



# RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

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“ . . . a place where lives are changed.”

**A Brief History of the Hopkins (Black) White-O/Bishop's Ranch**

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### RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

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

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## IN THIS ISSUE

A teenager has to take over the family winery, an unusual occurrence on the Tayman Park Links, a fascinating history of the beautiful ranch now known as the Bishop's Ranch, and a family history that starts out with two young boys who came from England in the 1770's.

This is what's in store for our readers in the Summer 2002 issue of the *Russian River Recorder*.

We wish to welcome to our staff a new contributor, Charlotte Anderson, a long time volunteer with the Museum and presently serving as president of the Healdsburg Museum Volunteer Association. She brings us a brief history of Tayman Park Golf Course with a very special twist.

June Maher Smith, in her own inimitable way, tells the story of Simi Winery and the long time colorful owner, Isabelle Simi Haigh, who had to take over the operation of the winery as a teenager following the deaths of her father and uncle.

Our extremely capable and professional curator, Marie Shobe, recounts the fascinating history of the beautiful Bishop's Ranch out on Westside Road. As she so ably points out "this piece of land has an interesting and varied history from grapes, to Percheron horses, Great Danes, and lumber, to meetings, summer camps and retreats . . ."

This time Research Curator Holly Hoods gives us an edited version of an oral history of a well known Healdsburg area family, the Goddards. In her oral interview with Robert Silzle, the seventh generation descendant from two boys, John and Joseph Goddard, who set sail as young boys from England in the 1770's. Eventually the Goddards arrived in California coming by covered wagon. This is a fine example of how important the Museum's oral history program is.

We hope that you enjoy this latest issue of the *Recorder*.

Arnold Santucci  
Editor

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## HISTORIC



## BUSINESS

Montepulciano Winery, 1910

# SIMI WINERY: ROOTS IN ITALY

## Isabelle Simi Haigh Forced to Take Over Management as a Teenager

By June Maher Smith

The history of Healdsburg's popular Simi Winery begins in Italy when two brothers, Giuseppe and Pietro Simi, left their Tuscany home and journeyed to California in 1848. They started their first American enterprise as vegetable growers for San Francisco restaurants. They decided to go into winemaking and in 1876 they bought a three-story house in San Francisco. Their first winery was in the basement and their living quarters were upstairs. They used grapes grown in the Healdsburg area for producing their wine, transporting them by wagon to Petaluma and then by boat across the bay. Five years later they bought a winery on Front Street here in Healdsburg and named it "Simi Winery." They prospered and in the early 1880s they bought the land in north Healdsburg where the present-day winery complex is located. They named their vineyards "Colina de Florenza" and started construction of their new winery. It was finished in 1890—a two-story building 80' by 100', with walls of native basalt excavated on the property. The location reminded Giuseppe of his Italian home in Montepulciano so that was the name he gave the new winery.

About this time Isabelle

Victoria Simi was born to Giuseppe and his second wife, Nicoletta Casassa. They were the first couple married, in 1885, in the new Healdsburg Catholic Parish Church. Isabelle later avoided discussing her year of birth, but it seems to have been somewhere around 1887 to 1890. Her sister, Elvira, was three years younger than she.

The winery continued to prosper and in 1892 the Simi brothers had a license to distill brandy. Sufficient water was a problem and that year they drilled a 250-foot well, the deepest in Healdsburg at the time. The winery's reservoir was on the hill to the west where a large house now sits. Also in 1892 they signed a deed for a railroad right-of-way through their property to the San Francisco & North Pacific Railway Company.

The year 1904 was filled with happenings—some good, some bad. Giuseppe was adding to the original winery building. An 80' x 100', two-story addition was built on the north end, again using basalt from the area. The Simi Land Company filed articles of incorporation; a new well was drilled, reaching water at 50 feet this time; and two more



Giuseppe Simi, left, Isabelle Haigh's father, and her uncle Pietro.

parcels, 360 acres and 200 acres, were added to the vineyards. In May of that year Isabelle was selected by popular vote as queen of the Healdsburg Rose Carnival. It was such a major event that Isabelle's "royal wardrobe" was not selected in Healdsburg, but in San Francisco. Little did she know that three months later her life would be drastically changed. In the midst of all this activity, Giuseppe died in August. One month later his brother Pietro passed away.

