



RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

SPRING 2011 • ISSUE 112

An Official Publication of the Healdsburg Museum and Historical Society



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In This Issue

Our first issue of 2011 features long ago water carnivals and fiestas, fun times on the Russian River, Memorial Beach and around Fitch Mountain, a look back at the very successful Prune Blossom Tours and finally a fitting tribute to a business that served the community for over 120 years.

We have purposely tied in this issue with the new exhibit, *Russian River Good Old Days*, now on display in the Museum's main gallery. If you have not visited the exhibit you still have time to enjoy this very special exhibit designed by our curator Holly Hoods who was assisted in its execution by many dedicated volunteers.

Setting off the tone of this issue, of course, is Holly's delightful and well researched story of Healdsburg's past water carnivals and fiestas. In keeping with this theme she has chosen four artifacts to describe, all of which can be found in the exhibit. And please check out the Russian River Memories with many local area residents recalling the fun times they had on the Russian River, Memorial Beach and around Fitch Mountain.

Our Collections Manager Meredith Dreisback agreed to research and tell us about the very popular Prune Blossom Tours which introduced many Bay Area residents to the beauty and charm of the Healdsburg area. Meredith recalled working on the tours when she was employed by the Chamber of Commerce and that "it was fun". It was also fun, she said to talk to the ladies of the Russian River Farm Bureau in Alexander Valley who put on a delicious country lunch for the visitors.

Janet Sbragia Pisenti who grew up in the Healdsburg area

returns with her second article about a special Healdsburg business. This time she recounts the history of the Rosenberg and Bush Department store which served the Healdsburg area residents and beyond for over 120 years. It is a well researched and written article I know you will enjoy. Many of our readers, more than likely, will recall shopping with pleasure at Rosenberg and Bush.

If you have not already done so, by all means take the time to enjoy the new exhibit on display in the main gallery, *Russian River Good Old Days*.

This is the last issue of the Russian River Recorder I will edit. After fourteen years at the helm it seemed time to hand over the reins to a younger person. It has been a challenging and, yes, rewarding 14 years and I appreciate all the help I received from the three Curators who served during these years Marie Shobe, Dan Murley and Holly Hoods. Holly and I worked together all these fourteen years since she started as Research Curator just a few months before I joined the Museum volunteer group. Also my sincere thanks to all the many writers who contributed so many interesting articles about Healdsburg's past. I could not have done my job without you.

My thanks also to the board members throughout the years who supported my efforts and to Steve Perkins, our printer and graphic artist who gave so generously of his time and talents.

Sincerely,

Arnold Santucci
Editor



RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

*The Official Publication of the
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by Meredith Dreisback

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by Holly Hoods

Holly recounts the history of the many water carnivals and fiestas held on the Russian River's Memorial Beach and enjoyed by hundreds of area and Bay Area residents over 100 years. She reminds us that plans are underway for a Water Carnival this year. You'll find her detailed account of past carnivals most interesting, we believe.

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A detailed and well researched history of a Healdsburg business that served the residents of Healdsburg and surrounding areas for many years.

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Local residents recall with fondness the many hours they enjoyed on the Russian River both at Healdsburg Memorial Beach and around Fitch Mountain. Enjoy these and many others at the Museum's present exhibit *Russian River Good Old Days*.



Jacob Gregg Heald

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: HEALD'S ARTIFACTS

Dear Sir:

Recently I read the article on the Bell Ambulance Service in your publication.

Of interest, my great grandmother was married to Emsley, son of John BELL Elliot, founder of the Geysers. After his death, she married Jacob Gregg Heald, younger brother of Harmon Heald, founder of Healdsburg.

As a great grandson of Jacob Heald, I have donated many Heald artifacts to the Museum, including the Heald family Bible.

Last summer, I donated my third book; *John Heald 1615-1662, Founder of Concord, MA* to the Museum library. When finished I will mail my next book: *Samuel- Jacob Heald, Healdsburg Family Ancestor of the Healdsburg Family*.

In my latest book, *Harman Genealogy* will be a huge amount of Healdsburg Heald's pictures, artifacts, charts, maps, drawings, etc. (This includes the original "plat" of the town showing the names of who bought the lots).

For example, a short while back I mailed a large envelope of "Heald materials" to Meredith Dreisback (Collections) at the Museum. The material contained pictures and a Biography of Dr. George Heald, nephew of Harmon, with a feature article on his founding of "Life and Health" magazine in Healdsburg. When the publication went public, he moved to Washington D.C. where he was the head editor for 25 years. The magazine is now called just "Health" and is found at nearly all of the doctors' waiting rooms throughout the nation. Unfortunately the materials must have been lost as they never appeared in either the "Review" or the "Russian River Recorder." [Museum note: Meredith did receive the materials and may feature them in a future "Collections Corner" article in the Review.]

My Grandfather (William T. Heald) wrote and had published in 1918 in the Healdsburg newspaper of the time: "Healdsburg History." It was re-published in 1954. The long article, published in some 15 "chapters," was quite comprehensive, including details of the first settlers and business of the time. Some of the material in these chapters is reprinted in my new book.

With my Master's Degree from the University of the Pacific, 10 years in Broadcast radio and teaching Speech and Debate at the High School, Junior (community) Colleges, and Stanislaus State University, I find my retirement years in lecturing on history much more interesting than when I attended High School many years ago!

Sincerely,

Jack W. Heald

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Wilbur and Norma Moniz, 1946

AMBULANCE OWNERS AND DRIVERS IN THE 1940s

Carl Hagsten, Wilbur Moniz,
and Ed Crosetti

By Janet Sbragia Pisenti

(Correction: Wilbur Moniz and Lloyd Evangelisti were not partners in Healdsburg's taxi and ambulance business prior to Bell's Ambulance Service. The real story follows.)

Wilbur Moniz was born on Vine Hill Road in Sebastopol and as a young man, he volunteered to serve in the U.S. Army Infantry. Like Lea Bell, he had experience with war during World War II. He served in the European Theater of Operations for six years, suffering several wounds, and with points, he was discharged in June of 1945. The war was over! After returning to Sebastopol, he met Norma Cavallo of Geyserville. Her parents had owned a farm in Alexander Valley which is presently owned by the Murphy-Goode Winery. They were married in 1946 at St. John's Church in Healdsburg.

Wilbur, it appears, liked nothing better than driving any sort of conveyance...a car, a truck, a taxi, even an ambulance. At age 85, he was still hauling grapes. His Class C license is

just expiring. He started out as a partner with Norma's brother, Lorenzo Cavallo, hauling prunes and grapes from their ranch in Dry Creek. Then he drove a laundry truck. In January of 1947, he decided (along with Norma) to buy Carl Hagsten's Ambulance Service. It is not known how long Carl had been driving that ambulance, but Carl was selling it due to his ill health. "The ambulance was a 1932 Cadillac ambulance," Norma recalled, "and it was a big white thing!" Wilbur did not have any medical training, so he signed up for a two-week First Aid class at Santa Rosa Junior College. That was it!

In the spring of 1947, he and Norma also decided to buy Nick's Taxi in Healdsburg and they changed the name to Healdsburg Taxi. The taxi was situated in front of Medico Drug. Taxi fare up to Diggers Bend was \$2.50 and in town, it was 50 cents. The ride to Geyserville cost \$1.00.

"The ambulance was parked behind Tomasco Drug (behind West Street) and we had a small office there," Norma recalled. "Lloyd Evangelisti had a soda fountain in the Tomasco Drug Store during that time, and he enjoyed riding along with Wilbur on his runs whenever he could." Lloyd was just company for Wilbur and possibly he assisted him when needed.

One night, Wilbur took on a passenger who needed to go up Mill Creek Road and so, Wilbur obliged. After arriving somewhere out in that area, the passenger was let out of the car. The fellow looked around and seemed confused about it all and then came up behind Wilbur and began to strangle him with intense force. "I was young then," Wilbur added, "and could handle him pretty well and so the fellow took off running. He was not heard from again. That is when Wilbur decided to sell the business. This job was not for him. It was 1948 and they had only been in business since January of 1947.

They sold the combined taxi and ambulance business to Ed Crosetti, who was their employee and was considered the perfect person for the job. "Ed was a fine man, a good man," Norma kept saying, and they were happy to pass it on to him. Ed was married to Hazel and they had a son in Healdsburg. They owned two taxis and one ambulance, and it is unsure how long they served the city of Healdsburg. Yet, we do know that eight years later, in 1956, Lea and Inez Bell purchased their 1948 Buick Flexible ambulance and started Bell's Ambulance Service.

This is the missing chapter in Healdsburg's ambulance history. No descendants of Carl Hagsten or Ed Crosetti have been found. When they are found and more stories surface regarding this type of business, there will be more stories to tell.



