grant - in exchange for his newspaper shares. Morris accepted, and Fitch owned the paper on his own. After only a month his enthusiasm was gone, and he sold the paper to Boggs and C.A. Menafee. Boggs then sold his interest to W.A.C. Smith. In 1867 Fitch (again) and Joe Davis (Fitch's relation by marriage) became the owners. This partnership did not last long. The two fought, and "Fitch made the imprint of the butt of a Colt .44 under Davis' left eye" (*HT Diamond Jubilee edition*). Davis left town for the gold fields, and Fitch sold the *Standard* to John G. Howell in 1868.

The Russian River Flag

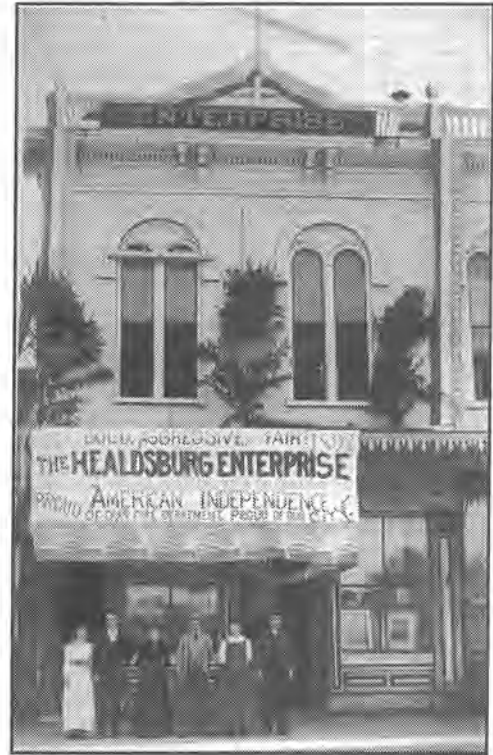
In the fall of 1868 John G. Howell was a passenger on the stagecoach running between Petaluma and Healdsburg. He immediately liked the Healdsburg area, and in November 1868 bought the *Democratic Standard* from John B. Fitch. Two changes occurred as a result of that sale - the *Democratic Standard* became the *Russian River Flag*, and the underlying political ideology became republican. In his salutatory editorial John Howell asked "that every old Missouri democrat of Healdsburg and its surrounding country subscribe for the *Russian River Flag*" (*RRF 11/19/1868*).

In 1876 Howell sold the *Flag* to the Jordan Bros. Elder brother L.A. Jordan soon after became sole proprietor. Four years later, in 1880, Jordan became Postmaster, and put the *Flag* up for auction. J.W. Ragsdale was the high bidder. Ragsdale had been an editor and printer in Santa Rosa, and brought with him to his new paper a new press and type, slugs, and rules. He carried on the paper's republicanism. In fact, Ragsdale had political ambitions, and became a state senator, and later, ambassador to China.

Ragsdale sold the *Flag* in 1885 to R.E. Eagle. A year later W. Frank Russell and his sister held the mortgage on the plant, and wanted to "cash in". This not being feasible, by a small payment they took over the *Flag*. In 1887 the *Flag* was sold to Felix Mulgrew.

The Healdsburg Enterprise

The *Healdsburg Enterprise* was established in May 1876 by brothers John F. and Felix Mulgrew, along with Samuel Englehart. Both John and Felix had served printer's apprenticeships under big republican John Howell at the *Russian River Flag*, but they were not swayed from their democratic party ideals. Their established *Enterprise* was politically democratic.



The Healdsburg Enterprise when it was located on West Street (Healdsburg Avenue) north of Matheson Street. Left to right: Ed Thompson, Florence Keane, Ed Duncan, Mary Livernash, John Livernash and Lizzie Livernash. Circa 1890.

It was during this time that Healdsburg had two distinct and ideologically different newspapers, the republican *Russian River Flag* and the democratic *Healdsburg Enterprise*, serving the community. Sometimes the two would "have it out" in the public forum: "At times the *Enterprise* and the *Flag* would enter into a verbal warfare. A disagreement in civil, social and political problems would kindle the fire and from an outside observing station it would seem that there would be knives and pistols due any minute, and that someone was sure to be butchered." (*HT Diamond Jubilee edition*)

Financial partner Sam Englehart was a republican, and soon sold his interest to the Mulgrews. Felix Mulgrew took charge of the editorial management, while John handled the business and mechanical departments.