Luckily, young Isabelle had worked with her father in the vineyards and accompanied him on business trips. In addition, she had graduated from Santa Rosa Business College in June. So she was somewhat

prepared to take over the helm of the business. And take it over she did. It is astounding that she began managing the business when she was a teenager, probably just 17 years old. She continued using the guidelines set by her father: buy grapes with a minimum of 22 sugar, age the wine for seven years, and bottle 100% of the grape shown on the label.

Isabelle was also one of the early wine marketers. In 1908 she and her cousin traveled to Denver, Chicago, and New York to visit distributors and tell them about Simi wines. In that same year she married Fred Haigh, the cashier of Healdsburg's Sotoyome Bank.

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He was the son of pioneer residents, Mr. and Mrs. George Haigh, and had served with honor in the Spanish-American War, along with other Healdsburg men. They set up housekeeping in the Simi home on Front Street. Their daughter Vivien was born in 1915, the same year that Fred resigned from the bank and joined Isabelle in the management of the winery. They acquired even more land and soon produced Simi wine at three different locations: the Montepulciano Winery, the Dotta Winery just south of it, and the Lencioni Winery in Dry Creek Valley.

The wine business came to a screeching halt on midnight of June 30, 1919. The U. S. Congress passed the 18th Amendment and Prohibition went into effect. No more production of wine and no more wine sales, except the small amount needed for sacramental and medicinal purposes. During the 14 years that Prohibition lasted, Isabelle and Fred kept up the vineyards and held onto the wines they had in storage. However, their despair must have been deep—no income; and then the Depression hit. There were bank foreclosures and they lost most of the land that Giuseppe, and Fred, had acquired.

In December of 1933 when Prohibition was repealed the Haighs had a half a million gallons of wine stored in their cellars. The youngest of the wines

would have been 15 years old, and some had been in the tanks seven years longer. As you can imagine, much of the wine was not of the best quality after all those years. A lot of it was sold to distilleries for making brandy. Some of it had turned sour and was sold as vinegar. Soon, however, Montepulciano Winery was producing again and the Haighs opened one of the first tasting rooms in the area. It was housed in a 25,000 gallon barrel which Fred moved from the champagne section of the winery and positioned along the road. It was a distinctive building and served its purpose until 1970.

In the late 1930s Parrot & Company of San Francisco became the exclusive distributor of Simi Wines. They developed a new label, Hotel del Monte, for the Simi Wines which were sold at that hotel in Monterey. And, at the California State Fair in 1941, Hotel del Monte wines won gold medals for their Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel and Burgundy. The pink Champagne won a silver medal.

The years passed and Simi Winery continued to produce wines according to Giuseppe's techniques and with outdated equipment. In 1954 Fred Haigh died and Isabelle and her daughter Vivien carried on. The relationship with Parrot & Company had come to an end. With no national distribution commercial sales were limited to the tasting room. Tragedy struck again



*The Simi Winery Tasting Room housed in a 25,000 gallon barrel, 1930's to 1970.*

when Vivien died suddenly in 1969. At the age of 80 Isabelle, who suffered from arthritis, made what must have been a hard decision for her—she would sell the winery.

In 1970 she sold to Russell and BJ Green, who were growing grapes on their ranch along the river in Alexander Valley. They had become friends with Isabelle, sharing a love of the land and fine wine and they agreed to carry on the quality traditions of the Simi Winery. By that time the Simi lands were greatly reduced from the holdings of 40 years earlier. There was just one small vineyard near the winery and another small one further north towards Asti. Russell set about modernizing the winery and the wine-making process. Stainless steel tanks were put in place, refrigeration and automated bottling were installed. The second story of the old building was sprayed with foam to keep the

space at a wine friendly cool temperature. Oak barrels were brought in. New buildings were built to house the tasting room, an office complex and meeting rooms.

One thing didn't change, however; Isabelle was at the winery seven days a week greeting visitors and telling them about the "old days." The apron and sweater she wore were decorated with souvenir buttons from across the country given to her by the tourists who stopped to taste the Simi wines. After four years spent improving the winery, the Greens sold to Scottish & Newcastle Vintners. That firm continued to produce wines worthy of the Simi label. Several other subsequent owners and noted winemakers have introduced new wines and built more buildings. Giuseppe's original stone building was renovated and now has three stories, the top two of which are used for barrel storage.

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Isabelle continued to be interested in the developments at the winery until her death at her Front Street home in October, 1981. Simi Winery is now part of Franciscan Estates and produces many outstanding wines. However, people still remember Isabelle Simi Haigh's presence in the tasting room and her pet turkey who guarded the cash register. The tall redwoods which provide the welcome shade at the attractive winery site are another reminder of Isabelle. She and Fred planted them to celebrate the repeal of Prohibition.