Prune trees in bloom, 1963

HEALDSBURG PRUNE BLOSSOM TOUR

by Meredith Dreisback

To celebrate the beauty of the prune blossoms' flowery show each spring, Frances Carson, chairman of the Healdsburg Chamber of Commerce's publicity committee, organized the first annual Prune Blossom Tour in March 1961. Local residents, as well as visitors from the Bay Area, were invited to travel the 30-mile route, including Fitch Mountain, Alexander Valley, Geyserville, Asti and Dry Creek. The tour began at the Chamber of Commerce office where visitors were given a brochure, a map of the route and free prunes. The first year approximately 200 people attended.

Now keep in mind, blossoms are an act of nature, and to determine when they would be at their prime was often an issue in planning the Prune Blossom Tour. In an interview with Frank Zak, who chaired the event for over ten years, he said he would talk with the prune farmers to determine when the trees would bloom. He also learned from the Catholic fathers how the Vernal Equinox played a factor in bloom time each spring.

In 1962 the blossom tour was planned for the weekend of March 17th and 18th. However, Mother Nature did not cooperate. March 17th and 18th arrived, but not the blossoms,

forcing the Chamber to extend the event to a second weekend, March 24th and 25th when the trees actually did put on their flowery show. There were other years, throughout the event's history, when the blossoms were either late or early, but the people came anyway.

Over the years, with extensive advertising in Motorland and Sunset magazines, the visitors to the event began to increase...by the bus load. Five buses toured in 1962; 25+ at the peak of the event. The Prune Blossom Tour was a popular day excursion for senior citizen groups traveling from the Bay Area and the peninsula. The event guest register kept at the Chamber office also included out-of-state visitors and, at times, visitors from out of the United States. They came to see the beauty of Healdsburg and surrounding area.

They also came for lunch. The Russian River Farm Bureau served a ham luncheon at the Alexander Valley Community Hall. The lunch included green salad, potato salad, Jello salad, peaches or pears and cottage cheese, spiced prunes, baked beans and ham, all for \$1.35 (in 1963...the last luncheon in 1995 cost \$9.00).

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Frank Zak would go out early on Saturday morning and post these directional signs to guide the drivers along the tour route

For many years Ruby Wasson was in charge of the salads for the lunch. She recently shared her stories and notebook of what she and her committee did to prepare that part of the meal. The potato salad was their specialty. Ruby purchased 240 pounds of potatoes and 30 dozen eggs, distributing them to the ladies in the Valley who would then cook the potatoes (25 pounds) and eggs (2 dozen plus 8) at home. On luncheon day these cooked ingredients would be brought to the hall where the potato salad was assembled and dressed (in Ruby's big stainless steel bowl), fresh and ready to serve at 11:00 a.m. When they served over 1600 lunches during the two days, needless to say, Ruby's shopping list was big. Ruby maintained a detailed notebook of all the ingredients she needed, her helpers and their duties. Ruby enlisted the help of 50-plus women to make the Jello salads. The ladies' names and the day the lady was to bring her salad was also listed in the notebook. The last page in the notebook noted any food left over (to plan for the next year) and a final, financial accounting. Profits from the luncheon funded scholarships on behalf of the Russian River Farm Bureau.

Over the years, visitors also came for stops at Timber Crest Farm's prune packing facility where they were introduced to how prunes were processed and handled after picking. There were art exhibitions by the Healdsburg Arts, hoedowns by the Healdsburg Country Dancers, country barn sales by the Geyserville Dorcas Ladies Aid, a "Collections Showcase" sponsored by the Soroptomist Club, and a historical display by the Alexander Valley Ladies Aid at the historic Alexander Valley Community Church. KVRE radio broadcast live from the Prune

Blossom Tour in 1971. All of these activities associated with the Prune Blossom Tour attracted nearly 4000 people at its peak in 1971. In 1966 the Prune Blossom Tour was rated as one of the top ten travel events in the nation (the only one in California) by the National Association of Travel Organizations. People appreciated the opportunity to view "the wild mustard, green grass, fresh country air and friendly people of the area."

When the numbers of visitors to the Prune Blossom Tour increased to the point where the Chamber office could no longer handle the crowds, the tour headquarters moved to the Villa Chanticleer. The larger groups could be accommodated and outside vendors could display their offerings. Some of the local businesses that set up booths included: Shoffeits Products, Maherajah Water Skis, Sunsweet Growers, Mayfair Packing, Manufactured Homes, Standard Structures, Idaco Lumber, Sonoma Wood Products, California Redwood Tubs and some local wineries. Additionally, the Chamber began to give away prune cookies along with the sample packets of prunes. The prune packets were bagged by local 4-H groups, Girl Scout troops and the Senior Citizens' Club. The 3000 prune cookies were made by the Healdsburg High School home economics classes. An article from the March 23, 1978 issue of the *Healdsburg Tribune* tells of Florence Wheeler's Home Ec classes mixing 33 pounds pitted prunes, 19 pounds shortening, 37 ½ pounds brown sugar, 12 ounces vanilla, 75 eggs, 23 ½ pounds flour, 1 ½ cups baking powder, 1 cup salt, 37 ½ teaspoons cinnamon and 2 quarts prune juice to make the cookies. You'll find a smaller version of a Prune Cookie recipe at the end of this article.



Ruby Wasson and Alyce Cadd serving salads at the Russian River Farm Bureau luncheon

While events were expanding at the Villa Chanticleer, so too were events at the Alexander Valley Community Hall. The Alexander Valley Hall Association ladies began a bake sale, offering prune cakes, breads, candies, relish, cupcakes, muffins and more cookies. A treasured cookbook from this organization, "Favorite Prune Recipes," was a reference resource for this article.

People came by bus, private car, sometimes in vintage antique vehicles, and by airplane. Beginning in 1965, pilots were encouraged to fly in to the Healdsburg Airport, where private cars would be provided for driving the designated route. The route was marked by wooden stakes, painted white with black lettering... "Blossom Tour". Frank Zak would get up early on the Saturday morning and drive the route, placing the directional stakes to guide the visitors. The route was also spruced up by the neighbors. Healdsburg was serious about this event and wanted to make sure the area was "spic and span" To that goal, Sonoma County road crews cleaned Healdsburg Avenue and Alexander Valley Road as far as the County dump and from there, the Alexander Valley 4-H kids picked up the task, cleaning from the dumps to the Community Hall. Boy Scout Troop 21 helped direct traffic at the Villa Chanticleer, making sure the buses and cars found a place to park. The Prune Blossom Tour was a community event, organized by the Chamber of Commerce, and supported by local businesses and community organizations.

In 1973 the Prune Blossom Tour took on a new name, "Spring Blossom Tour." Prune trees were being replaced with grape vines. Though the blossoms were diminishing, interest in the event was not. People still came to see the countryside and enjoy the lunch. They did, in addition to all the other goodies offered at the Villa, receive information about the First Annual Russian River Wine Festival to be held in May that year. Times were changing; a new agricultural focus was emerging.

With the Chamber of Commerce's focus shifting to the Wine Festival, they made the decision to remove themselves from the Spring Blossom Tour in 1986. From that point forward, the Russian River Farm Bureau also known as the Alexander Valley Farm Bureau, now took on the responsibility of carrying on the Blossom Tour. They continued to serve the luncheon at the Community Hall, adding new exhibits to entertain the visitors. The Alexander Valley 4-H Club prepared a farm animal display. The Farm Bureau also gave out maps directing visitors to other local activities, such as the quilt display at the Healdsburg Museum and the art show at the Healdsburg Senior Center.

The Spring Blossom Tour came to an end in 1995, after celebrating its 35th anniversary.

Today, the prune trees are gone; all that remains are the pink cherry blossoms on Matheson Street and the brilliant yellow mustard in the vineyards. The trees became vines;

colorful in the autumn with leaves of red and gold. The visitors still come, not for prunes and prune cookies, but for tastes of premium wine. They still come for lunch, this time at the many restaurants in town. Our community had, and always will have, beautiful scenery, delicious food and wonderful events.

PRUNE RECIPES

Healdsburg Chamber of Commerce Prune Cookies

Combine thoroughly: ½ cup shortening, 1 cup brown sugar, 1 teaspoon vanilla, and 1 egg. Add: 1 cup chopped prunes and ¼ cup prune juice. Combine together and add to the above: 1 ¼ cup sifted all-purpose flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder, ½ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon cinnamon. Drop by teaspoon full on parchment lined baking sheet; bake 12 to 15 minutes at 350 degrees.

