



RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

WINTER 2012 • ISSUE 115

An Official Publication of the Healdsburg Museum and Historical Society



Interior of Schwab Brothers Shoe Store, 1910

SCHWAB BROTHERS SHOE STORE - 93 YEARS IN BUSINESS

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In This Issue

This issue of the Russian River Recorder includes articles by Janet Sbragia Pisenti, Ann Howard, Donna Butz Zoellner, Robert Hassett, Dorcas Cowperthwaite and Holly Hoods.

Janet Sbragia Pisenti has once again written our feature article, highlighting an important longstanding Healdsburg family business: Schwab Brothers Shoe Store. If you weren't lucky enough to have lived in Healdsburg before 1969, Janet's article will take you back to the local good old days of shoe shopping at Schwabs'!

The Museum has just presented Historic Preservation Awards to three deserving historic buildings in Healdsburg, including the John and Sarah Hassett House at 68 W. Grant Street, now owned by Bruce and Carmen Selfridge. The Hassett family was prominent in Healdsburg history and later in their involvement with the Healdsburg Historical Society and Museum. I have found and reprinted an article about John Hassett, written by his grandson, Robert Hassett in 1977. I have also featured Sarah Vaughn Hassett's wedding dress and wedding shawl as artifacts in the Museum collection.

The article by Dorcas Cowperthwaite, who came to Healdsburg in 1889, was a speech she gave at the Healdsburg "Old Folks' Society" in 1905. This document recently arrived

in a donation to the Museum by Bill Clark, a relative of Dorcas' (and the Heald, Ridenour, and Arata families).

Donna Zoellner, the sister of longtime Museum volunteer Eleanor Zak, presented a moving memorial tribute at Eleanor's "Celebration of Life" November 12, 2011. Those of us fortunate to have known and worked beside Eleanor were so touched by the speech that we approached Donna to publish it as an article in the *Recorder*. Thanks to Ann Howard for connecting with Donna and obtaining the photographs.

Ann had her own touching story to contribute to this issue of the *Recorder*. Ann explains how she serendipitously connected her own family history with an artifact on display in the Museum's holiday toy exhibit. The 1922 photo of her father in a Model A pedal car in Iowa was an exact match to the Model A pedal car loaned to the exhibit by George Goobanoff. Ann's photograph detective skills, well honed from years of historical research, yielded new clues and connections to her family history.

Sincerely,

Holly Hoods
Curator



RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

The Official Publication of the

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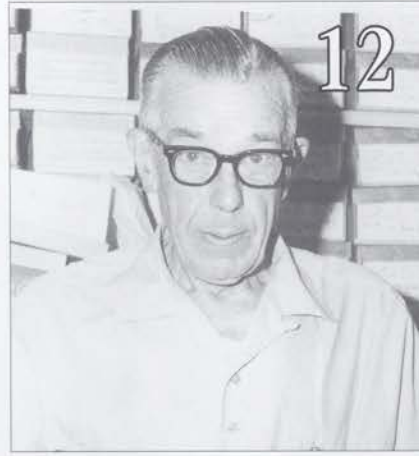
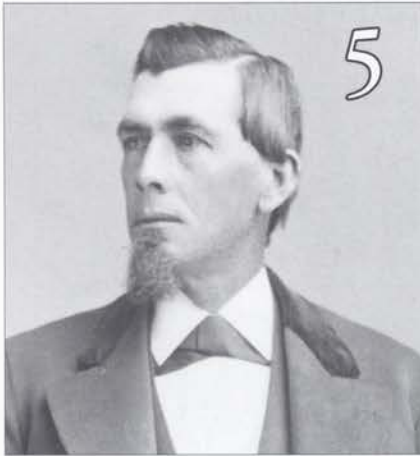
221 Matheson Street
P. O. Box 952
Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 431-3325
www.healdsburgmuseum.org



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Artifact: First Issue of the *Russian River Recorder*, 1976

By Holly Hoods

A pristine copy of the first issue of the *Russian River Recorder*, dated July 1976, was recently donated to the Healdsburg Museum by the Domitilli/Gagliardo family. At nine pages of double-spaced type, it seems short in length and graphically humble, compared to the RRR of today. (The publishers noted "Appreciation is extended to the Healdsburg Fire Department for the use of their mimeograph machine in the reproduction of this newsletter.") The original publication served as both newsletter and research journal for the Historical Society. Today HM&HS publishes a monthly newsletter and the quarterly *Russian River Recorder*.

The highlight of the first issue was a concise history of Dry Creek Valley by Pat Schmidt. There were also some compelling local photos with captions. The cover featured a sepia-toned 1864 photo of downtown Healdsburg: an oxcart (with ox) parked in front of a cluster of modest buildings at the northeast corner of Healdsburg Avenue and Plaza Street.

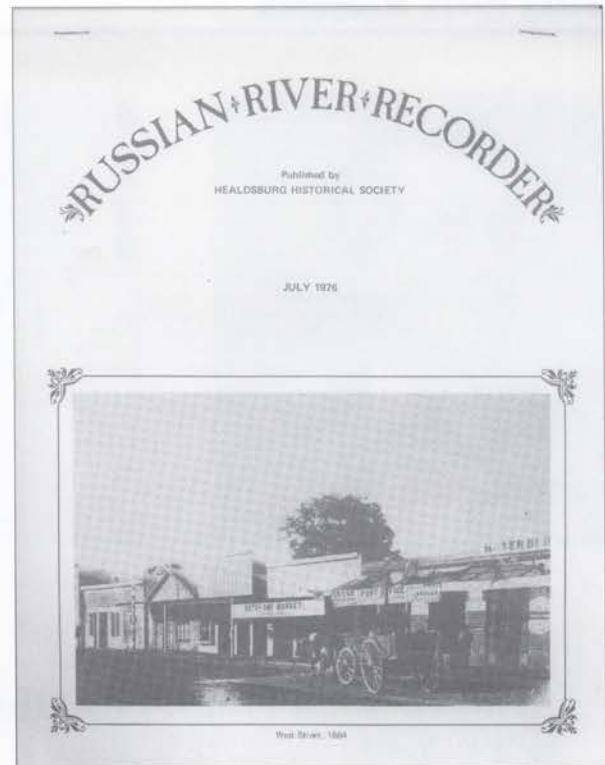
The issue opened with an enthusiastic statement of purpose:

The Healdsburg Historical Society has become a reality, and it's good to have it occur during our nation's bicentennial year, when our city, in celebration of this occasion, has created a city museum. This is a reminder to future generations of the special effort that the city undertook for the bicentennial.