Isabelle Simi Haigh with Russell Green who purchased the Simi Winery in 1970

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## ONLY IN HEALDSBURG! TAYMAN, UBOLDI AND RIPLEY

By Charlotte Anderson

"Keep your head down only when swinging or you'll miss most of what Tayman offers"

In 1922, Tayman Park was founded as the then private Healdsburg Country Club. Charter membership was \$50 per person and drew 116 people.

The original membership agreement contained an interesting statement: "pay an initiation fee of \$100 for man and wife, and \$50 for single women"! Dues were set at \$3 per month.

The club purchased 63 acres of the Luce Tract on June 19, 1923. Volunteers cut down hay to mark fairways or left it standing to mark the rough. The original greens were made of Russian River sand, but "real" greens were laid later in 1923. The original nine holes covered 2,922 yards with par at 35 strokes.

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

When the Great Depression hit Healdsburg, membership fell so much that in 1930 the Club took out a \$9000 mortgage to keep the course in shape. The mortgagor was a local physician, Charles W. Weaver, and the deed of trust was payable in 3 years. Dr. Weaver died 18 days before the note was due and payable, and the Salvation Army's Lytton Home was his beneficiary — the monies to be used to establish a children's hospital at the home.

The Salvation Army agreed to accept \$6000 on the promissory note of \$9,000, provided that the City of Healdsburg would buy the property from the Country Club for use as a public park. City Councilmen Beeson, Killingsworth, Sherrifs and Haley passed Ordinance #240 on January 21, 1935, purchasing the acreage for \$6010.

In March 1935, resolutions were passed making the City responsible for the Course and establishing operating personnel and fees for the use of the course. The park was to be named Tayman Park after Charles E. Tayman, founder and first president of the Healdsburg Country Club. A golf professional was hired to manage the course and two greenskeepers were also hired.

During World War II, the course was closed for a brief period when Tom Fry, then the pro, left for the service. Shortly, the City hired its first and only female golf course manager, a Mrs. Stewart. Mrs. Stewart managed the course until 1946 when Bill Ross succeeded her.

Early in 1947, John Uboldi, a Healdsburg High School faculty member, and a group of friends were golfing when John noticed an interesting telephone pole between the 4th and 5th holes. Having been raised in McCloud at the base of Mt. Shasta and having been an avid woodsman and nature lover, John was fascinated by the pole which was "completely imbedded with thousands of acorns." He sent a photo and letter to "Ripley's Believe It Or Not." The photo was published in Ripley's cartoon panel in the *San Francisco Examiner*, Monday, June 9, 1947. John also received a card saying his contribution was added to the Ripley file of world oddities!

"Keep your head down only when swinging or you'll miss most of what Tayman offers!"



## HISTORIC



Osborne White

## RANCH

“ . . . a place where lives  
are changed.”

### A Brief History of the Hopkins (Black)/White-O/Bishop's Ranch

By Marie Shobe



*Hauling grapes from the (Black) Hopkins Ranch now known as the Bishop's Ranch, to Windsor to be crushed. The driver of the first wagon is Marshall McCracken, of the second wagon James Thurman. (Circa 1900's)*

### Introduction

Out on the west side just south of Healdsburg (on Westside Road, no less!), amongst the hills, forests and vineyards, lies what is known as the Bishop's Ranch. The Bishop's Ranch is now owned by the Episcopal Diocese, and is used as a retreat and conference center. This piece of land has an interesting and varied history. From grapes, to Percheron horses, Great Danes, and lumber, to meetings, summer camps and retreats - all make up the past, present and character of this patch of Sonoma County.

### The Hopkins Estate

In the early 1840s Mexico (which owned California) granted large tracts of land to individuals. Captain Henry Fitch was granted 48,800 acres of land that was called the Rancho Sotoyome, and which encompassed all of the Healdsburg area (except Dry Creek Valley). By the late 1840s many people had come to California looking for

gold and land, and "settled" on land they found attractive. Between 1852 to 1864 these squatters were involved in various land wars between themselves and the Mexican landowners. During this period, many of the landowners had to sell off pieces of their land to pay off debts. Josefa Fitch, widow of Sotoyome Rancho landowner Henry Fitch, held land auctions in the 1850s.