Donna's Prune Cake

(from the Alexander Valley Hall Association cookbook)

1 ½ cup sugar	2 cups flour
1 cup vegetable oil	1 cup buttermilk
3 eggs	1 cup cooked, chopped prunes
1 teaspoon cinnamon	1 cup chopped nuts
1 teaspoon nutmeg	1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon allspice	1/8 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon soda	

Beat sugar, oil and eggs. Add spices, soda and salt to flour. Mix into sugar, oil egg mixture. Add buttermilk. Mix. Blend in prunes, nuts and vanilla. Spread in a 9x12x2 baking pan. Bake 30 minutes at 325 degrees; raise temperature to 350 degrees and bake an additional 15 minutes.

Spiced Prunes

(provided by Marion Young Penry)

1 lb. prunes (40-42 prunes)
Cook 20 minutes or so until prunes are puffed.
Combine:
1 cup sugar
1 cup water
1 cup vinegar
1 teaspoon cinnamon

Cook together until sugar is well dissolved, then add drained, cooked prunes. (I added a pinch of whole cloves and 1 large cinnamon stick to the syrup mixture. MYP)

References:

Healdsburg Tribune, 1961 – 1995.
Interview with Frank Zak
Interview with Ruby and Fred Wasson
Alexander Valley Hall Association Cookbook

ARTIFACTS:

by Holly Hoods

MAHERAJAH WATER SKIS, SKATEBOARDS AND JACKET

The current exhibit, "Russian River Good Old Days," features many items produced by the Maherajah Company. All of these items are on loan to the Healdsburg Museum for the exhibit, many of them hand-delivered by company founder, Bob Maher, himself.

Pictured are two water skis that were made in Healdsburg by Maherajah. One is a 2000, on loan from Bob Maher. The other is a Maherajah single slalom water ski, on loan from Frank and Arnold Lelouran of Healdsburg. The Lelourans were very active water skiers in the Russian River during the 1950s – 1970s, Healdsburg's waterskiing "good old days." Also pictured are a wooden skateboard from the 1970s, on loan from Nick and Lois Grace; and a nylon Maherajah skateboard jacket and metal skateboard also from the 1970s, loaned by the Jess A. Zimmerman Family.

Bob Maher has been building top-of-the line water skis for most of his life, and for 25 years he built them in Healdsburg. Maherajah began when brothers Bill and Bob Maher, age 15 and 12, started making water skis under the porch of their summer cabin at Jago Bay in 1950. Bill sold his share of the company to his brother in 1956. The following year Maherajah introduced slalom skis with drop-through fins. This innovation remains popular today. In the last world championship in 2009, 5 out of 6 world champs rode Maherajah skis.

Bob moved the company to Healdsburg in 1966, center of water sports activity. He opened Maherajah in the Quonset Hut at 226 Healdsburg Avenue owned by Bell Chevrolet (today housing Healdsburg Classics Antiques). The company became the second largest employer in Healdsburg,

eventually building a factory in a metal warehouse on Grant Avenue behind Giorgio's Restaurant. The custom-made skis of eastern Ash wood were the predecessor to his larger "gourmet wood" products, including skateboards, cutting boards and counter tops, all of which can be seen in the exhibit.

The company developed a distinctive color logo in the 1970s. Many locals (men, especially) vividly remember the Suzanne Somers "Right On" poster, featuring the buxom blond actress at the age of 26 (five years before her Three's Company fame), wearing only the Maherajah "Right On!" logo in body paint on her bare chest. To raise funds for the Museum, Bob Maher has generously donated eight of these rare 1972 posters to the Museum to sell for \$50 each. A water ski enthusiast in Australia has already purchased two of them through the mail. Right on!

Sources:

Frank Lelouran, interview with Holly Hoods, February 2011.

Bob Maher, interview with Holly Hoods February 2011.

Healdsburg Tribune, 12 August 1965.

Maherajah company history on Maharajah website.



Maherajah on Healdsburg Avenue



Suzanne Somers Poster



Maherajah Jacket and Skateboards



Maherajah Water Skis

SOUVENIR PROGRAM FROM 1908 WATER CARNIVAL

Currently on display in the Museum's "Russian River Good Old Days" exhibit is this featured artifact: a program from the 1908 Healdsburg Water Carnival. The 8-page booklet, which measures 7 x 4 inches in size, was printed in Healdsburg by the *Sotoyome Scimitar* (local newspaper) press over 100 years ago. Titled "Scimitar Souvenir Program, First Annual Water Carnival, Healdsburg, California, August 15, 1908," the booklet is in remarkably good condition for its age. It was donated to the Museum in 1988 by the American Legion and is numbered #439-20.

The souvenir program is printed in black ink on folded cream-colored paper. The program is held together by three ribbons in the Carnival colors red, green and gold. The cover of the program bears an oval-shaped photo of the Water Carnival queen, Miss Winifred Meeker. On the back of the booklet is an oval photo of a boat on the water, captioned "Moonlight on Russian River." Inside the program are the scheduled events and their times, plus names of the sponsors and the major participants in the Water Carnival.



"H" on Fitch Mountain, 1920s photo

THE FITCH MOUNTAIN "H," 1921-1960's

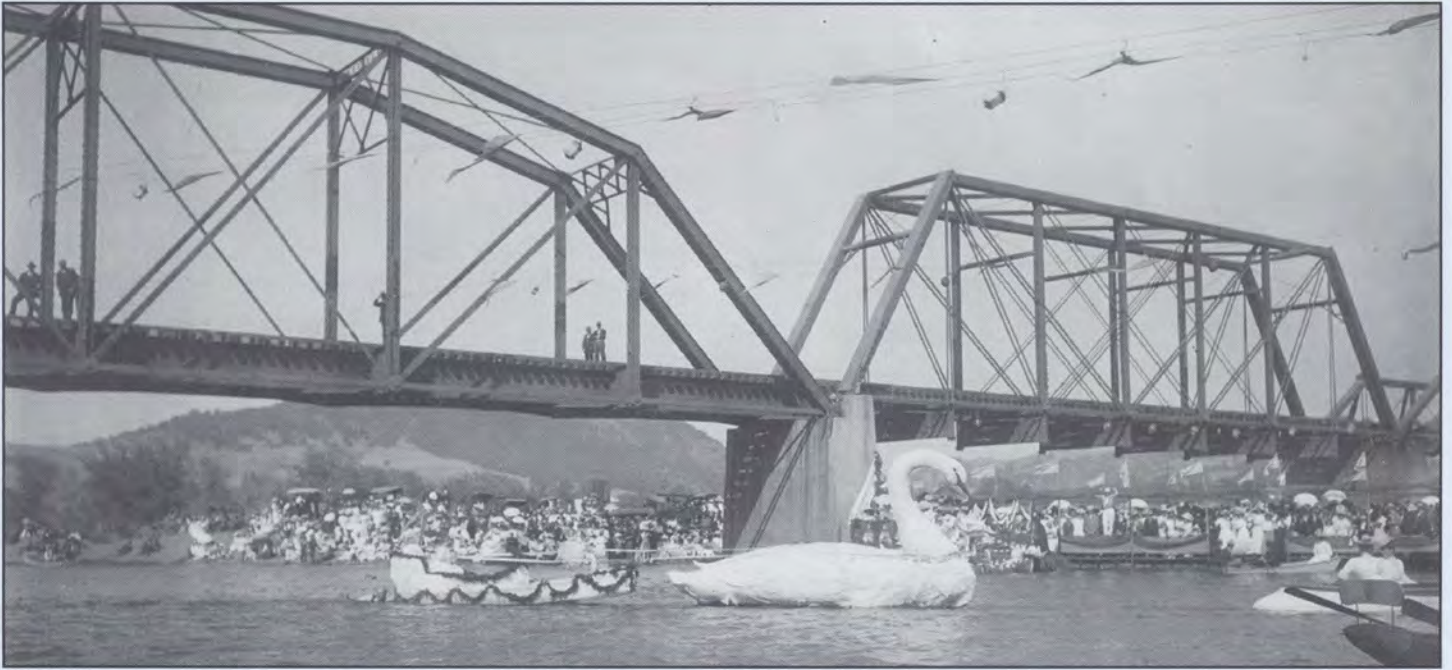
This "H" is a replica of the ones that Healdsburg High School students built and erected on the west slope of Fitch Mountain for over 30 years. Placement of the enormous "H" became an important yearly tradition, beginning in 1921. As a symbol of school/town pride, the "H" was the target of occasional pranks, including being painted red by unknown culprits and being changed into an "A" just before a game against Analy High School.

Every year, students would hike to the "H" and make repairs and give it a fresh coat of white paint. After more than a decade, students made a replacement for the first "H". According to the 1933 Sotoyoman yearbook, two boys, under supervision by the shop teacher, built the letter 18 x 13 feet, 24 inches wide using redwood furnished by the student body. In 1940, an ambitious group of 12 sophomore girls spent 8 hours installing the "H". The tradition continued into the 1960s. Can anyone tell us which HHS class stopped the "H"?