Felix remained editor of the *Enterprise* on and off during the next few years. He first left to become deputy to Santa Rosa democrat T.L. Thompson, who was elected as secretary of state. Three years later he returned as editor of the *Enterprise*, only to leave when chosen as assemblyman. In 1881 John became county clerk, and sold his interest in the paper to Felix. In 1883 Felix was appointed wharfinger in San Francisco, and sold the paper

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to dry goods merchant William Ruffner. Ruffner sold a year later in 1884 to Robert Lee. Lee in turn sold a year later to W.D. Crow. A year after that, in 1886, Felix Mulgrew returned and bought back the *Enterprise* with Frank Merritt. Mulgrew resumed the editorial duties, while Merritt ran the mechanical department. In 1887 Mulgrew bought out his political rival - the *Russian River Flag* - and for a short time (one year), the *Healdsburg Enterprise* was the only paper in town.

In 1888 Felix Mulgrew, wanting to return to politics, sold the *Enterprise* to Julius Myron Alexander and C.H. Pond. Alexander and Pond made the *Enterprise* an "independent in politics" paper, and paid much attention to civic and educational matters. They sponsored a clean-up and ornamental planting of the downtown plaza, and helped in the formation of the first high school district. In 1890 they sold the *Enterprise* to Edward J. Livernash and his brother John, who returned the paper to democratic ideology.

Edward soon left for San Francisco to join the *San Francisco Examiner* staff. John took over the paper, and was aided by his sister Lizzie. John too left for San Francisco to work on the *Call*, and Lizzie, aided by her sister Mary, was left to run the paper. Lizzie Livernash ran the paper with great success. She was a compositor and business manager, as well as a writer (she wrote under the pen name "Mignonette"). In 1898, upon the sale of the *Healdsburg Enterprise*, the *Healdsburg Tribune* wrote of Lizzie, "It is not too much to say that "Mignonette" has performed a task in the last few years that not many men could have carried out." (HT 1/20/1898)

In 1898 Winston Harper bought the *Enterprise*, but sold it the same year when he formed a company of volunteers for the Spanish American War, and then became a captain in the army. The new owner, J.P. McDonnell was a Sebastopol newspaperman, and made E.S. Fyfe editor. In 1901 Fyfe became the owner of the *Enterprise*, but Grace Bros. became the financial backers of the paper, and when Fyfe decided to leave, it was Grace Bros. that put the *Enterprise* on the market. They sought out R.E. Baer, owner and publisher of the *Cloverdale Reveille*, and in 1901 Baer bought the *Enterprise*. He ran the *Enterprise* until 1929 (one of the longest stints of ownership of any paper to date).



Mrs. Charlotte Lowery at the Tribune linotype, circa 1912

The Healdsburg Tribune

In February 1888 Louis Meyer, the oldest son of Healdsburg merchant Sam Meyer, unpacked all the equipment for a small printing plant in a little attic store room in his father's building on West Street. By March 21 the *Sonoma County Tribune* had made its debut. Eighteen year old Louis made his twenty-nine year old lawyer uncle, Isadore Abraham, editor. The paper was politically republican, and rivaled the *Enterprise*.

Salutatory editorial of the *Sonoma County Tribune*:

To the people of Sonoma county, whose good opinion and generous encouragement we are anxious to deserve, we present our first issue of the TRIBUNE with our kindest greeting.

In ushering our weekly into the journalistic firmament, where already shine so many luminaries of surpassing magnificence and dazzling splendor, we justly appreciate the magnitude of our undertaking, and of our weighty responsibilities to the public...It is our aim to make the TRIBUNE a spicy, interesting family paper - one that should meet with a kind welcome at every hearth...

In politics, we propose to marshal our forces under the banner of the Republican party... We shall, therefore, devote our best energies towards promoting its aims and purposes. But, while pledging our adherence to the principles of the Republican party, we make this special observation. We place party principles above the men who aspire to expound and administer them... A good Democrat is far preferable to a Republican of questionable character...

Our journal will be published in the interest of Sonoma county in general, and Healdsburg in particular...From the public we ask a kind reception and a reasonable support. We shall try to deserve it."