S.A. Marshall, a native of Ireland who had come west in 1849 by the overland route, in 1868 bought 7,583 acres of Rancho Sotoyome land lying about three miles south and west of Healdsburg. The Russian River formed a part of the eastern boundary, and the property extended back to Mill Creek. During the years Marshall owned the property he kept all of the timber/trees intact. He established about 225 acres of vineyard and 30 acres of orchards. Other parts of the land were prepared for vineyards.

In 1887 a "ripple of excitement" (HE 1887) flowed through the area when the S.A. Marshall parcel of land was sold. The property sold in less than three weeks for \$325,000 to millionaire Moses

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Hopkins (brother of Mark Hopkins). The land was still full of natural resources. According to the *Healdsburg Enterprise*: "The timber resources of the place are the most extensive and valuable of any in Sonoma County. There are about 25,000,000 feet of redwood, and about 15,000 cords of tan bark, to say nothing of redwood for shingles, stakes, etc., and some 40,000 cords of tanbark wood, much of which will be worked into hardwood lumber. There are several thousand acres of available grape and fruit lands... The development of the vast resources of this property will bring lots of business and wealth to Healdsburg..." (HE 1887). The sale of this large parcel of land was the largest land sale in Sonoma County to that date.

Over the years the ranch had many superintendents to take care of its needs. A Captain Black was considered an "expert" (HE 1887), and was sent by Moses Hopkins to examine the property before the sale. Captain Black favored the purchase, and became the first superintendent. The ranch at times was referred to as the Black Ranch. James D. Smith became superintendent at some point, and was succeeded by George Blackburn, who had worked on the ranch for eleven years. Other superintendents were M.V. Frost, and Marshall McCracken, who was the last.

In May of 1925 Mrs. Emily Hopkins, aged 85 years, passed away in New York. Mrs. Hopkins was sole surviving owner of the Hopkins Ranch, which had been in the family for forty years. At the time of her death the ranch was partially planted to grapes and other crops (grapes being the main crop). A large amount of livestock was kept, and about 700 to 1,000 acres were covered in timber. Upon the death of Emily Hopkins much speculation about the fate of the property arose. Would the property be sold? Would it be subdivided? The Hopkins' nephews had tried to have the ranch subdivided amongst the heirs, but Emily had resisted this (HT 1925). It would be five years before the Hopkins ranch was sold.

### At Home on the White-O Rancho

Osborne and Alice Aileen White purchased the Hopkins estate in 1930, with the idea of working a large agricultural ranch.

Before coming to Sonoma County the Whites lived in Honolulu, Hawaii, where Alice White's father, John Dowsett, was the owner of a large plantation called Waianae Plantation. Osborne White worked on the 7500-acre plantation for four years, and gained much experience which he could apply to his own agricultural enterprises in Sonoma County.

When the Whites purchased the Hopkins property there was only one building and a farm shop on the property. They began an inten-



Mr. and Mrs. Osborne White and daughter Persis with part of the Adow Kennel dogs. Circa 1940.

sive building program right away, transforming the property into a "farm community" (HT 1940) that included two residences, five cottages for employees, several large barns for cattle, the most up-to-date chicken and brooder houses, model dog kennels, state-of-the-art-horse stables, a lumber mill and numerous other buildings.

The 'Diamond Jubilee' edition of the *Healdsburg Tribune* in 1940 characterized the 8000 acre White-O Ranch as the "agricultural showplace of Sonoma County - recognized throughout the west for its famous Percheron horses, great danes, and general agricultural products" (HT 1940).

The White-O Ranch Percheron horses were fairly famous. In fact, they were a nationally known group of thoroughbred mares and an imported French Percheron sire. The horses were shown annually in the California State Fair, as well as in the leading county fairs in California, where they won numerous prizes. They were also entered in national and international competitions, winning all prizes in their class. The reputation of these Percherons was such that the agricultural department of the United States government kept a stallion in stud at the ranch.

The thoroughbred horses were not the only famous animals on the ranch. Alice White had a dog hobby, specifically Great Danes and, to a lesser extent, Irish Terriers. She raised the purebred dogs from birth, and entered them in dog shows across the country. According to the *Tribune*, "Mrs. White has carried off more honors for her dogs than any one individual entrant" (HT 1940).

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The ranch was considered very modern and up-to-date. It had the latest in farm equipment in all of its various operations. Animal-wise, it consisted of beef and dairy cattle, poultry (5,000 chickens) and horses. It also had many acres of vineyard and fruit orchards. The ranch employed more than 50 people to regularly care for all the various aspects of operation.