The two organizations, though formed in the same year, are separate entities: the Historical Society being a nonprofit corporation guided by a board of directors, the museum a branch of the municipal government, but managed by a board of trustees appointed by the Mayor. Each will complement the other.

The purpose of the Historical Society is to record the history of the Healdsburg area through the collection and preservation of all historical materials and to actively foster the appreciation of our local history through programs and activities.

There is a wealth of historical material in the community that should, in time, be made a part of the collection of the museum. All members of the society



Russian River Recorder

are urged to look for items that were a part of our local history and to arrange, if possible, for the eventual transfer of this material to the museum.

The next several pages included four large high-quality historical photos interspersed with brief ethnographic descriptions of local Native people by ethnographer Steven Powers in early 1900. It is obvious that founding Historical Society president Ed Langhart sought to enlarge the society's membership and enrich the Museum collection. He solicited donations of artifacts, books, photographs and other items related to the history of the area.

The first issue of the *Recorder* also introduced the first Board of Officers and Directors of the newly-formed Healdsburg Historical Society: Ed Langhart, president; Rose Demostene, Vice President; Carol Barbieri, Recording Secretary; Jan Harrison, Corresponding Secretary; Billie Jo Haley, Treasurer; Barbara Beeson, Director; Robert Hassett, Director; Jack Relyea, Director. The Museum would not be here today without the leadership of these community members. Some of their descendants are still involved with the Museum in 2012.



John D. Hassett

John D. Hassett, Pioneer

By Robert J. Hassett

Bound For California

John D. Hassett arrived in the community in 1852 from the gold mines of Placerville. There he had met (Valentine) Felta Miller, who told him of the beauties and opportunities in what was later to be the Healdsburg area. Hassett liked what he saw here and determined to settle.

Born in 1832 in Ohio, one of a family of five boys and one girl, Hassett in his teens had been apprenticed to a brother-in-law who owned a flour mill. His apprenticeship was to last two years and for his two years' work, he was to receive \$100 per year. When he left for California, he joined a group who were taking horses and mules west, and he paid \$150 for the privilege of accompanying the traders.

Reaching Salt Lake City safely after crossing the plains, Hassett and the rest of the party were stranded there when the owner of the outfit sold out and abandoned them. Hassett was determined to reach California. He bought a pack mule and supplies, and started out on foot for the land of

promise, traveling only at night to avoid encountering the Indians.

He arrived in Placerville and was mining gold when he met Felta Miller and heard of the Russian river countryside. After a few months ranching near what is now Geyserville, he went to work for Felta at the mill built by William March on Mill Creek, and worked there for nearly three years. Hassett then built a sawmill for himself on what was later the Bill Gray ranch on Mill Creek about nine miles from town. He worked this mill for two years.

Hassett Brothers' Mill

John Hassett's brothers, Aaron and Charles, had by now come west and also settled in this area. In 1858, John and Aaron joined in a venture to build a flour mill, a mill located on West Street just south of the Odd Fellows' Hall [on Healdsburg Avenue just south of the Brandt Insurance Building]. When it was completed, it was the largest flour mill in the county, and to commemorate its opening, a "Grand Concert" was held in the building. The *Petaluma Journal* stated "Mr. and Mrs. A.N. Hamm gave a

grand vocal and instrumental entertainment at Healdsburg in Hassett's new building on Friday evening, June 18th. The house was crowded to its utmost capacity and the singing gave entire satisfaction. . . ." The Fourth of July was also celebrated with a "grand dance in Hassett's Hall."

The following year (1859), the first Sonoma County Agricultural and Mechanics' Society Fair was held in Healdsburg, and at this fair, Hassett's

mill received a gold medal for the best corn meal. In 1859 too, John Hassett married Sarah E. Vaughn, who had crossed the plains from Kentucky in a covered wagon with her parents in 1857. In 1862, their first child, James T. (who died in 1953 at the age of 91) was born in their home, which stood at 239 Center Street [and was relocated to Piper Street by Dr. Glenn Benjamin in the 1980s]. Two years later, a sister, Lulu, was also born there.



Hassett Healdsburg Mills, 1873

Buys All of Fitch Mountain

Ranchers brought their grain on pack mules from as far away as Lake County to have it ground at the mill on a 50-50 basis. The mill prospered, and John Hassett began to expand his operations. He established and conducted the Sotoyome Meat Market, and in 1863, bought 1,000 acres from the Fitch estate. The acreage included all of Fitch Mountain and extended westerly to what is now Tayman Park. In 1868, Hassett with his brother Aaron bought 150 acres on what is now Grove Street. The land was bounded on the west by Dry Creek, on the east by the railroad, on the north by a line extended from Powell Avenue, and on the south by North Street. Here Aaron built the home that came to be owned by Ken Buchignani, and John built a new family home, still standing, owned by Perry Austin [and now owned by Bruce and Carmen Selfridge, recipients of the 2011 Healdsburg Museum and

Historical Society Residential Historic Preservation Award]. Grove Street was formerly named "Hassett Lane." The surrounding land was covered with large madrone trees and "Hassett's Grove" was a favorite picnic ground for the community.

In 1872, Jesse and William Vaughn took over Hassett's Mill and, in exchange, Hassett acquired a 4,000-acre ranch on Mill Creek, later known as the Collier Ranch. Hassett later added about 2,000 more acres to the holding by the purchase of adjoining ranches.

Hassett felt a personal responsibility for the growth of the community and was involved in many ways. For a number of years, he was a trustee of the Healdsburg School and in 1868 was a member of the City Council. He later served as County Supervisor and held other offices before he passed away in the summer of 1887.



Sarah Elizabeth Vaughn Hassett

Artifacts: Hassett Wedding Dress and Shawl, 1859 *by Holly Hoods*

When Healdsburg pioneers John D. Hassett and Sarah Elizabeth Vaughn married in 1859, Sarah wore a beautiful muslin gown and silk shawl. Their descendant, Robert Hassett, a founding Healdsburg Historical Society board member, donated her wedding attire to the newly-established Healdsburg Museum in 1977.



Wedding Shawl of Sarah E. Hassett, #77.33.10

The wedding shawl is described as follows: white silk ground with white silk twist used in embroidery and deep knotted border ending in fringe. It measures 62" x 62" before fringe, with a knotted border 3 1/3" deep and fringe 10" long. The shawl is decorated with Chinese style embroidery. A trailing floral design runs along all sides with center free of embroidery except for a single butterfly. The shawl is in good condition, especially for its age.