Louis Meyer sold the *Sonoma County Tribune* in 1897 to Frank W. Cooke. It was at this time that (March 11, 1897) that the paper's name changed to the *Healdsburg Tribune*. Cooke was publisher of the *Tribune* during the 1906 earthquake. The trembler destroyed the office and plant located on West Street (Healdsburg Avenue), next to the Odd Fellows building. He rebuilt the office and plant further north on West Street.

Cooke published the *Tribune* until 1908, when he sold to gospel minister E.B. Ware and his silent partner, minister G.W. Brewster. Ware found juggling his ministerial duties and newspaper work difficult, and sold the paper to Alexander Crossen in 1909. Crossen liked the artistic aspects of publishing a newspaper, but did not like editorial work, so in 1912 he sold the paper to former owner Frank Cooke. Cooke ran the paper until 1916 when he sold to R.L. Dunlap, who operated the paper on a "shoestring" budget for eight months, and then resold the paper to Cooke.

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In this his third time attempt at newspaper ownership, Cooke lasted two years. In November of 1918 Cooke leased the *Tribune* for a year with the option to buy to M. Earle Adams, a newspaperman and printer from Palo Alto. When his year lease came to a close, Adams was encouraged by Healdsburg's business community to exercise his option and buy the paper. On November 1, 1918 Adams started publication of the daily *Healdsburg Tribune*, keeping the weekly going as well.

The Healdsburg Tribune and Enterprise

In 1928 R.E. Baer of the *Healdsburg Enterprise* became partners with Earle Adams. Baer consolidated his weekly *Enterprise* with the weekly *Tribune*, but after a year, in 1929, Baer sold his interest to Adams. Adams ran the paper for the next eight years. Then on January 1, 1937 Adams leased the *Tribune* and *Enterprise* to Larry Thatcher, who had been working for the paper for three years. A year later, with the consent of Adams, Thatcher merged the daily and weekly editions into one paper, and published semi-weekly on Mondays and Thursdays (the daily edition had become too difficult to maintain due to the development of radio and the increasing cost of production). Even so, with these changes Thatcher was financially unable to sustain his lease, and Adams came out of his retirement to resume authority over and the duties of the *Healdsburg Tribune* and *Enterprise*.

In 1938 the *Tribune* was housed in a single story brick building on a corner lot of Tucker and Fitch Streets. Earle Adams was editor in chief, and his wife Agnes acted as office manager. Two employees worked on contents: Max Farmer, who was advertising and commercial printing department chief; and Martha V. Hansen, society and local editor. Three regular employees staffed the mechanical department: Lawrence Rosasco, commercial printing; Edwin Taeuffer, make up and floorman; and Felix Lafon, linotype operator. Three boys worked twice a week as newspaper carriers for those subscribers inside the city limits. Outer city subscriptions were fulfilled by mail.

"That brings the history of the oldest continuously operated newspaper in Healdsburg from the day of its founding in October 4, 1865, to the present day. Many publishers have held the helm in the seventy five years of continuous operation, and several consolidations of business have been chalked up in its history, but still the Fourth Estate can boast of three quarters of a century of continuous succession, absorption of individualities and community service in Healdsburg, from a time prior even to incorporation of the town, which occurred first in 1867 under laws of the state then existing, and reoccurring during the twentieth session of the legislature when a special law was passed incorporating the City of Healdsburg, which was adopted by the voters of the city on April 18, 1874."

(HT Diamond Jubilee edition)



Healdsburg Tribune office, Earle M. and Agnes Adams, publishers, circa 1942. The Tribune office was in the building that was originally part of the grammar school. Fitch and Tucker Streets.

The Sotoyome Scimitar

The *Sotoyome Sun* was a newspaper that was established in March 1898 by J.C. Keene. In keeping with the manner of the times, the paper was politically slanted. Keene was a democrat with strong socialistic tendencies, and the *Sun* reflected these beliefs. In 1908 the *Sun* was sold to Ande Nowlin, who changed the name of the paper to the *Sotoyome Scimitar*. The *Scimitar* was financed by a group of local business men - including Ed Dennes and Alex Flournoy - in opposition to the *Healdsburg Tribune* and its publisher at the time Frank Cooke, who was campaigning to prohibit the sale of alcohol in Healdsburg. Local business men and bankers financed the *Scimitar* at \$100 per week, since the town's other paper, the *Healdsburg Enterprise*, did not enter into the opposition of Cooke. The "drys" lost the election, and the *Scimitar* went on to have a long history under the same ownership. In 1946 Ande Nowlin sold the *Scimitar*.