The White-O Ranch was well known for its grain fed cattle. It had 100 head of grade Hereford cattle and 80 head of purebred Herefords. Cattle from the ranch were marketed through the Santa Rosa Meat Packing Co., of which Osborne White was vice-president. The beef was sold in Sonoma County under the names "White-O Rancho Baby Beef" or "White-O Rancho Fed Beef". The Whites also kept a herd of Ayrshire dairy cows, whose milk was supplied to employees.

In addition to these agricultural pursuits the Whites owned a lumber mill, located just at the back of the ranch. The lumber mill was called the Mill Creek Lumber Company, and was managed by Joe McEachern. Each year this lumber mill produced more than 2,500,000 feet of redwood and pine lumber. Rails and split products were manufactured and shipped out. The lumber mill had about 40 of its own employees

Osborne and Alice White were very active in their community. They welcomed neighboring farmers and allowed them to look at and study the modern and up-to-date equipment and farming methods used at the ranch. Osborne White served as president of the Fourth Agricultural District Fair Association, as director of the Sonoma County Farm Bureau, and as a director in the Sonoma County Fair Association.

One of their big interests was in the advancement and encouragement of the Future Farmers. The Whites would invite agricultural students from north coast high schools to come to the ranch one day a year to have an educational field day. During the day, they would hold a huge barbecue lunch for the students.

After World War II the Whites decided to sell the Ranch and move to a smaller property in Petaluma. Many of the outer parcels of the ranch were sold or leased. The main ranch parcel was sold to the Episcopal Diocese.

## **El Rancho del Obispo**

In 1947 Bishop Karl Morgan Block bought the 63-acre main ranch parcel of the White-O Rancho. Bishop Morgan had been searching for a retreat site for the Episcopal Diocese of California,



*The beautiful chapel at the Bishop's Ranch.*

and found the ranch setting the ideal spot. He named it El Rancho Del Obispo (The Bishop's Ranch).

The main ranch house became the retreat center. The original entrance was transferred to a neighboring leased parcel, and a new entrance was built directly from Westside Road. The Great Dane kennels were turned into guest dormitories- "Bishop Block is said to have remarked he was glad the Whites hadn't raised dachshunds!" (Lampen 2001). In 1955 the Chapel of St. George was built across from the Ranch House, and it was dedicated to Bishop Karl Morgan Block "for his vision in making the ranch what it was" (Hickman 2000). The Refectory - or the dining hall - was built in 1958 (and was subsequently renovated in 1998).

Over the years since then many additions were done to the Bishop's Ranch. St. Stephen's Youth Village was built in the mid 1960s (and renovated in 1991). Kipp Cottage, which became the manager's residence, was built in 1961. Between 1972 and 1982, when the Episcopal Order of Saint Francis occupied and managed the ranch, a west wing addition was built onto the main Ranch Hall (also renovated in 1991). In the late 1980s a tree house was built in memory of diocesan AIDS victims.

This collection of buildings that had been added one by one to the already existing structures of the White-O Rancho was in need of renovation and updating by the mid 1980s. Under the direction of Bishop William E. Swing "a master plan to remodel and construct additional buildings was in the works by 1986" (Hickman 2000). The Ranch House was the center of the ranch during the time of the Whites, and it has remained the center since. The house needed a new plumbing and heating system, and a complete electrical rewire, but above all it needed to be made wheelchair accessible. The house consists of a dining room, a living room, a library, a kitchen, a solarium, 15 bedrooms and many patios.

*Please see page 9*





## the bishop's ranch

a place where lives are changed

In the 1990s several new buildings were added to the grounds: St. John's Meeting House (1991), which is a multi-use facility; Webb Lodge and Graupner Room (1994), which was built specifically for handicapped guests; and the Youth and Family Lodge (1996), which was built to complement St. Stephen's Youth Village (all 10 cabins support not only youth, but teens and adults as well). According to Executive Director Sean Swift, "We've tried to keep the spaces fairly flexible. It is important for the ranch to be accessible for both individuals and families, religious and non-religious groups" (Hickman 2000). Today the Bishop's Ranch is a retreat and conference center that provides meeting facilities, lodging, meals and recreational activities for non-profit, religious and educational groups of all ages (web page).