Wedding Dress of Sarah E. Hassett, #77.33.11

Sarah Elizabeth Vaughn, the bride of John D. Hassett, was married in 1859 wearing this dress of pink and tan sheer muslin with thin white stripes through pink and corresponding pink stripe in tan. There are vertical rows of white damask woven onto the base fabric. The dress has a high rounded neckline with a narrow waist and a gathered full skirt. Sleeves are set in and bell out toward the wrist. Pleated silk ruching is applied to the sleeve at top and bottom. The dress is in fair condition. The bodice is badly shredded as is the left front next to opening.

The donor informed the Museum that it was used as Sarah's wedding dress in 1859. Style confirms this. This dress needed many layers of undergarments because it is so sheer. None of the original undergarments have survived.

A Life Sketch

Written and Read by Mrs. Dorcas Cowperthwaite

At the Healdsburg Old Folks' Society Meeting, June 8, 1905

As some of my brothers and sisters have given a history of leaving their native state, and the trails and hardships they had to encounter and endure in getting here, and as it was a very easy journey when I came here in 1889, I thought I would tell of some of the hard roads I had to travel in my own native state of Maine.

I was born in the town of Levant, Penobscot County, Maine, near Bangor, May 4, 1842. My Father died when I was six years old and left my Mother with five children, the oldest eight years old, the youngest yet unborn. Then we all started on a hard road. But my Mother was a brave, hard-working woman and battled well for her little flock on her farm. She sold the oxen, paid the debts that sickness had incurred and with two cows and a few sheep and her own hands kept the wolf from the door and we never suffered with hunger or cold.

When I was ten years old she sold out and moved to Bangor where her brother was living and got places for the three oldest where we had to do all we could to earn our living which was not very costly.

When I was twelve years old, my Mother married again, a man with six children, the oldest thirteen; the youngest one year old, and in due time there came three more. Then he began to realize that his farm was not large enough to maintain such a large family and he sold out and moved to this wonderful county of Aroostook, a vast wilderness where he could get all the land he wanted very cheap.

Here I shall have to give a little history to show what brought to light this great and wonderful county, for great it was in dimensions, rivers and lakes (which abounded in fish and game for hunters in abundance—from a moose to a muskrat and partridges) and fertility of soil.

Now the boundary line between that county and Canada was supposed to be the St. John's River, but the "Blue Noses" (as they were called) that had settled on their side of the river discovered that our side was better than theirs, and so a good many had settled on our side. However Johnny Bull had claimed a good slice of it and a great many Yankees had settled there too. It came to pass that rumors of the war was [sic] floating around so the militia was called and drafted and enlisted men were sent there to protect them, and it was a hard road to



Mrs. Dorcas Cowperthwaite, 1880s

travel as they had to make it they went for quite a distance, and we found it so when we went there later. The war which caused a great panic and scare closed without any bloodshed. As I said before, my stepfather went there in the spring of 1840 and bought two lots of 160 acres each, one each side of the Aroostook River. He bought this land off a man that had come up this river some five or six years before and made him a home, and his nearest neighbor ten miles away said "I can't see why this man should come and stick himself down under my nose!"

But this war advertised this place and moneyed men came and bought land; the lumbermen came and the woods was [sic] alive with men, but women and girls were very scarce.

My stepfather went there alone with a horse and wagon to within twenty miles of the river and had to leave his wagon and go horseback the rest of the way. When he came back to this place where he had left his wagon (it was a public house) and they found out he was coming back in the fall, they wanted him to bring them a girl to work. So in the fall he took his ox team loaded with farming implements and started to the

“land of promise” 160 miles. Three days later my brother and I boarded the wagon with one horse power and followed after and overtook him at the place of my destination. The next day they took the team and left me (and the old wagon for company) among strangers in the wilderness. Everyone was very kind to me, but OK, wasn't I homesick! For 24 hours I cried my fill and have never been homesick since. I was getting two dollars a week instead of fifty cents as I had heretofore, which was a great consolation. At the end of the six weeks my folks came back on their way home, but I had made up my mind I should not stay there as I had an Uncle living at the river that went there one year before, and I was rich too. Meantime they had got the road turnpike to within fourteen miles of the river, and they took me there with the horse where they had a trusty man to escort me on foot. My wardrobe was not cumbersome at all, as it was all tied up in two handkerchiefs and he carried one for me. As he was a young man and a stranger and I was quite bashful (as most girls were in those days), I kept quite a distance behind him. We went four miles and stopped for the night as there was not another house of entertainment on the road. The next day we went through. When within a few rods of the river there was a little brook or riverlet and there was a log across to walk on. As I stepped onto one and a man stepped onto the other—which proved to be my husband in two years! And, as he has often told the story since, he stepped off and gave me the right of way and that I had always kept it! But I think that, instead of giving, he led the right way and I went side by side with him for sixty-one years.

I was very fortunate in getting a place to work for two dollars per week, til spring, ten miles down the river so did not meet my Fate again til spring. Then my folks came in March and I went home in May and I was delighted with what was to me The Beautiful River, and with my brothers learned to handle the boats. That summer there was four commissioners sent here by the government from different states to investigate and trace lines and so forth, and they camped near our place two or three weeks. We furnished them with butter, milk and vegetables and I did washing for them and mended their stockings. Their names I remember were “Longfellow,” “Bontelle,” and “Lee,” the famous General of the Civil War. As I remember him, a tall commanding figure and very gentlemanly. As he had occasion to cross the river to the little village, I had the honor of taking him across in a boat a number of times and he used to call me his “little ferryman.” But I was not very small as I was “Sweet Sixteen.” If I could

have foreseen coming events, perhaps I might have given him a dunking [in the river]!

When I came home, the man I first met on the log and I soon paired off, and he was my first accepted “beau” (as we called them, not “fellers” as they call them now). As he was first Selectman and Town Clerk of our little town, I thought it was quite a catch and I sometimes fancied that some of the girls envied me now.