The Healdsburg Tribune, Enterprise and Scimitar

In 1941 another regular employee of the *Tribune*, Lawrence Rosasco, was given a lease by Earle Adams, but by September 1942 Adams was back in charge. In that year, 1942, the *Tribune* was changed into a weekly again. In 1946 Adams sold to Edd Roundtree. Roundtree bought the *Sotoyome Scimitar* from Ande Nowlin, and merged the papers together. The name *Scimitar* was incorporated into the newspaper's heading. A year later in 1947 Ruben and Robert Carlson bought the paper. And then in May 1950 Arnold Santucci assumed ownership and editorial duties.

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The Sotoyome Scimitar print shop, Ande Nowlin owner and publisher, circa 1904-05. It was located at the southwest corner of Center and Matheson Streets.

Conclusion

Healdsburg is lucky to have had such a long and varied newspaper history. Multiple points of view (in this case political) make up a broader view of a place's story. The "musical chairs" nature of the ownership seat in almost all of these papers speaks to the difficulty of running a journalism operation, and Healdsburg has been indeed fortunate to have experienced continuous newspaper coverage.

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Healdsburg Tribune: 6-4-1896; 3-11-1897; 1-20-1898; 12-28-1899
Illustrated New Year's Edition; 6-30-1901; 6-13-1901; 7-3-1902; 12-25-1908;
7-2-1909; 11-15-1911; 3-9-1916; 4-10-1916; 11-6-1919; 3-5-1929; 12-26-1940
Diamond Jubilee Edition

Russian River Flag: 11-19-1868; 3-3-1869; 10-14-1869; 2-20-1873;
7-15-1875; 2-15-1917

Sonoma County Tribune: 3-21-1888; 3-23-1893

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2-24-1938

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ARTIFACTS:

Mastheads of the Various Healdsburg Newspapers

THE DEMOCRATIC STANDARD.

RUSSIAN RIVER FLAG.
"Gazette for all - Police Bureau Head."

Sonoma County Tribune.

Healdsburg Tribune.

The Healdsburg Enterprise.

The Sotoyome Scimitar

The Healdsburg Enterprise
and the Healdsburg Weekly Tribune

THE HEALDSBURG TRIBUNE
Enterprise & Standard

HISTORIC



LIVES

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF FRANCIS PASSALACQUA

Edited by Holly Hoods

The following article is partly excerpted from a 1993 oral history interview with Francis Passalacqua by Jim Myers for a Sonoma State University history research paper. Additional material in the article is from Holly Hoods' February 2001 interview with Mr. Passalacqua. Born and raised in Healdsburg, Francis Passalacqua is the 2001 recipient of the Healdsburg Museum and Historical Society's annual Pioneer Award.

Passalacquas in California

My dad landed in the United States in 1865. They had no Ellis Island at that time. He came to the west coast and landed a few days after Lincoln had been assassinated. There were three brothers that came to the west coast: Anton (Antonio), Benedetto, and my father, Frank Passalacqua.

He worked in the gold mine fields for a period of time, how long, I don't know. But I remember him saying when he landed in San Francisco he was informed that



The Passalacqua family, back row, left to right, Francis, his sister Edith, his brother Henry; front row, his mother Rachel, his father Frank and his brother Emilio, circa mid 1920's

that was the best place to earn a living.

My father came to Healdsburg because he wanted to farm. California-- and especially Sonoma County--he'd heard was a good place for growing of grapes and fruits. He came here and had a vegetable garden first. He had one in Cloverdale and one in Healdsburg. He peddled vegetables by horse and buggy, I think as far as Ukiah.

Vegetable Garden and Winery

My father bought ten acres which he converted into a vegetable garden and it included the two motels there, Fairview and the other one. . . that was all a vegetable garden. I can recall my father going down there collecting rents after he had gone into the wine business.