Giant "H" was built for the "Russian River Good Old Days" exhibit by Jon Lacaillade.



Water Carnival Brochure



Swan Float 1908 Water Carnival

SPLASH FROM THE PAST: 20TH CENTURY WATER CARNIVALS OF HEALDSBURG

by Holly Hoods

Healdsburgers have always loved to party. The tradition of festive water pageants on the Russian River in Healdsburg dates back more than 100 years. Water carnivals evolved from popular land-based festivals, including May Day, Fourth of July and something called a Floral—sometimes “Flower”--Festival. Organizers of the water carnivals could innovate, but they liked to re-use the best ideas from well-established events. The key ingredients necessary for a successful river festival in the early 1900s were: music, dancing, parades, floats, queens, speeches, plentiful food and drink, feats of athletic prowess and beautiful decorations. Just add water...and lots and lots of publicity.

The most glorious Healdsburg Water Carnival was held in 1908. Proclaiming it the “First Annual” water carnival signaled the big ambitions of its organizers, the Ladies’ Improvement Club, a progressive women’s organization active in city affairs. Naturally the planning and promotion began months in advance. Committees and subcommittees were formed. One thousand picture post cards were printed; promotional souvenir buttons were also created. August 14-16 was the chosen weekend for what would be billed as the “Healdsburg Water Carnival and Firemen’s Tournament.” Absent from the 1908 festival were the ring spearing and medieval jousting events seen at the 1907 water carnival (which had themselves been carried over from May Day pageants of the 1860s-1890s). The champions of the 1908 event would be firemen, not knights in armor.

George Madeira described the three-day 1908 event in great detail in the Healdsburg Tribune, 20 August 1908. He counted “many thousands” of attendees, most of whom arrived by train. The local firemen (“in neat white suits”) marched to the railroad depot with the town brass band to welcome the Veteran Firemen of San Francisco on Friday. The city on this evening was “a blaze of light and crowded with citizens and nearby residents.” The Veterans’ band played, serenading Miss Winifred Meeker, who would be crowned queen the next day.

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Squeedunks

On Saturday morning the excursion trains from the north and south were met at the depot by the Sotoyome Band and the visitors were escorted into town. The whole city was decorated in the carnival colors (red, gold and green) and the City Hall and plaza were festooned with strings of electric lights. Among the visitors were the Mill Valley firemen's team and the Petaluma firemen's team. The firemen staged hose cart races and other relay races for prizes on West Street (Healdsburg Avenue), right in the center of town. The Petaluma team, with H.J. Meyers as captain, won first prize. Then came a reception and free lunch "with plenty of drink of a semi-alcoholic character and soda water" for the visiting firefighters at the City Hall. This was followed by speechifying by the Mill Valley fire captain, Chief Meyers of the Petaluma team, President Steve Bunner of the San Francisco Veterans and Guy Wolcott of the Healdsburg firemen.

The parade to the river began at 1:30 Saturday afternoon. Headed by the Sotoyome Band, came "a bevy of young misses in carnival colors riding Shetland ponies," followed by Winifred Meeker, the queen of the carnival, in a carriage of attendants. Next came a carriage carrying the queen's maids of honor, then the Healdsburg Fire Department and the Veteran Firemen of San Francisco. "Squeedunks," a group of masked local men, dressed as silly and grotesque clowns, added their fun and bizarre humor to the parade. The march led to the banks of the river where the water carnival ceremonies began.

The first float to come into view was a golden floating chariot carrying Queen Winifred and her court (maids: Jennie Offut, Esther Scott, Gertrude Waterman, Marie Chappari; crown bearer: Helen Marie Ferguson; flora: Mildred Bailhache; pages: Marsden Cooke and Charles Byington). A figure garbed in green as "Neptune," stood at the bow of the float, which came to a landing at the royal court's platform on the river bank between the wagon and railroad bridges. The queen and court disembarked and were crowned by King Neptune who then dove

into the water and was not seen again. Judge Emmet Seawell of Santa Rosa delivered the coronation address and the floating parade continued. First prize was awarded to a Petaluma entry: a golden barge with a woman representing "California." Second prize went to the memorable Swan Float by Ed Snook of Healdsburg. The floats and boats kept coming: the Ladies' Improvement Club's Cleopatra's barge, canoes of "Indians" from the local Red Men's fraternal organization, the Oddfellows' barge depicting "Rebecca at the Well," and a float "trimmed in carnival colors and bearing Swastika good luck emblems," entered by Rosenberg and Bush store. Following the parade of floats, attendees were treated to a high diving exhibition by members of the Olympic Club of San Francisco. At night the same immense crowd gathered to witness acrobatics on the bridge and the fireworks display, conducted by W.B. Whitney, the local druggist.

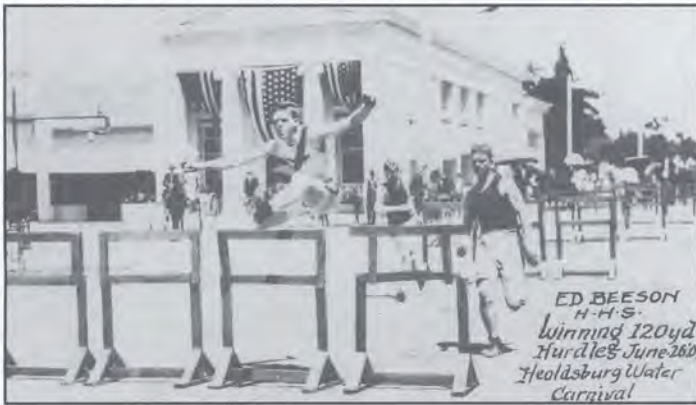


Rosenberg and Bush Float Water Carnival

Music was an essential component of the weekend. Healdsburg had a fine brass band, sometimes more than one, to add a musical flourish to the outdoor festivities. Saturday night featured a ball at Fox's Hall, under the management of Clyde Van Deveere. A grand march into the ball was led by Queen Winifred and her pages, followed by dancing with music provided by Scott's orchestra. Sotoyome Band concerts on the plaza and at the river on Sunday closed the carnival.



Stella Lufkin and Court 1909 Water Carnival



Eddie Beeson Competing at Water Carnival

The 1909 Water Carnival was again put on largely by the Ladies Improvement Club. On Friday, June 25, Miss Stella Lufkin was crowned as queen, attended by Theo Brown, Kathleen Swisher, Marie Chaparri, and Nina Luce. On Saturday the 26th, there were "Field Day sports" at the Plaza in the morning. The talented Healdsburg High School athletes competed with local firemen for prizes. Eddie Beeson competed in 120 yard and 220 yard hurdles as well as the high jump and broad jump. Ralph Rose was in the 16 pound shot-put and 16 pound hammer throw, and Fred Young was in the pole vault. There were five races, and the finale was a mile relay which was won by the firemen, but they lost the "meet" to the High School 5 to 7. Beeson and Rose grew up to set World Records in their respective sports, so the firemen were a little outmatched. In the afternoon, there was a parade march to the river where the floats passed in review and there were swim races, boat races, and log rolling contest. A feature of the afternoon was the leap of Mr. Marshall, handcuffed and bound into the river at its deepest point, from which "he emerged without injury other than a wetting," according to the Tribune 29 June 1909. One striking feature of the 1909 Carnival that the newspaper noted were the many automobiles: evidence of "the great change in means of travel." It was said that there were 250 autos in town.

Despite the successes, exhausted planners took a break from hosting the third "annual" Water Carnival in 1910. The 1908 and 1909 events had been huge undertakings. After the 1909 festival, the Healdsburg Enterprise concluded:

Well, the Carnival is over, we pause to reflect on its cost and its benefit. It has cost a whole lot of work and no little worry. If men had been at the head of the enterprise, with the discouragement that the ladies received, they would have quit some time before the time set for the crowning of the queen. They worked and WORKED, we never saw such

incessant effort. Every conceivable way of turning an honest penny was thought out and set in motion. There were women who worked on that enterprise in order to make it a success that money wouldn't hire to work so hard for their own benefit.

In 1911 and 1912 some people of Healdsburg were concerned that the momentum was slipping away. They talked about "the Festival habit—don't lose it!" Stock certificates were offered and sold to pay to erect a pavilion for a 1912 festival. A new name was chosen: "Healdsburg Harvest Fair." A huge fundraiser was held at the residence and grounds of A.F. Stevens. However, it all bogged down and no fair was held in 1912!

In 1913, the Water Carnival was moved to July to be celebrated during the Fourth of July festivities. The focal point of the 1913 water carnival was a performance (staged on barges on the River!) of Gilbert and Sullivan's opera, "the HMS Pinafore." The nearly 100-degree heat did not diminish the crowds of 8-10,000 people. Over 500 cars were seen in town—a record at that time. Dimes jingled into the tills of the vendors of ice cream and other cooling beverages.