The State for their interest had persuaded the few inhabitants to have the town incorporated which they soon found, to their sorrow, was not for the best, for the better-informed people that came there to make homes sailed on down the river to the next township to avoid taxes. But after all we profited a little by it. We could get married with less trouble. He being the Town Clerk was paid for writing the intentions of marriage and posting it in a public place instead of buying a license as they do here. Then he could give the parties a certificate to give the one that was to tie the knot, to show that it was all right. But he cheated the public curiosity a little by shutting the documents up in his book of records until he saw fit to use them, as he did in December 26, 1842 instead of the 25th as it came on a Sunday and we wanted to have a little dance.

Our house consisted of one large room and two bedrooms below and two bedrooms upstairs. We had a few friends and relatives at the ceremony and supper. I don't remember what we had; only the cake my Mother made. It was an old-fashioned pound cake and she had had some experience in making them as she had made two before for her own two weddings. At her second wedding I danced with my stepfather and my uncle played the fiddle, as we called it.

Well now, go back to our wedding. Between the ceremony and the supper, we went on sort of a wedding tour down the river on the ice two miles—two couples accompanying us—to where my husband had prepared a home and that was a log house where he was baching. But he had a fine framed barn which in those parts they were obliged to have in which to put the hay and grain and the livestock. And then back to supper. All the young folks around were invited for the evening and we had a lady to play the violin. It was sweet music and very foot inspiring. The next day we moved home and I commenced life in earnest at the age of nineteen. But this story of nineteen years has not half been told. And here I am away out in California at the age of 81, far from my native State.

(signed) Mrs. D. Cowperthwaite



Helen Lorraine Crawford, age 8, and John Matthew "Matt" Crawford, age 3, about 1922, Ida Grove, Iowa. Matt is Ann Howard's father

A Pedal Car, a Photograph, and a Little Felt Hat

by Ann Howard

In November 2011, Holly Hoods, Curator, mentioned that George Goobanoff offered to display his collection of pedal car reproductions for the holiday exhibit, "Mother Goose on the Loose," at the Healdsburg Museum. Holly's plan was to also hang enlarged old photographs of children in pedal cars from the Museum's collection. When I mentioned that I had a photograph of my father in a pedal car, she was eager to see it.

I scanned the photograph, taken in the winter of 1922 of my aunt, Helen Lorraine Crawford, age 8, sitting on the wall in front of their home at 510 Moorehead Street in Ida Grove, Iowa, with snow on the ground. My father, John Matthew "Matt" Crawford, age 3, was sitting in his pedal car. Then I noticed the little felt hat with rolled rim that he was wearing. Bits and pieces of stories Dad had told me fell into one.

In January 2006 at the age of 86, while

writing his second manuscript, "Why Me and the B-24," about his WWII service in the Army Air Corps, Matt began to recall an incident long ago. He remembered that in his twenties in the 1940s during a physical exam for insurance, Dr. Armstrong had asked him if he had ever been knocked out. Matt had replied no, just knocked around playing football in high school. Dr. Armstrong had then proceeded to tell him that he, Matt, had been hit by a car, and knocked unconscious for a couple of days.

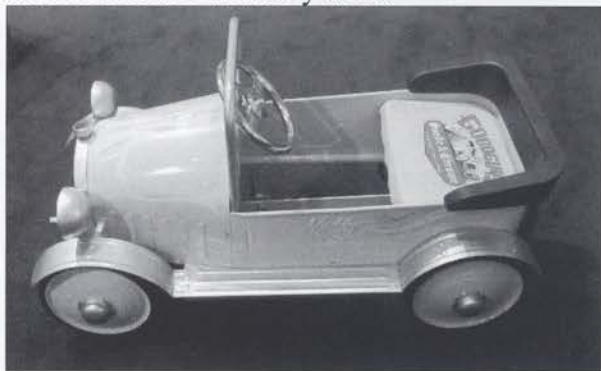
From his home in Montana in 2006, Matt called a friend in Ida Grove to check the newspapers to see if there was write-up about the accident; indeed there was, and his friend quickly mailed him a copy:

"MATT CRAWFORD INJURED - Matt, the manly and energetic six-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Crawford was seriously injured Sunday morning in front of the Methodist Church, [Ida Grove, Iowa] when his father was discharging an

automobile load of children for Sunday school. Matt was first out of the car and dashed ahead [of] his older companions. He ran around the rear of this father's car to gain the sidewalk on the west side of the street and in so doing, suddenly appeared in the path of Martin Seite's auto approaching from the north. Before the car could be stopped, the radiator struck the boy on the right side of his face and felled him to the pavement the car passing over him, but not touching him. The left side of his head hit the pavement with great force, producing a concussion. He remained in a daze until late Monday and since then has been much brighter. He complains of pain in his head and has been able to retain very little on his stomach. His pulse and temperature were reported about normal Tuesday afternoon and unless unexpected symptoms appear, his recovery seems assured." (Ida County Pioneer Record, Ida Grove, Iowa, November 18, 1925).

Dad shared the story with my sister and me, and thought that a little felt hat with a rolled rim that he had worn at the time had probably saved his life. He said that he vaguely remembered waking up while lying on a couch or day bed with his father and another man talking quietly beside him.

Matt also recalled that later, while still living at home, he and his mother were cleaning his room and he found the little hat. When he showed it to his mother, she got upset and took it. He didn't understand why at the time. He also recalled that when he was learning to drive, his father kept saying, nervously, "Watch out for that child! Watch out for those children!" His parents had never told him that he had been struck down by a car.



George Goobanoff's Model A Ford Pedal Car

Back at the Healdsburg Museum, when George Goobanoff and his wife Jeannie brought a shiny pink and white pedal car to fill out the display,

it just happened to have "Holly" written on the side, in honor of their infant granddaughter. Our Holly was tickled to see the name. As I walked over to admire the display, both George and his wife were pointing to the enlarged photograph of my father in his pedal car hanging on the wall. I mentioned that it was my dad, and they exclaimed that their pink car was a reproduction of his Model A Ford pedal car – almost 90 years later!



Aunt Helen, age 3 and a half, taken in March 1919 in her pedal car

Then I started looking through all of the early photographs of Aunt Helen and Dad when they were little, and found a photograph dated March 1919 taken of Aunt Helen, age 3 and a half, in her little pedal car at 306 Burns Street.

Then I found another taken in May, just a few months before her little brother Matt was born on August 11.



Aunt Helen with her parasol taken in May 1919

Amazing how clues from one photograph developed into a chapter of information!

Oh, I just remembered.....I was knocked unconscious when I was about six years old and remember when I woke up.....but that is another story.



Interior of Schwab Brothers Shoe Store in 1910 with Schwab family members in the background. Notice several of the high button shoes in the display case and the moveable ladders.