### Land Preservation

Once the buildings were updated and modernized, focus turned to the surrounding land. The Land Preservation Committee of the Bishop's Ranch issued a Mission Statement and Action Plan, which outlines the overall goals, the program ideas, and the action plan to carry the ideas out and fulfill the goals. The Mission Statement reads in part: "The purpose of this committee is to ensure that the outstanding natural resources of the Bishop's Ranch and those of the immediately surrounding areas are preserved and enhanced. Our program would be an integral part of the collaborative challenge to protect the entire Russian River watershed and restore the habitat for threatened species. Its message would also act as an important incentive to our guests when they return home to go about helping to protect the watersheds in which they live" (web page).

The outline that follows the Mission Statement develops overall goals, which include: the establishment of a resource center for helping restore the natural resources of the Bishop's Ranch area and the

Russian River watershed; the preparation of a community action plan for protecting areas; the development of a land use ethic; the preservation and restoration of natural habitats; the zoning of areas as forever wild and the protection of conservation easements; and the preparation of a trail map and guide from the Russian River to the Ranch.

The Action Plan contains ideas such as: a schedule of programs (6th grade curriculum, Elderhostel programs, half-day programs); the design of a trail network and interpretive watershed booklet; the restoration of areas with unneeded roads; the removal of all but perimeter fences; the research of possible seasonal camping sites; the establishment of a corps of volunteers to build and maintain trails, act as interpretive docents, control plants, build databases on the natural life, etc.; the making of a list of restoration sites in the water shed; and the preparation of fundraising materials.

### Conclusion

The area known as the Hopkins or Black Ranch, then as the White-O Rancho, and now as the Bishop's Ranch has always been used in conjunction with its natural surroundings. Whether agriculturally centered, animal oriented, meeting focused, or spiritually inspirational, the Bishop's Ranch has served its occupants well. The future seems equally positive.

"Natural beauty is a critical asset of the Bishop's Ranch. The peace and tranquility found there provide us with a respite from the pandemonium outside and a means for restoring the soul. We consider the Bishop's Ranch a natural haven and that is why it is so special and has been called "...a place where lives are changed" (from the Land Preservation Committee Mission statement, web site)

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## ORAL



Robert Silzle

## HISTORY

# COVERED WAGONS TO WESTSIDE ROAD: THE PIONEER GODDARD FAMILY IN HEALDSBURG

*AN ORAL HISTORY WITH ROBERT SILZLE*

Edited by Holly Hoods

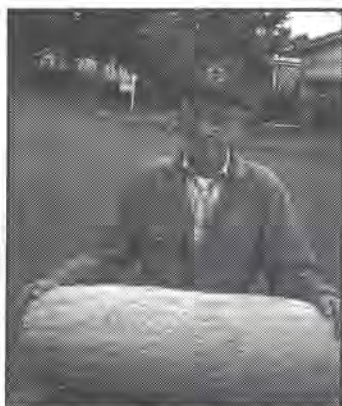
### Introduction

I am Robert Silzle and I had a brother Donald Silzle and a sister Harriette. My folks were Evelyn Goddard Silzle and Roy John Silzle. My grandfather was Wellman Goddard and my grandmother was Blanche Goddard. The genealogy of the Goddard family in Healdsburg started in England. It goes back to two little boys—John and Joseph—who were put aboard a ship in England and came to the United States. And I'm the seventh generation from those two boys.

### Bound for America

The family story goes that there was a mean and covetous stepmother who wanted to get rid of the two boys so that she could inherit her husband's estate. So she took the two boys who were about 10 years old on board a sailing vessel on the coast of England. While the captain was showing the boys around, she got off and the ship sailed. The little boys found out that they were going out to sea, well, they started crying and they wanted to get off, naturally. So the story goes, the captain whipped them and they were put in bondage. They came to Virginia and they were put in bondage until they were 21 years old. This happened about 1750.

One of the boys did pretty well; ended up owning some land in Kentucky. The Goddards were very religious. Some of the Goddards moved up to Ohio because they didn't believe in slavery. They moved up there to get out of this slavery deal. Mr. Goddard had a black hired man who



Robert Silzle, 1999

was what they called a free slave. They all stayed there in Ohio for several years and then moved to Iowa. They stayed there in log cabins for several years.

### William and Jane Goddard to California

According to the history that I got, my great-grandfather William Barry would be the fourth generation of the Goddards. William Barry had married a girl from an upper state—I forget what state it was. They had five children by that first marriage, and then the wife passed away. There was a set of twins; one girl died and another boy that died. So there was three children from the first marriage after his wife died. Then he married Jane Phillips and they had more kids. They decided to come to California.