In the summer of 1916, the Business Men's Association proposed having street dancing or Mardi Gras amusement on Saturday evenings after the band concerts in the plaza on those nights. These would take the place of one single celebration. The first Mardi Gras was held on June 24, 1916, on Center Street between Matheson and Powell (now Plaza) Streets, following the Saturday night concert in the Plaza. Also in 1916, there were 4th of July boat races, swimming races, high and fancy diving on the river, and dancing at the Masonic Lodge and Pavilion which gave amusement to local people. World War I channeled the Healdsburg citizens' thoughts, activities, and money into war efforts. It wasn't until 1923 that the American Legion made plans for a fete to mark the completion of the harvest season.

In the remaining years of the 1920s, Healdsburg did not have any festivals. However, in 1925, 1926, and 1927 there were huge 4th of July celebrations. The first of these, in 1925, had a queen, Virginia Sodini, who presided over a Grand Ball at the American Legion Clubhouse on the first evening. On July 4th there was a grand parade, the reading of the Declaration of Independence, and an oration by the Honorable Emmet Seawell of the California Supreme Court. At 1 p.m. Arthur Starbuck took his plane into the air with 'Daredevil Walker' and his parachute aboard. Walker jumped out over the river and landed safely at the golf links. There were water sports—swimming, diving, and even a water polo game. In the evening the "royal and horrible parade was put on by the Awful Order of the Old and Ancient Squeedunks." The parade was a howling success with

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everything in it from male "hulu hulu" dancers to two wheeler automobiles. One entry was an ancient hearse containing pre-Volstead wine barrels and another was an automobile that would rear back on its hind wheels whenever desired. Later that day "the ancient automobile race was held on Matheson Street and won by Dr. Swisher in his pre-historic Reo." After dark there was a display of fireworks.

Also in 1925, on August 20, "a crowd of 2000 witnessed the first annual Healdsburg one mile swimming race." The beautiful \$450 silver loving cup was won by Carl Stevenson from Stanford University in a time of 17 minutes 43 seconds. In 1927, there were 22 entrants for the Fitch Mountain Marathon, including 3 Sotoyome Indians: Fleet Elk, Humming Bird, and Mad Wolf. The 5.6 mile race was won by Manuel Cordova (Humming Bird) in 35 minutes and 22 seconds.

In 1931 was the first "annual" Russian River Pageant and Fiesta. (There were only two!) It was held in June and the queen was Lena Massoni. The events included the Fitch Mountain Marathon won by Leland (Clipper) Smith. Exciting innovations this year included the turning on of the NEW "Russian River Resorts" electric sign at West and Matheson, broadcasting the Fiesta on the radio every day, a Traveling Amplifying "Station" (an automobile) furnished by Standard Oil Company, and the night's events illuminated by "powerful searchlights."



Healdsburg Fiesta 1941

The 2nd (and last) annual Russian River Fiesta was a modified one, due to strained finances, put on by the Chamber of Commerce. One of the highlights of the Fiesta was a Screen Test in the Plaza where local girls vied for honors. In the competition were Thelma Scatena, Lena Massoni, Margaret Buchignani, Eleanor Giorgi, Lorraine Cottini, Norma Massoni, and Gertrude Tate. The films were shown at the Plaza Theater the following week, together with scenes of other events in the Fiesta.



1948 Harvest Festival Barrel Races

Much of the 1920s and '30s water festival information in the Healdsburg Museum files, and presented in this article, was found through dogged newspaper research by Charlotte Anderson. Former Healdsburg Museum Curator Hannah Clayborn also researched the festivals of Healdsburg from 1857 to modern times. What happened to the Fiesta? She concluded:

After disappearing for several years during the mid 1930's, the Russian River Festival returned in a new season and with a new name. Beginning in 1937 the Healdsburg Harvest Festival, "staged over Labor Day to attract thousands of bay area, Redwood Empire and county residents," moved to the fore. Several familiar features -- a Labor Day parade, queen contest, coronation ball, water sports, fireworks display, and Fitch Mountain Marathon -- assure us that this "new event" was simply repackaged and repositioned for maximum tourist impact.

Plans are currently underway for a July 2011 Water Carnival at the Russian River in Healdsburg, co-sponsored by the City of Healdsburg with County Parks Department. Many people are excited to hear of the return of this beloved local tradition. Long live the Healdsburg Water Carnival!

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ROSENBERG & BUSH – A DRY GOODS STORE

SERVING HEALDSBURG 120 YEARS

Janet Sbragia Pisenti

“MAY I HELP YOU?”

“May I help you?” were two little words you could count on while entering a department store in the past. Personal service was a common and expected shopping experience. Rosenberg & Bush in Healdsburg’s past was that type of department store, also Rosenberg’s and the White House in Santa Rosa. Salespeople were expected to dress according to the rules set down by the owner of the establishment...very modest dresses for women and suits and ties for men in accordance with the styles of the times. A salesperson always took your selections to a dressing room and kept track of you, bringing you different sizes if you needed them. There are few department stores of that type in existence today.



Wolfe Rosenberg arrived from Poland in 1859 and was the original owner of Rosenberg & Bush in Healdsburg

The Rosenberg part of Rosenberg & Bush belonged to Wolfe Rosenberg, who left his family home in Poland at age 19 in 1859 and crossed the Atlantic Ocean by ship, arriving in the port of New York along with many others seeking a new life in America.

His descendants are not sure what transportation he used to travel across the United States to California, yet one possibility was to sail from one of several U.S. ports heading for the Isthmus of

Panama, where one could then take a train or carriage along the rough and curving Isthmus route to a port on the Pacific coast side. From there it was another sail north to San Francisco. In any case, it was a long and tiring journey and he arrived safely.

“In 1860, it appears he was living with relatives Max and Rosalie Rosenberg in Santa Rosa. After that, he owned a series of stores,” related his grandson, Ira Hall Rosenberg. “The one that stuck was Rosenberg & Bush on West Street, now Healdsburg Avenue, in Healdsburg. In 1867, he earned his American citizenship.” (For clarification purposes, Ira *Hall* Rosenberg is the son of Ira *Hayes*



The City of Healdsburg store was inspired by the department store City of Paris in San Francisco. It was one of the first dry goods stores started by Wolfe Rosenberg.

Rosenberg.)

In 1865, Wolfe was working for Bloom & Cohen in Healdsburg. It appears he bought out Mr. Bloom and became a partner with Samuel Cohen. In 1874, he gained possession of the business and opened his first store, *The White House*. Eventually, he changed the name to *City of Healdsburg*, inspired by the City of Paris in San Francisco. He then moved into a brick building on the 300 block of West Street. After his death, the business was moved to 321 West Street, where it remained until 1949. In the 1800s and early 1900s, those types of businesses were called Dry Goods stores and they included clothing, linen, yardage and so on. “They had everything but gasoline and bread!” Ira laughingly recalled.

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"In 1873, Wolfe married Esther Coloma Kaplan," Ira continued. "She was the first non-native child born in Coloma, California, near Sacramento, after the discovery of gold there. She and Wolfe met in San Francisco, where they eventually were married at the bride's home by a Rabbi from Congregation Sherith Israel. She then joined Wolfe in Healdsburg, where their married life began. Wolfe had built a house in Healdsburg, which cost only \$1,500."

At this point, it is very possible that Wolfe, served as customers in his stores, or socialized with Healdsburg's earliest residents, such as Cyrus and Rufina Alexander and their children, Josefa Carrillo Fitch and her children, and those early settlers who came after them. The population was listed at 300 and continued growing to 500.

Seven children were born in the year that followed Wolfe and Esther's marriage. The children were: Melville Rosenberg, born in 1874 and father of Barbara Rosenberg Ashbaugh; Myrtle Rosenberg, born in 1875; Julian Rosenberg, born in 1879; Ira Hayes Rosenberg, born in 1880 and father of Ira Hall Rosenberg; Harold Rosenberg, born in 1883 and father of Garry Rosenberg and William Kent Rosenberg; Stella Rosenberg, born in 1884; and Teo Rosenberg, born in the late 1800s. Healdsburg resident Jane Rosenberg Deas is the daughter of Garry Rosenberg.



Eli Bush was a partner with Wolfe Rosenberg from 1886 to 1919.

ELI BUSH JOINS THE HEALDSBURG FIRM IT BECOMES ROSENBERG & BUSH

Eli had been hired as a clerk at Wolfe's store in 1880. He received a small salary and no salary during hard times. There must

have been a lot of hard times, since Wolfe decided in 1886 that Eli had accumulated enough hours to eventually become a partner. One year before this happening, Wolfe Rosenberg accepted into his home his nephew, Max Rosenberg, who had just arrived from Europe. Additional family members would arrive later.