Schwab Brothers Shoe Store – 93 Years in Business

Founding Partners – Joseph and Anton Schwab

by Janet Sbragia Pisenti

Shoes in general can only be interesting if you are in desperate need of a pair, you are wearing a pair, or you're just mad about shoes - in today's lingo, a "fashionista!"

Just a small bit of historical information before the introduction of the Schwab brothers and their shoe store...for instance, the wearing of shoes goes back to very early times, since cave drawings show the ancients covering their feet to protect them against rough terrain. Even so, common footwear in most early civilizations was sandals. When a stronger, more complete covering of the foot took place, various forms were created and styles, materials, and colors changed to suit the latest trend. But consider this...for many years, each shoe in a pair looked just like the other shoe...no left and right shoe. It was in the early 1800s, when people realized that shoes would be more

comfortable if the right and left foot were taken into consideration. Imagine that!

Francis Joseph "Joe" Schwab and Francis Anton "Anton" Schwab spent 93 years making sure their customers' new shoes were just that - the right size for each foot and comfortable. The brothers Schwab were born in Germany, Joe Schwab in 1854 and his younger brother, Anton, in 1856 where they were reared and educated. It is not known what inspired them to go into boot and shoe making, but German shoemakers were known for making excellent quality boots and shoes, as were shoemakers in Spain and Italy.

The 1850s, the years the Schwab brothers were born, were a special time in this industry, but an American fellow, Lyman R. Blake, gets the credit for inventing a sewing machine that did something we

take for granted. It sewed shoe soles to their uppers! Before then, boots and shoes were made by hand. The stitching was done on the inside of the shoe, and then turned inside out to become the outer part of the shoe. Then along came Charles Goodyear, who invented a machine that sewed both boots and shoes.

Somewhere along the line, Joe and Anton Schwab must have heard about the boot and shoe manufacturing establishments in America, which were also producing excellent products.

At ages 18 and 16, the brothers Schwab left Germany and arrived in the United States in 1872...so young and so brave. There were 21 ships leaving Germany for Boston during that time, usually from the ports of Bremen and Hamburg. During the years that the Schwab brothers came to America, they were just two young people among a large crowd of German immigrants crossing the Atlantic Ocean to start a new life. From 1840 to 1880, the Germans were the largest group to immigrate to this country. Many of them settled with other Germans in parts of Texas, Wisconsin, Montana, and other states, but not the Schwab brothers. They began their American lives in the city of Boston and, eventually, the tiny town of Healdsburg.

In Boston, they could have worked for several companies that produced custom-made boots and shoes. Brockton, a suburb of Boston, was one of the shoe centers of the United States, turning out much-needed boots for the Union soldiers in the Civil War. It became known as the "Shoe City" with 91 shoe factories at the turn of the century. All that ended when Foot Joy ceased its operations in 2009.

While living in Boston, Joe Schwab married Louise Wissing and eventually they had seven children: Marguerite (who married Louis Jacobs), Anna Clara Louise (who married Frank Kaiser), Mary Rose (Healdsburg Elementary School's "Miss Schwab"), Alice (who married Bill Taber), Frank, Elizabeth, and Claire. Elizabeth and Claire entered the religious orders of the Sisters of the Holy Family and Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin. It is obvious that this Schwab family had a strong and faithful Catholic upbringing. The original two sons were named in honor of St. Francis – Francis Joseph and Francis Anton.

Anton Schwab married Barbara Minkle of Boston and they had a child, Regina, who died in Healdsburg at the age of 41. His second wife was

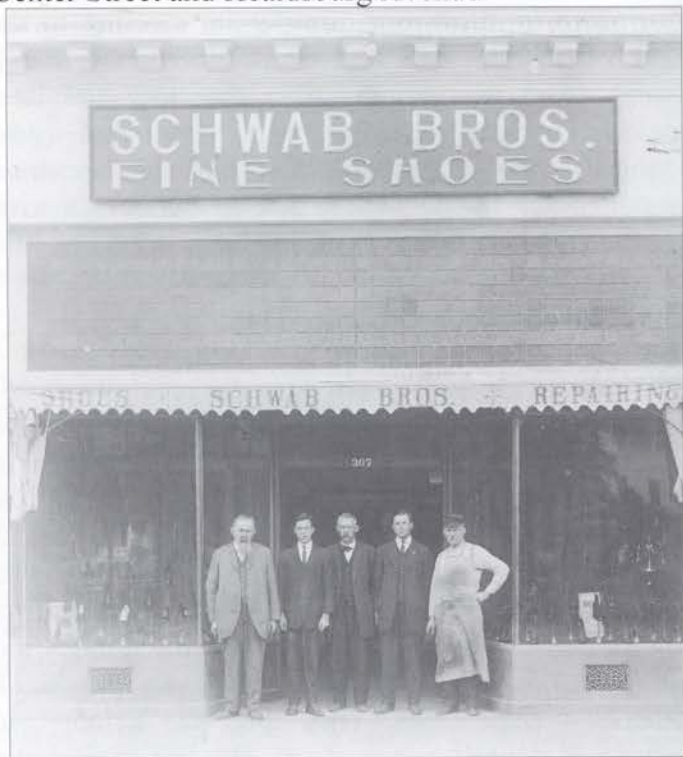
Elizabeth Wissing and they had four children: Louis (who ran the store and later became a partner), George (who lived in San Francisco and eventually opened a shoe store in Westwood, California, catering to the likes of Lucille Ball and other Hollywood stars), Joseph (who was employed in the store and later became a partner), and Marie Antoinette (who attended school in San Francisco in 1917, became a schoolteacher in the San Francisco School District, and married Jack Sweeney of San Francisco).

The Schwab Brothers Move West Healdsburg is the Chosen Spot

In 1875, three years after the young brothers' arrival in the United States, Joe Schwab decided to leave Boston to look for business opportunities in California. His brother, Anton, stayed behind for awhile. Joe had several choices on how to get to California. He could have hired a horse and carriage, which would have meant a very long and unsafe trip, since a network of highways as we know it today did not exist, or he could have sailed around South America's Cape Horn. That, too, was a long and sometimes dangerous trip at sea. His last choice, and the one he chose, was to sail from Boston in a southwesterly direction to the Isthmus of Panama, where he boarded the train called the Panama Railway (the canal was not completed until 1914). This four-hour trip took him to the Pacific Ocean side, where he boarded a ship heading to San Francisco. After his arrival, history finds him living across the Bay in Vallejo.