### Crossing the Plains

There was four wagons; three Goddards and there was a West—and his wife was a Goddard. I don't know how many was in the caravan, but Jane,

I guess, did most of the driving. . . They came across the plains after there had been a prairie fire. And there was no grass, so the cows dried up and there was no milk for the kids, and they were crying 'cause they didn't have any milk. I don't know how they fed the mules and horses. They must have had hay or something in the wagons. One of the girls in the caravan wrote a journal of the trip. She said the only Indians they saw was a bunch of Indians who rode by them and they were very stern—they didn't look at them at all. I guess they resented all these people coming through their territory.

### Pregnant Pioneer

Jane was pregnant with their second boy. They stopped up there in the Sierras someplace. She set up a cook tent and she sold meals to the people passing through. Finally Uncle Dan was born. They didn't know what side of the line he was on, so they named him "Daniel Nevada Goddard." He always resented that middle name for some reason. It was kind of a joke in the family.

### Settlers in Healdsburg

So they came on, I guess it was into Utah where the Oregon Trail forks off and goes up into Oregon Territory. So the three other wagons decided to go up there to Oregon and William Barry, my great-grandfather, decided to continue on to California. So they came down to Healdsburg. They camped at what they called the Immigrant Bar, below Healdsburg. I guess they just lived out of their covered wagon. And

then across the River there was quite a stretch of land there from Jim McClish's place to the Storey place and he rented this strip of land for the first year. I don't know what he raised, but he had several hundred acres in it, whatever it was.

After the first year, they decided to go up to Oregon Territory to see how their brothers were doing up there. I guess they took that covered wagon, I don't know. [Laughs] They couldn't get on a train and there was no good roads. It must have taken them a long time. So they decided to come back to Healdsburg and they bought that strip of land. They started clearing it, and they sold about half of it to Dick Lewis. They started clearing the hill, which was madrones and oaks. And they had a big Italian family that came in and grubbed the stumps out and chopped the wood and they made charcoal. They made the charcoal and sacked it and sent it to San Francisco.

### Harvests and Houses on Westside Road

After they got the land cleared, they planted grain, I guess: wheat, oats and barley, that kind of stuff. Once a year, during the summer, Zeb Pritchett had a harvester, and he'd come through and harvest the grain. Zeb Pritchett is Ray Gardner's grandfather.

The first year they had the Westside Ranch they lived in a house down below the hill from Harold McClish's house. And then they moved to

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another place further south below Young's slough down there. Finally William Barry built his own house further south, which would be Albert Goddard's place. The rest of the boys were born there. My grandfather was born there. My mother was born there.

## The Goddard Boys

William Barry Goddard and Jane Phillips Goddard—she had eight boys. She had them just like clockwork. Every two years, they had a boy. All but two of them matured. There was one who died a year old and one who died 'bout six years old.

Getting back to the Westside Ranch, there was three Goddards: my Grandfather Wellman, Albert and Daniel who went together and bought out all the other brothers and sisters and stepsisters and so forth, and they had this ranch. When my Grandfather got married, he built his own house, which ended up as our place. So the three boys divided it up and Uncle Albert got the north section. It was twin places about 80 acres apiece. His son-in-law ran the ranch. Then Wellman, my grandfather, got the lower place. But Uncle Dan, he wanted the hill land, because the trees were smaller and easier to grub out, I guess. So he got the hill land, which was the poorest land. After so many years of planting grain, I guess they started planting vineyard and prunes.

## Wellman Goddard

My grandfather Wellman Goddard, what a picture perfect life he had! He was a hard worker, and I guess some of the other Goddards was jealous of him, calling him "Penny Pincher." But he was the most successful one! My mother said some of the Goddard boys took over running the ranch for their mother and lost money, and then my grandfather took it over and he made money. I don't know what he did different, but he was a real good farmer.



Harvesting hay on the Goddard Ranch, 1918

What a man he was! I was sure lucky to have a grandfather like that! He didn't smoke or drink and I've never seen him upset or mad. He was a hard worker and it's just amazing what a beautiful ranch he developed there. He built this beautiful two-story Victorian home, all good redwood lumber. It's still standing there; that's where I was born. It cost \$1400. The carpenters were two and a half a day. And he built a beautiful, big barn and a shop with power equipment.

He built a prune shed and a dipper and a help house down in the pasture there for the hired men. Everything was so beautiful, painted up and new. And he made money. . . he retired and bought that big home on Matheson-the Alexander place. I think it was \$6000 in 1923. When his daughter married my dad, Pa was a butcher. Two years later they came on the ranch and filled the house up with kids, so Grandpa and Grandma Goddard bought the Alexander house in Healdsburg and moved.