Eli Bush was a handsome young man married to a woman named Alice. He was a respected member of the Healdsburg community and became a Mason with Sotoyome Lodge No. 123. The lodge was located in the Ottmer Breiling Building on West and North Streets. Eli's photo appears in the organization's Centennial publication, as well as the membership names of: Melville Rosenberg, Ira Hayes Rosenberg, Julian Rosenberg, Garrett Rosenberg, Ira Hall Rosenberg, and Teo Rosenberg. Eli retired from Rosenberg & Bush in 1919. Four years later, on April 6, 1923, Eli and Alice Bush deeded a downtown property to the Sotoyome Lodge, the property known as that of the Masonic Temple.



An interior view of one of the Rosenberg & Bush stores, believed to be the City of Healdsburg stores, later to become Rosenberg & Bush

Ira goes on to describe the configuration of the store known as Rosenberg & Bush... "The store faced West Street and if you walked out back, you would cross an alley to the warehouse. Foss Creek was situated in back of the warehouse. Inside the store the customer would see a mezzanine in front, which was the office, and a rear mezzanine, which featured women's apparel. There was a gorgeous stairway in the store and gas lamps, called lumieres, hanging from the ceiling which were lit with piped-in gas.

There was a basement in the rear of the store and the space for this basement was dug deeper than the actual level of the main part of the store. One winter, there was a flood and someone opened the back door and the water came into the basement, wetting all the merchandise stored there. The door could not be closed again, but the staff gathered up the wet merchandise and draped it over the mezzanine railings to dry!"

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In a Rosenberg & Bush advertisement in the Mason's Centennial publication, the following quote describes Wolfe Rosenberg: "He founded the firm upon the principle of selling dependable merchandise at an honest price. He was one of the very first businessmen in the nation to put into practice a money back guarantee with every purchase and to adopt as a slogan "Satisfaction or your money back."

"Besides running the store, Wolfe enjoyed the outdoors," Ira added. "He loved horses, especially fine trotting horses. At one time, he wagered he could drive his buggy, pulled by a Kentucky mare, to Santa Rosa in less than an hour and 15 minutes. He won the bet, making the distance in one hour and 6 ½ minutes. He also had a campsite on Mill Creek where he loved to go when he had time to rest and meditate. Esther eventually gave it to the Boy Scouts, who always called it Camp Rosenberg.

Wolfe was also very serious and religious about his faith and religious principles, enjoying his trips to San Francisco to attend religious services and other events at the Jewish temple. Esther, on the other hand, enjoyed being a member of the Ladies Improvement Club of Healdsburg, once called The Albanian Literary and Military Society, which really did not have anything to do with being Albanian. The women met weekly to discuss authors and musicians. They were the most controversial club in town and became quite political. In January of 1900, one of the officers was Mrs. Wolfe Rosenberg. Over the years, the group became responsible for the lettering and installation of the first street signs and had all the electrical poles painted white. Beforehand, they had played a significant role in the great fight for publically-owned electricity and water in Healdsburg, also comfortable seats in the Plaza and a drinking fountain in the Plaza.

WOLFE ROSENBERG DIES

THE FAMILY ASSUMES LEADERSHIP

In 1911, in San Francisco, Wolfe Rosenberg died. He had been attending a religious service. His wife, Esther, became the person in charge of the store along with their sons, Ira Hayes Rosenberg and Harold Rosenberg. They subsequently bought out Eli Bush in 1919, but the name of the store was never changed.

On September 27, 1924, something happened that upset the family a great deal. The store had become the official outfitter of gym clothes for Healdsburg High School. There were no complaints from the school regarding the clothes, yet the manager of the business across the street, J.C. Penney Company, placed in

its store window a sample of 'gym pants' or 'shorts' being offered for sale to the students of the local high school by the firm of Rosenberg & Bush. This display consisted of placards, comparing the garments offered for sale by the J.C. Penney Company and similar garments purchased at Rosenberg & Bush. The placards derided the merchandise of Rosenberg & Bush, using the phrases: *poorly made seconds...prison-made merchandise...shoddy appearance...wrinkled waists and hems.* Ira remembered the items they featured were used and faded old gym clothes as an example. It was enough to make one's blood boil, so Rosenberg & Bush entered into a lawsuit with J.C. Penney. The lawsuit dragged on for many years and lingered throughout the 1930s when it was eventually settled. To make a long story short, Rosenberg & Bush won and received \$10,000.

During this period, Esther Rosenberg, had gone to a picnic in Napa County and died there in May of 1927. Sons Harold and Ira immediately took over running the business. In 1944, Harold Rosenberg died. His brother, Ira Hayes Rosenberg, continued as partner, along with Harold's widow, Lillian Rosenberg, who became a partner. Ira had married Gretchen Hall and they had one child, Ira Hall Rosenberg, the contributor of this story.

"I remember picking hops with my mother at the Sherriffs' ranch," Ira recalled. "The Sherriffs family was friends of ours and I remember my father showing up early in the morning, as we were picking. He was wearing his suit and tie and he would pick for awhile and then leave for the store! Actually, the hop field was situated west of West Street, where our store was located, and a person could walk from the store to the ranch," Ira recalled.

Asked about his remembrances as a young man working in the store, Ira replied, "I was just the 'security guy' at the store when the band concerts took place on Saturday nights. I had to keep an eye on things so nothing got stolen or damaged.

Actually, a robbery did take place during my father's time at the store. It was difficult to figure out since nothing was disturbed, but the method of discovery took place later when it rained and the roof was leaking. It was obvious that the robbers had cut a hole through the roof of the store. They had spent the night before at the Plaza Hotel next door and during the night, when no one was in the store, they cut a hole through the roof, came down into the store, and got into the safe. They took coins, but no paper bills, since there was no money visible. The reason it wasn't visible is that it had been placed in individual envelopes and clipped into the pages of the business ledgers in the safe...and the robbers didn't think to look inside the ledgers!"



Garry Rosenberg was one of the last partners of the store, along with his cousin, Ira Hall Rosenberg. Garry was of great assistance to the Healdsburg Museum and Historical Society by helping its organization in developing an endowment fund.

After Ira Hayes Rosenberg died in 1947, his wife, Gretchen Hall Rosenberg joined Lillian Rosenberg, the existing partner. Eventually, Harold's son, Garrett 'Garry' Rosenberg came home from the service and served as manager. After Ira Hall Rosenberg graduated from Stanford, he also returned to Healdsburg and eventually Rosenberg & Bush had two new partners, Garry Rosenberg and Ira Hall Rosenberg.

MEMORIES OF THE PAST

Darla Williams Budworth, a Museum volunteer who was born and grew up in Healdsburg, recalled shopping at Rosenberg & Bush during the 1940s and 1950s. "I remember the partners and salesmen, Garry and Ira Rosenberg and Chris Jennings, who worked in the Men's Department, and Rose Moore, who later worked at the White House in Santa Rosa. It was a long and narrow building. When you entered the building, the women's clothes were on the left side. When I was in the 7th grade, we all wanted to wear men's denim jackets for some reason, so I had to have one, too. My mother didn't like the idea, but she relented and we bought my jacket there. I shopped there often with my mother and when the store was moved to North and East Streets, my parents and Grandma Williams had a charge account there. They had nice maternity clothes that couldn't be found anywhere else and they had a yardage department.

I remember walking to a counter, where a saleslady would show us nylon hosiery and she would actually put her hand in the hosiery and spread it through her fingers so you could see the sheerness and the tint of that particular pair of stockings. Or she

would show us a pair of gloves by actually putting them on her own hand! I really miss Rosenberg's store." Hearing of Darla's memories, Ira remembered the Men's Department, with the suits kept behind sliding glass doors and moth balls added to prevent moths from eating the wool fabric.

Nanci Gunnerson, Healdsburg Museum volunteer, recounted the story of a friend, Pat Cook. "She had eight children, was living out on West Soda Rock Road, and was having a dinner one night for guests. After starting to set the table, she knew the tablecloth she had bought at Rosenberg's was too short. So, at the last minute, she called the store and said she needed another size and would run right down to the store. They told her, 'No, we will come out there!' Now, that is service!"

ATTENTION! SHOPPERS! ROSENBERG'S HAS MOVED!

In 1949, Healdsburg shoppers looked forward to walking into the new Rosenberg & Bush on the corner of North and East Streets where the Rosenberg family's two-story home had stood all these years. "The house was moved to another part of town," Ira recalled. "When the old store was being dismantled, the Franchetti family of Santa Rosa purchased the beautiful stairway. The new store was designed by the firm of Kelley & Peletz, Architects and General Contractors." It was designed as a one-level store with a more modern exterior, continuing to have individual departments and personal service. Garry and Ira Rosenberg were the last ones to run the store before it closed in 1985. It had been in business for 120 years. The building at North and East Streets is presently occupied by Jordan Oil and Gas. "It was extensively remodeled, but it was made to look just like before. They recreated it," Ira added.