Anton arrived sometime later and joined his brother, Joseph, who by then had settled in the sparsely-populated town of Healdsburg. It is written that they opened their place of business in 1877, ten years after Healdsburg was incorporated, in the building formerly occupied by Krider and Laymance. Their experience and talent were put to use in the making of custom boots and shoes, using raw leather, and thereby gaining a sound and widespread reputation for the high quality of their work. In 1893, they officially began selling to the general public. Their business, Schwab Brothers Fine Shoes, was located on the northern side of the Plaza. In 1907, a commercial brick building on the corner of Powell (now Plaza Street) and Center Streets, built in 1883 by Ransome Powell, became the new and permanent location for their business. The original owner was

John S. Tucker. Al Bertagna remembered the store as being on Plaza Street, midway between what is now Center Street and Healdsburg Avenue.



Schwab Bros. Fine Shoes at 307 Powell (Plaza) Street, circa 1913. The caption of the time described the people as: Uncle Joe Schwab, Louis Schwab, Anton Schwab, Frank Schwab, and Mr. Hughes, shoe repairman and maker.

Schwab Brothers Fine Shoes (usually called Schwab Brothers Shoe Store) was considered at that time the oldest shoe store in Northern California, and a great number of boots and shoes were sold to the people of Healdsburg during all their years in business. Because everyone in town patronized that store at some time in their life, and because of the friendliness of the Schwab family members, the name Schwab has not been forgotten.

When my grandfather, Michele "Mike" Rochioli, bought his shoes at Schwab Brothers shoe store, he must have been impressed with their shoes, since he was trained as a cobbler as a young man in Italy. He always thought a shoe should cover the foot entirely and never liked to see women wearing skimpy summer sandals. He thought that didn't make any sense at all.

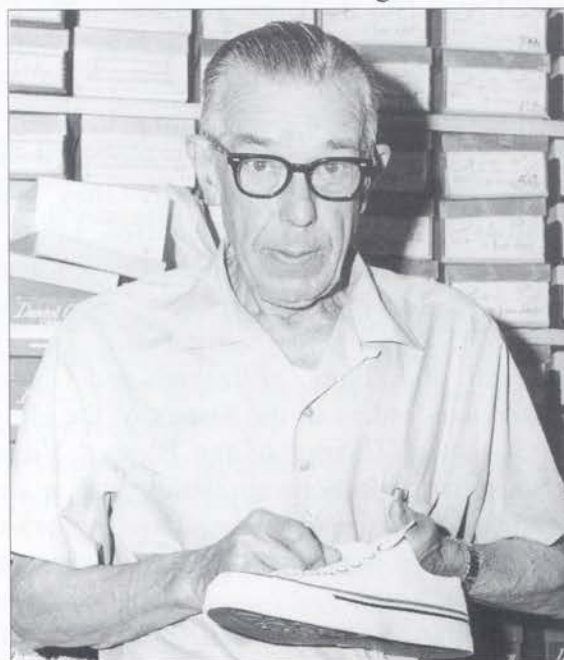
Healdsburg was always considered a small town, yet other shoe stores existed during those early years. One of them was Rosenberg's Shoe Store, owned by Mervyn Rosenberg, and a later one owned

by Cliff Fraser called Fraser's Shoes, located on Center Street. Cliff went on to open Red Wing Shoes in 1956 on Steele Lane in Santa Rosa. J.C. Penney was also a place to buy shoes.

Joe and Anton Schwab came to the end of their lives during the 1920s and 1930s. Joe Schwab died on February 23, 1925 and Anton Schwab died on February 7, 1935. The Healdsburg Tribune eulogized them with an abundance of praise. In one article, Joe was written up as a great conversationalist, always loving to share his memories of various people in town, remarkably remembering all the details of their lives. He was well loved. It is also written that F.J. "Joe" Schwab provided in 1906 for 31 family members in his home because they were victims of the San Francisco Earthquake. Yet, both brothers were praised with the following statement: *sterling characters, loyal and true citizens, desirable home folks, always interested in the progress and prosperity of the little town in which they established their business more than one-half century ago.*"

The Shoe Business Continues with Frank, Louis, and Joe Schwab

As the years progressed, several of Joe and Anton's descendants came to work at the store. In 1932, cousins Louis, "Louie," and Frank Schwab took over the store from their fathers having received



Louis Schwab with sneaker at shoe store, 1965

excellent training from them and having worked as clerks in the store for several years.

Louie was mentioned in a Healdsburg Tribune article as saying, "I worked in the store since I was a young kid...it was 1918. I remember those old high-buttoned shoes like nobody's business and those high laced shoes...those were killers. You had to lace them up skin tight and your fingers soon had a row of calluses from tying them."

Louie's cousin and partner, Frank Schwab, retired in 1934 and turned to ranching, which included a prune and grape ranch on Magnolia Drive. He had married Virginia Bacigalupi of Santa Rosa in 1917 and they had two children, Francis "Frank" Schwab (who married Mary Ann Wallerstedt, was a school teacher, and raised his family in San Francisco) and Mary Virginia Schwab (who married Joe Riley, was a mother and homemaker and lived in Marin County).

Louie's brother, Joe, then joined him in running the store, meaning that once more...Schwab Brothers shoe store was owned by Schwab brothers!

Louie married Violet Leone and they had one child, Lois Schwab. She was the only descendant found in researching this history and was thrilled to know we were featuring the store and the family in our Russian River Recorder. Lois is a Healdsburg High School graduate, Class of 1951. She also attended Lone Mountain Catholic College in San Francisco and then married Al Bertagna. They have four daughters.

Louie's brother, Joe Schwab, married Marie Canobbio. They did not have children, but the two families remained close to each other, living and working in Healdsburg all their lives. Louie, Violet and daughter Lois lived on Tucker Street; Joe and Marie lived on Front Street. Louie and Joe's cousin, Mary Rose Schwab, "Aunt Mae," lived on Matheson Street. She and her cousin Louie enjoyed having their backyards right across the alley from each other. Alleys were an important part of city planning in the early days, especially in the historic downtown districts. There were no attached garages like today, and it was an accommodation for horses and buggies to be settled into the barns in the back part of those estates. Mary Rose Schwab is discussed further at the end of this story.