Everything was going good until the Depression hit. Even after the Depression, when things were awful bad, my Grandpa was able to buy us a disc in 1935, which was a big help. Then in 1936, he bought us a T-20 International Tractor, a track layer, which was a godsend. We didn't have a truck, other than the old Sampson, and Grandpa bought us a DS30 International Flatbed Truck. Then we were pretty well off.

## "A Real Good Life"

You know, it was a real good life. We worked hard, but-we had a big garden. We didn't suffer too much. My poor mother, one year she put up 200 quarts of fruits and vegetables. We didn't have a refrigerator. We had what we called the milk house-it was a cement floor with redwood sawdust for insulation between the walls. It kept pretty cool. The shelves was just sagging down from the weight of all that canned stuff. Pa had to put braces in under each shelf to keep them from breaking.

My mother even canned some venison. My dad would get a couple of deer, and she would cut up the meat in squares and parboil it and put it in jars. Then in the winter time, she'd take it out and finish cooking it. We ate well. We had all kinds of fruit canned and stuff like that.

## Hard Times for the Silzles in Healdsburg

The Silzles came from Illinois. My Dad was born in about 1888, the second to last child. There was seven in the family. My dad said he was born in a house south of Healdsburg near where the Old Redwood Highway goes south underneath the underpass. His mother got perionitis when the after-birth didn't pass when my dad's brother was born, and she died. They had family back east who wanted to take the kids, but John, the father, said he

wanted to keep the family together.

I don't know how long they lived there south of Healdsburg, but later they moved up West Dry Creek, to a canyon next to the Sioli Ranch. Pa called it "Dog Canyon." They were really poor. They had a terrible life. Pa said that they were so poor, they didn't have butter for their bread. They'd eat their lunch behind the school-the grammar school, so kids wouldn't make fun of them 'cause they had lard or bacon grease for butter. And Pa worked for Siolis after school and in the summer. He got one meal a day.

Things were really rough for them up there. I guess John was an alcoholic. He kind of abandoned the kids. He went to Stewarts Point as a blacksmith. My dad was so bitter against his father that his name was Roy John Silzle and he changed it to Roy James Silzle. He never talked about his father. I wish I had inquired more, because up in the cemetery there's just a cheap stone that says "John Silzle." So we don't know when he was born or when he died.



Robert Silzle with first deer, 1936



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## Butcher's Apprentice

Pa was lucky a little later to get a job working for the Moores. They had a butcher shop in Healdsburg and I think they also had a slaughterhouse. Pa became what they called a "Yard Boy." He washed the buggy and mowed the lawn, gathered the eggs, milked the cows. It was at the Moores' place on North Street. They had a beautiful stucco home, so Pa was really lucky. They took good care of him and he got a good start in life, after having such a rough time in earlier life.

Pa got fifteen dollars a week as a

butcher. Then after he got married in 1916, they gave him eighteen dollars. He'd tell about the farmers who'd pay once a year, after Harvest. They'd pay in gold. If they'd have a bad year, they'd wait two years to pay! And when they'd come in to pay, Pa would cut them a big Roast for paying their bill. Boy, things really have changed, haven't they?

## Silzle Humor

Pa'd tell this story about the Moores having home brew in the basement. One time they were gone, and they phoned Pa to see how things were going. So he talked to 'em, but he held the phone away from himself



*Wellman Goddard house, 4296 Westside Road, built in early 1900's.*



*Wellman, Blanche and Evelyn Goddard*

while he did so they couldn't smell his breath, 'cause he'd been sipping some home brew down there!

Oh, I've got lots of stories!

## Selling the Ranch

My folks retired in about 1962-3 and moved into Plantation Trailer Park in Healdsburg. And then I took the ranch over and I ran it. I got married to Janet Ferber in 1957. I ran the ranch for several years, but finally we sold it to Windsor Vineyards who still own it. They pulled out all the walnuts and apples and prunes, and planted vineyard.

I hated to sell the ranch which had been in the family since 1854,

but things went from bad to worse. The taxes doubled in the few years I had it, and the price of prunes went way down. I was just work, work, work! I didn't have a vacation for seven years. Sunday morning I'd come in about 10:00, change my clothes and take the family and go to church, then come home, change my clothes and go back to work. That's the way it was for about seven years.



*Wellman Goddard*