Everyone who has been in Healdsburg and lived during those times has never forgotten Rosenberg & Bush, the merchandise, the partners and salespeople, and the friendliness of many members of the Rosenberg family.

ROSENBERG & BUSH AND ROSENBERG'S WAS THERE A CONNECTION?

"Yes, there was a connection," Ira continued. "Wolfe Rosenberg helped his nephew, Max Rosenberg, when he arrived in Healdsburg in 1885." It was one year before Eli Bush became a partner. The Rosenberg family was growing during this time; therefore, young Max was settled in the hayloft of the barn behind the house. Apparently, Uncle Wolfe provided shelter for many of the new arrivals in his family. It is recalled that Max Rosenberg worked and saved enough money to bring his wife, Emilia, and infant son, Fred Rosenberg, from Europe.

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Ira Rosenberg helping customers at Rosenberg and Bush, 1977

In 1887, Max went into partnership with his younger brother, Isadore Rosenberg, in a store in San Francisco. Yet, he longed to return to Santa Rosa. It was there in 1896 that he opened The Red Front Store (because the other stores were white!). It was followed by a store on Mendocino Avenue, which was destroyed in the 1906 earthquake. After that, Max reopened a store called Rosenberg's on the bottom floor of the new Overton Hotel on Fourth and B Streets. In 1922, he and his son, Fred, were instrumental in building the Rosenberg Building on Fourth St. and Mendocino Avenue (still standing). The dry goods store on Fourth and B Streets was destroyed by fire in 1936 and in 1937, son Fred Rosenberg built the large building called Rosenberg's on 4th and D Streets.

Max Rosenberg, after his wife's death, retired in 1930 and was living at the Chancellor Hotel in San Francisco when he died at age 84 in 1944.

Rosenberg's was purchased in the 1940s by J.E. McNeany of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and owned and managed later by his son, William 'Bill' McNeany. The business ended on April 2, 1988 and it became a Barnes & Noble book store, whose company saved the building from destruction in 1994. Older generation Santa Rosans feel the same about the name Rosenberg in their town as the people of Healdsburg feel about Rosenberg & Bush, never forgetting the store, the service received, the buyers, and the salespeople throughout the years.

European service and fine quality were provided by all the Rosenberg families. They gave us the best products we could afford, and as Wolfe Rosenberg would say, "Satisfaction or your money back!" Wolfe's eldest son, Melville Rosenberg, owned the Rosenberg Shoe Store in Healdsburg.

Ira Hall Rosenberg and his wife, Ruth, the family's historian, gave willingly of their time for this story of Ira's family. Ruth is a native of Denver, Colorado, and they have been married 26 years. They each have children and they live in Santa Rosa. The Healdsburg Museum and Historical Society respects the addition of their history to our archives.



A Rosenberg & Bush advertisement circa 1902 in an old Healdsburg Tribune

Other Sources:

- Healdsburg Museum & Hist. Soc. – articles & photos
- Jane Rosenberg Deas – photos of Wolfe and his store
- Sonoma County Historical Society – historical dates
- Sotoyome Lodge #123 – Centennial Souvenir Edition
- Charlotte Anderson – Rosenberg & Bush 2009 article
- Darla Williams Budworth – Rosenberg & Bush memories
- Gaye LeBaron – "Santa Rosa, a Twentieth Century Town"



The Ark, circa 1937

RUSSIAN RIVER MEMORIES

Once the summer dam went in around Memorial Day, the water was deep enough to attempt to water ski. My friend Bob Birkett and I rented a 10-foot rowboat from Bob Trowbridge, and another friend had an outboard motor. We put the motor on the row boat, tied a rope from the boat to a wooden (ski) handle and took off from the beach in-tow. Immediately the boat went straight up and I fell into the river. I had some water skiing lessons to learn. After some re-doing, I finally got up on skis; then Bob Birkett got up. After a while, I taught many adults and children how to ski, perform in water ski shows, and do it safely. I was the first person to water ski on the Russian River in Healdsburg.

—*Bob Stevens*

Fun on the Russian River was the best part of summer in Healdsburg. Swimming lessons at Memorial Beach helped save the monotony of picking prunes, plus picnics with friends and family always took place at 'the river,' usually underneath or near a bridge - the Healdsburg bridge, the Wohler bridge, or the Alexander Valley bridge. Sunday afternoons were also spent at the Ark, a bar and restaurant owned by my uncle and aunt, Gino and Julia Sbragia, situated at the west entrance of the Healdsburg Bridge. A jukebox entertained us with songs of the times, while watching from the deck some of the daring swimmers jumping off

the bridge or swimming across from the beach to the steps below the Ark. Since the Ark was a Sunday gathering place, it is where I took my first steps as a child - right across the bar room floor!

—*Janet Sbragia Pisenti*

I was born and raised in Healdsburg, so in the 1950's, my teen years, it was expected that we would spend our summer days at Memorial Beach. The swimming was a wonderful way to spend the day, but the biggest reward was the socializing with the boys. Some days were very rewarding in that respect, some days not so much. After much disappointment on those days, my friends and I realized that during the hot months the families from San Francisco would come to their summer cabins on Fitch Mountain and bring their teenage children. Well, the local boys would high-tail it to Palomar or Camp Rose to find some new girls to romance. Try as we might, we weren't able to lure them back to our beach at Memorial Bridge. When we had a driver's license and a car we would drive around Fitch Mountain to see where our boyfriends were, but were usually unable to find them. Needless to say, we didn't look favorably on these "City Girls" and treated them badly when they would wander into town.

—*Pat Agostini McCracken*

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My mother and father, both at Lowell High in San Francisco, met swimming at Fleishhacker Pool. I am sure they were both there because of their Russian River swimming experience. My dad's family bought a lot and started building their own cabin in Rio Nido in 1910. My mother's mom and dad, Harry and May Saville, bought two lots in Camp Rose, one for a river dock and the other across Fitch Mountain Road, also in 1910.

They got better acquainted in school and he told her, "I hear your family has a place on the Russian River out of Healdsburg. Why don't I paddle up and see you this summer?" She said, "That would be fine." He asked "How will I know it?" and she said "It is a place where the river joins a big black mountain, Fitch Mountain." My dad had been from Rio Nido to the ocean and back and up to friends at Summerhome Park, so he was sure he could make it. When the trip started and he had paddled a pretty good way, he came around a bend and could see a "big black mountain"—it happened to be St. Helena about 15 miles away with a range of hills in between. My dad thought, "I'll never make it." Fortunately he did keep going and around a bend he saw a smaller black mountain 4 or 5 miles ahead with no hills in between. As he passed Healdsburg, he saw one of my mother's brothers on the dock!

—*Russ Green*

Today no one is allowed to jump or dive off the car bridge. However, for a few years on Fourth of July, a man was paid to dive off the auto bridge, wearing a suit of long underwear soaked in Kerosene. After his underwear was ignited at his feet, he would stand on the bridge with his arms outstretched, waiting for the flames to reach his chest. At that moment, he made a spectacular swan dive into the river, ablaze all the way.

—*John Naber*



ON THE RUSSIAN RIVER IN THE LATE 1930'S

In the summertime my friend and neighbor Catherine Hearing Curtis and I were always eager to walk down to the River from our homes on East and Tucker Streets. My family kept a rowboat at a dock between the railroad bridge and the old highway bridge (now the Memorial Bridge). Our mothers would make us sandwiches and we tied a bottle of Royal Crown Cola to the stern of the boat to keep it cool in the water. We took turns rowing the boat upstream and would soon find an island or a sandbar with willows so we would have a shady spot to eat our lunches. We felt so adventurous. My brother Bill would sometimes bring his motor, mount it on the boat and start out with a noisy roar punctuated with smelly smoke. That didn't appeal to us at all—we were rowers who enjoyed the peaceful silence of the river.

—*June Maher Smith*

GROWING UP NEAR THE RUSSIAN RIVER

I am a Healdsburg native, and I was lucky enough to have a father, Henry "Cotton" Williams, who loved to swim and loved the Russian River. From the time I was very young my father took me to the River to swim. It was often said I could swim before I

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could walk. Dad taught me not only to swim, but not to be afraid of the River. When I was little, I would often wait in my swimsuit on summer evenings for his car to come up the driveway of our Fitch St. home. That meant that Dad was home and we would soon be on our way to Camp Rose, Memorial Beach, or Palomar/Del Rio.