Healdsburg Shoe Shoppers Share Their Memories

Many of today's residents, who patronized the store while the next descendants of Schwabs were running the store, have their own memories of the one-room Schwab Brothers store on Plaza Street. They remember rows of shoe boxes from floor to ceiling which existed on both walls from front to back, with ladders used to reach the topmost boxes – ladders that could be moved from side to side, as they were hung on railings for mobility. Benches were used for customers to sit on, and a salesman would sit on a stool with a slanted front piece where you placed your foot for custom sizing. He would measure your foot (a rarity today, except for Santa Rosa Shoes in Santa Rosa). He then asked you to place your foot on a hand-held ruler of sorts with a sliding wooden piece that slid down to your toes to indicate the right shoe length and two other wooden pieces that settled in on either side of your foot to indicate the width of your foot. He then went off to find the perfect size shoe for you!

Many of us former customers remember the special upright X-ray machine at the back of the store, where you could place your feet into a space at the bottom. Then you could look down into a window at the top, allowing you to see your feet fitting snugly into your new shoes. We looked forward to that little experience, so obviously it didn't take much to entertain us during those years.

Memories of the store were shared by Harlene Howard Wright, who remembered buying her Buster Brown shoes at the store and getting her foot measured every time. Those memories brought forth her vocalization of the radio slogan of the time: "*My name is Buster Brown...I live in a shoe...my dog Tigie lives in there, too!*"

Darla Williams Budworth recalled her parents buying her the Spalding shoes so popular with teenagers at the time that she 'just had to have.' Patty Demostene Bosio, who was friends of Lois Schwab since kindergarten, recalled the 'crazy mirror' at the back of the store, which was fun to stand in front of and see how fat you could look. It was purposely distorted to entertain you, like the ones at the 'Fun House' at the Fair.

Al and Lois Schwab Bertagna visited the family shoe store often. Al recalled how their two oldest daughters always looked forward to getting a new pair of shoes from "Grandpa," and Lois remarked

how nice the Schwab family members always were and how often they attended church.



"You had to fight your way inside Schwab Brothers' Shoe Store last Thursday when the big storewide clearance sale began. Shown selling each other a pair of shoes are Louis, Joe, and Frank Schwab. Frank retired in 1934 and now the brothers Louis and Joe are closing out their huge stock of shoes, boots, rubbers, and slippers at huge savings." (Tribune Photo)

Schwab Brothers Shoe Store Closes August, 1969

Small town living has its special qualities and one of them is that almost everyone in and around town has a special place in their heart for the local merchants and places of business which they have been frequenting for many years. In some cases, the town council decides that when a particular place of business closes after many years, it should be recognized. In this case, this is the honor that Schwab Brothers Shoe Store received on that day in 1969.

RESOLUTION NO. 28-70

WHEREAS Schwab Bros. Shoe Store is closing its doors after 92 years of continuous business in the City of Healdsburg and

WHEREAS during their many years of operation they have exemplified the highest degree of business integrity and won for themselves a reputation of great esteem, now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Healdsburg that they hereby express on behalf of the city their gratitude and appreciation for Schwab Bros. many years of exemplary service in the business community and do also express regret that they are discontinuing their business.
Dated May 4, 1970

VOTE upon the foregoing resolution was as follows:
Ayes: Councilmen: Badger, Barbieri, Quinby, and Mayor Lucius Noes: Councilmen: None Absent: Giorgi.

Mary Rose Schwab - 50 Years a Teacher!

Writing about the Schwab family would not be complete without mentioning Mary Rose Schwab, who was called "Aunt Mae" by her nieces and nephews. She was the cousin of Louis and Joe Schwab and she also made her mark in Healdsburg. Mary Rose was generally called "Miss Schwab" by most people, especially the children who attended Healdsburg Elementary School. She never married, but spent 50 years of her life dedicated to the young people in town through her teaching profession. They never forgot Miss Schwab.

She is also remembered by many of the town's young Catholics as their catechism teacher at St. John's Church on Matheson Street. Before the existence of St. John's School, many of the local area's Catholic boys and girls received their Sunday catechism lesson and instruction booklet in preparation for First Holy Communion and Confirmation from Miss Schwab. The lessons took place every Sunday morning after Mass in the left front pews of the old church. The lessons lasted about thirty minutes. That is where I sat listening attentively to Miss Schwab, along with: Ernestine Nicoletti, George Ricci, Adrian Sodini, Ray Bonnani, Floyd Simoni, Frank Passalacqua, Peter Dal Coletto, John Cuneo, and many others.

We, too, have not forgotten Miss Schwab nor the old St. John's Church on Matheson Street, where we attended Sunday Mass and learned about the religion our ancestors passed down to us.

It is a pleasure to include Schwab Brothers Shoe Store in our Russian River Recorder. A business lasting 93 years is a welcome addition to our Healdsburg Museum & Historical Society's research collection. It is a jewel in the treasure box of Healdsburg's past.

Sources:

Al and Lois Schwab Bertagna, San Mateo, CA
Healdsburg Museum & Historical Society
Photo and Newspaper Collections



Eleanor Zak, 2010

My Sister and Best Friend

by Donna (Butz) Zoellner

Presented at Eleanor Zak's Celebration of Life November 12, 2011.

Photographs provided by Julie Zak. Edited by Ann Howard

I was asked to tell a bit about Eleanor's growing up years. And I guess can say anything *I* want about my sister, can't I. Who's to know....

Really, what I have written here is the best of my recollection of her. Remember, she was two-plus years older than I and three years ahead of me in school, so my early memory of her is limited. Also, she and I were complete opposites, so we pretty much traveled in different directions. With that in mind, let me begin.

Eleanor Winefred Butz, my big sister, my mentor, my best friend. I wonder if she disliked her middle name as much as I do mine. When I say big sister, I certainly do not mean size-wise, although she was a bit hefty during some of her teen years (that might have happened because our folks went into the restaurant business about then and Dad also made wonderful donuts.... yummmmy...haven't been able to pass up a donut shop since). I think probably Eleanor's largest size during her lifetime was an 8, maybe a 10...then it dropped to a 6 then a 4 and finally a 2. Somewhere along the way food became

unimportant to her. I sure wish some of that had rubbed off on me.

Well now, let's go back to the beginning. Eleanor and I were born in Denver, CO, Eleanor in 1930 and I in 1933. Our dad was transferred from Portland where he and mother called home, and Dad worked for Montgomery Ward (35 yrs).