We had a big winery on Fitch Street right where my home is and it extended to clear up to Sherman Street. They shipped wine back east, to the Mariani Brothers. They shipped in fifty gallon barrels, and that winery was in existence until Prohibition. Then after it was closed down they had a caretaker who was burning some leaves and

it was windy. It was a wooden, shingled building and some of the cinders landed between the two gables. The thing just took off and burned. At that time, I think my folks only had \$4000 worth of insurance, but that's all you could get on a winery at that time. It was north of the big house where I live.

A day laborer was all my father was until he had accumulated a few dollars to buy some land, and land was very cheap. As time went on, they bought properties out in the country. My father bought property out on the Russian River in the Alexander Valley. He eventually had 450 acres planted mostly in grapes and prunes.

Italian Self-Sufficiency

The Italians were hard workers and they saved everything they ever earned because in those days the cost of living was very low. And they raised most of the fruits and vegetables that they consumed. Likewise a lot of them never had to buy meat, because they had chickens, pork and beef. They lived off the land; they didn't go to the grocery store too often!

There were a lot of brick ovens up and down Dry Creek, Geyserville

and Healdsburg where the Italians baked their bread. They didn't buy bread. Actually, I remember my father baking bread-sourdough bread-once a week, enough for our family for the whole week. I remember as a little boy I'd go out there, and they would set a big fire in the brick oven and then they would take it all out and they'd scrape all the ashes off. Then you would throw flour, and if it just browned gently then the oven was ready. But if it turned black right away, it was too hot. I remember that as a young boy, because I did that for my father at his request-check the heat on the oven.

Parents and Siblings

My father married his first wife, Laura Boicelli, in Vallejo--she came over here-- and they had two children, Eduardo and Silvia. Laura went back to Italy where she died while visiting her family. My father went back and eventually married her sister, Rachele Boicelli, who was my mother. That marriage had four children: three boys and a girl.

My mother came here in the '80s, because I was born in 1910. I had two brothers and a sister. I was born about fifteen years after my brother Henry, the one next to me was born. I was born late in life to



Francis and Elsie Passalacqua, circa 1932

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*Francis and Elsie Passalacqua
in the mid 1960's*

my mother. My father was sixty-five when I was born. My two brothers worked on the ranch as laborers. I wanted to work on the ranch too, but my father said, "You've got two brothers." He wanted me to get an education and eventually a profession.

Law Practice

I practiced law from the late '30s until I retired about nine years ago. I practiced mainly civil law. There weren't very many

lawyers and only two judges in the early years. Donald Geary and Hilliard Comstock were the only judges at that time. They didn't have a public defender in the early years, so the court would appoint a lawyer to represent someone who couldn't afford to hire an attorney. I tried three murder cases in my career, but civil law was the main part.

Marriage and Family

I married Elsie Agnes Nardi. She was the daughter of Guiseppe and Ramida Nardi. We were married before I went to law school. . . it was 1933. I went to St. Mary's College in Moraga, then to law school in San Francisco. Elsie and I had four children (Frank J., born in 1936; Thomas R., born in 1939; Diane M., born in 1942; and Michael J., born in 1946).

Community Involvement

I attend Kiwanis meetings when I feel up to it. I've been a Kiwanian since just before I went

into the service. . . I've been involved in athletics since I was a boy.

Baseball was a pretty big deal in those days. Later I formed a non-profit corporation to put in lights in the ball park-in Recreation Park, with Art McCaffrey and several others who are gone now. We raised over thirty thousand dollars in the community to put in lighting through bonds, donations and fund raising. It cost around thirty to thirty-five thousand dollars to put those lights in.



Francis Passalacqua enjoyed playing baseball during his high school years and beyond.

Remembering Healdsburg as a Baseball Town

Healdsburg became a big town for Spring Training. Before the major leagues, the San Francisco Seals and the Oakland Oaks were big teams. The Seals always trained at Boyes Springs. I had met the owner-manager of the team, and we had just put the lights in Recreation Park. Mr. Fagin, the owner-manager, was interested in Healdsburg. Just then, the team was sold to the Giants, so the plan [to train in Healdsburg] was dropped.

But following that, Joe Orenge brought the Yakima Bears to Healdsburg to train for three weeks. Then came a Canadian team and other semi-pro teams. The teams would usually train for three weeks. They'd stay at the Plaza Hotel. We used to have big crowds at the ball park. It was a good time.