I can't tell you how fun those evenings with my father were. Then World War II came and Memorial Beach was closed (polio), so most of our swimming was at Camp Rose. The summer I was 7, the American Red Cross gave swimming lessons at Memorial Beach. Every morning for two weeks I would walk to Vivian Hall's house, and she would drive Vivian, Virginia and me to Memorial Beach for swimming lessons. It was always very early in the morning, sometimes foggy and the water was very cold until you moved around a bit. Do you ever hear of the Red Cross giving swimming lesson in the river today? I think not, if they do, it is probably at a pool. You have to remember, there were no public swimming pools in Healdsburg in those days. I continued to go to the ARC swimming lessons for several summers. At the end of each session, they had Race Day. You were grouped by age, and swam heats. The prize for winning was a blue ribbon. I did win one year, and I still have the blue ribbon to prove it. My biggest competition that day was one of my classmates, who was sure he could beat me, my father was in the Healdsburg Hospital recovering from surgery that day, and I felt I had to win for him. I still can remember running in

the front door of the Healdsburg Hospital, wet bathing suit and all, waving my blue ribbon for my dad to see.

The Summer I graduated from HUES my parents allowed me to go to Memorial Beach without an adult. What fun we had. Sometimes a group of us kids would go there in the evening, built a fire on the beach, roast weenies (as we called them in the '50s) and marshmallows, swim in the warm River water. We soon learned that the water was the warmest in the evenings after the sun went down. For years I didn't like swimming in pools, the River was the only thing for me.

—*Darla Williams Budworth*

WHAT'S BEHIND A NAME?

The Blue Heron is scratching her feathers and wondering how the Fitch Mountain cabins got their names. On a recent flyby, she took some notes and these snap shots.

Was it so long ago that the "summer people" identified themselves by the name of their cabins? "Oh I live at *River Forest Lodge*" or I bought *Bob and Bab's Place*" or "My place is next to *Del Rio Store*?"

These names light the imagination with the memories of sleeping porches and crickets, and warm rocky beaches on hot summer days; stringed colored lights along cabin roofs in the cool of evening; the echo of voices traveling the river full of inner tubes and frogs, music and mosquitoes. With the sights of sunburns and ice-cream and long stairways up to decks with sand-covered wood floors and wet bathing suits, the splash of summer unfolded with the heat of late May as the "city people" arrived to open up their places and sweep up the leaves of winter.

By the 4th of July the umbrellas were established on the beaches and children's voices and dog barks were familiar sounds, as the canoes passed with bright red oarsmen. Evening revealers splashed to the sounds of crickets and bullfrogs. July rolled along with lazy warm days until suddenly August was half over and with a faint smell of fall, talk of school began. It was the starting of "going home."

A certain melancholy set in as the "Woodwardians" and the "Port Candyians" packed up, and the "Leaky Barners" put away the summer trappings, and the "year rounders" watched as the carnival of excitement left. There was nothing quieter than the week after Labor Day when the people behind the names, like birds, flew off to their winter lives.

Jane E. Moore

Continued on page 23

VIOLATOR'S COPY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE — COUNTY OF SONOMA
JUVENILE CITATION

(: A.M.) (| DAYLIGHT (| DUSK (| DARK (: P.M.)
DAY OF WEEK SAF DATE Aug 26 1988

FULL NAME KINCAID, VICTORIA L.
RESIDENCE ADDRESS 1100 LYTTON SPRINGS RD.
CITY HEALDSBURG PHONE 433-5043

SCHOOL HEALDSBURG JR HIGH GRADE 7

DATE OF BIRTH 4-19-66 AGE 12

SEX F HT. 5 FT. IN. WT. 110 EYES BROWN HAIR BLD.
PARENT OR GUARDIAN CAROL KINCAID
ADDRESS 1100 LYTTON SPRINGS RD HEALDSBURG

YOU ARE HEREBY ORDERED TO APPEAR WITH A PARENT OR GUARDIAN BEFORE PROBATION OFFICER OF SONOMA COUNTY

PLACE LOS CILVELOS (JUVENILE PROBATION)
1110 PATTINIAN RD
AT AND IN THE CITY OF SANTA ROSA
ON THE 22ND DAY OF SEPT (1988)
AT 1:30 P.M. FOR AN INTERVIEW REGARDING VIOLATION
OF 15.20 SONOMA CO ORD. JUMPING
FROM BRIDGE - HEALDSBURG

THAT OCCURRED AT RAILROAD BRIDGE HEALDSBURG

I UNDERSTAND FAILURE TO APPEAR CONSTITUTES A MISDEMEANOR AND MAY RESULT IN IMMEDIATE DETENTION IN JUVENILE HALL.
I PROMISE TO APPEAR AT TIME AND PLACE ABOVE INDICATED.

SIGNATURE Victoria Kincaid
SIGNING THIS FORM IS A PROMISE TO APPEAR AND NOT AN ADMISSION OF GUILT.

OFFICER Sgt. Jensen BADGE 312
27652

I grew up in Healdsburg in the late 1970s-early '80s out Lytton Springs Road five miles out of town. During the summertime you'd get a ride when you can into town, so you don't have to walk or stay home. My mom, Carol Kincaid would leave for work around 7 a.m. or so. I would have her drop me off at the River, Memorial Beach. I would swim laps from the bridge

to the dam while I waited for my friends. When they got there, it was time to play. Diving off the platform diving boards, swimming underneath the platform, swimming up in the middle pillar of the car bridge (because it was hollow!), jumping off the car bridge, jumping off the train bridge—had to make sure there were no trains and then run. There were eight of us one day, me the only girl. Someone dared us to climb to the top of the train bridge and jump. Well, of all the eight, guess who showed those boys up?! As I was jumping, I looked to the shore, and Gosh Darn it, if it wasn't a Healdsburg Police Officer waiting for us to swim ashore!

We received citations to appear at Juvenile Hall with a parent to talk to a counselor. All the boys were there with their moms and me with mine. I heard a mother say, "I wonder what that cute little girl is here for?" and her son said, "Mom, she's the only one who jumped off the top of the train bridge!" The counselor asked if I was ever going to do that again, and I said, "Yes, as soon as we get back to Healdsburg!" And I did, over and over again.

—Victoria Kincaid Taneyhill

I've had a lot of fun from the time I was a kid to an adult doing different things on the river. I caught my first steelhead at the PG&E hole when I was about 12. I learned how to swim at Memorial Beach with all of the other kids in town, but I think my favorite memory was when I was a teenager, my dad bought a boat and every Wednesday night everybody in town that had a boat would meet at Brandts' Beach and water ski and have dinner on the beach. I'll never forget the

time my Uncle George made too wide of a turn water skiing and skiing right up onto the beach. We did this for years and I'll always remember our Wednesday night dinners on the beach and water skiing with my family and close friends.

—Ron Rafanelli

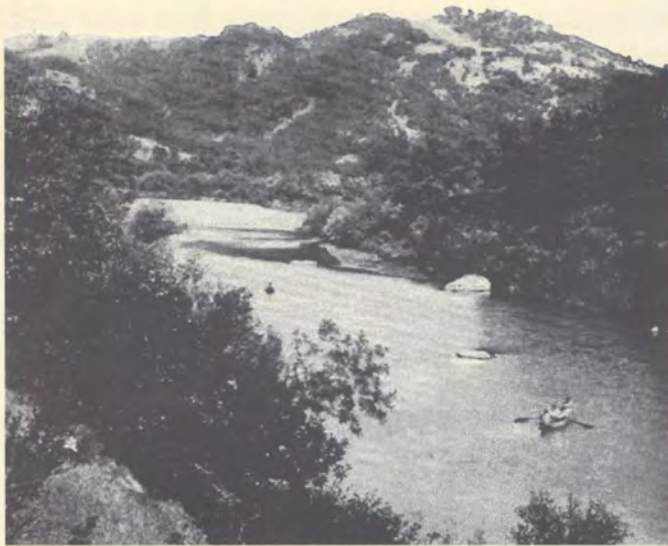
I started swim lessons at Memorial Beach the summer I was in second grade. We would pick prunes in the morning and at about one o'clock we would have lunch and my mom would take all three of us to the beach for our swim lesson and a couple of hours of fun. The beach was covered with families. Everyone watched everyone's kids. The snack shack had the best snacks. The frozen milkshakes were my favorite. We'd swim and run up and down the beach for hours. This went on every summer until I was able to swim from the dam around the Memorial Bridge pillar and back, in sixth grade. As I got older the beach at Palomar was the hot spot. Kids from the city would come up for the summer with their families. "Those were the days, my friend; we thought they'd never end."

—Kathleen Ponzo



Russian River at Camp Rose, Healdsburg, Cal.

YOU WILL
FALL IN FOR A GOOD TIME
— AT THE —
HEALDSBURG WATER CARNIVAL
JUNE 26, 1909.



Third Class

Healdsburg Museum & Historical Society
P. O. Box 952
Healdsburg, CA 95448

Michael Haran
2494 Riverview Dr.
Healdsburg, CA 95448

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