Eleanor and Donna about 1935-36

After three or four years we moved back to Portland. We lived in a rural area in the hills outside the city of Portland, and Dad's parents and three of his six siblings lived in another rural area nearby. Those were wonderful growing-up years with large family gatherings, always dinner and always card games following.....the men were into poker and dice, and of course, a little money changed hands. Eleanor and I were always included as soon as we were old enough to hold cards in our hands. Before that we just watched and learned, even the crap games.



*Eleanor and Donna
with Great-grandmother Butz about 1934*

Every summer we had big family gatherings at the seashore...aunts and uncles, cousins and friends. I remember my sister and I had contests to see who could eat the most pancakes, and she always won. Our grandparents lived in the old family house, and we loved our time spent there. After our grandparents passed away, our Aunt Rose moved in. We loved being with her, too, and would spend hours sitting and listening to her stories. Those were happy times.

At home, Eleanor and I entertained ourselves making up stories and acting them out. I was kept in

a crib for a long time...way too long, so that was always my prison while she played some character on the outside. We loved to play Doctor, and from an early age Eleanor's ambition was to become a doctor. I think the reason she decided against it later on was because of her eyesight.

We also spent hours cutting out pictures of dogs and horses and pasting them into scrapbooks. Eleanor was crazy about horses. Also we listened to the radio, but "Gang Busters" and "Inner Sanctum" were forbidden unless we could sneak them in. As a result I became a scardy cat. Of course, it didn't help that Eleanor did her best to scare me whenever possible. She had a little devil in her. I remember her standing in the doorway cheering mother on when I was getting a spanking. I doubt that she ever had one. She was the good child.

We were so very different. She was even tempered like our mother, loved to read books and listen to classical music, a very much a sedentary person. While I, on the other hand, was a tomboy to the max...played war and football, and wrestled with the boys...always had a dog and a tree house. I think that is why I had three boys and Eleanor two girls. I remember mother buying us each a pair of cords. She gave Eleanor a pair of boy-style brown cords, and I was given a pair of navy-blue bib-style cords. I was devastated and thought that totally unfair since I was after all the boy.

One of our most favorite things to do was visit the ice cream shop in a town nearby where we also went to school. Our favorite was ice-cream sundaes. Then we would take their delicious vanilla ice cream home and made root beer floats. Our neighbor who lived below us made homemade root beer and that was a special treat for us.

Our grandmother on my mother's side had a great deal to do with Eleanor's love for classical music (a little rubbed off on me too). She took us to concerts in downtown Portland where we were exposed to many famous musical artists. Eleanor fell in love with the violin after hearing Jascha Heifetz, and that is when she decided she wanted to take violin lessons.

We moved to Marysville, California, about 1942, during the war years, where my folks went into the donut and restaurant business. Many of our aunts and uncles were in that business, and they talked our folks into opening a franchise called Hoyt's Donut

Shop. Eleanor and I were pretty much on our own during those years, although we did have an elderly lady living below us, and she was like a grandmother to us. And Eleanor was old enough to stay home alone.

That's where I learned to clean house, as Eleanor seemed to know a lot about that. I think our Aunt Hildegard (who was the expert on house cleaning) indoctrinated her. We divided up the rooms, but Eleanor took the heaviest load. Of course, she was older and much more serious about it than I was. Being the big sister I looked up to her and learned a lot about cleaning.

Eleanor and I did not fight much when we were kids mostly because, well, Eleanor just wouldn't and definitely not physically. One time when I got a hold of some boxing gloves, I begged her to box with me. She finally gave in, but she didn't last very long. We had family living in Chico so on most Sundays we would drive up there for more family dinners and again play cards and poker and dice. Eleanor started high school in Marysville and then we moved again.



*Eleanor in high school about 1938
(ruby red lips in the original color photograph)*

While traveling up the coast, my mother spotted a "For Sale" sign in a window of a restaurant in the coastal town of Crescent City, and that became our next home. Eleanor finished her high school years there, and I think both of us had a lot of fun during that period of time. It was a small high school.

We were involved in lots of activities and made long-time friends.

It was during Eleanor's senior year that Frank Zak moved to Crescent City, and sometime during that year, a bit of a romance blossomed between them. Frank can elaborate on that. Of course Eleanor had her eyes set on the University of Oregon and her plan for a career all mapped out - to become a medical technologist. Frank joined the Navy.

Eleanor finished college and then a year of medical school. From there she moved to Sacramento and bought a 50-something Oldsmobile from my Aunt Hildegard. Later she showed a bit of her wild side and bought a little sports car. She began her working career at Sutter Hospital. After his Navy stint, Frank started college at Humboldt State, and during that time he looked Eleanor up, and they renewed their romance.

Eleanor and Frank were married December 28, 1957, two months after my wedding; I finally got ahead of her by a few months. Now that Eleanor and I were settling down and raising our families, we shared many good times together even though we lived six hours apart.



Donna and Eleanor in the Swiss Alps, 2000

Our relationship changed into a friendship. My sister had a curious mind and an adventurous spirit (like the time she went up in a hot air balloon). Had she had the opportunity, I think she would have done a lot more things on her bucket list. She and I took a trip to Europe, and on one occasion she got up

and did a whoopy-doo jig with the tour guide at a German *ratskeller*.

My sister was a very thoughtful person and always kept a notebook with her. She kept notes of things that someone might mention that they liked. She knew that I loved quails, so one time she brought me an old window that she found rummaging around an antique store. In the frame was a stained-glass quail. From that I was able to make a beautiful hanging piece of art, one that I will always treasure. Other times it was old books about things related to the history of my area, which was gold mining country. And I know she did the same for others, especially her daughters. She loved to take in the weekend yard sales and she had an eye for finding great "stuff," lots of it. That's where her collection of marbles, jiggers and Disney figurines got started along with other things...she and Frank's sister Sue were of the same mind, always searching for great treasures.

When I moved to Pine Mountain Lake Community, Groveland, CA, after I lost my husband, Eleanor and Frank would visit, and we enjoyed many fun outings to sites around the area like Yosemite National Park and wineries. We always took a picnic basket and found a spot to have our lunch, along with a little wine. Those were great times. And Eleanor

and I managed to include little trips together here and there throughout the years.



Frank and Eleanor when she received the Langhart Award for her volunteer work at the Healdsburg Museum (Healdsburg Museum collection)

Yes, she was my big sister, my mentor, my best friend and I miss her dearly.

May the Lord's blessings be with Eleanor.



Third Class

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P. O. Box 952
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