



# RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

SUMMER 2015 • ISSUE 129

An Official Publication of the Healdsburg Museum & Historical Society

# Lake Sonoma

## BEFORE *AND* AFTER





## In This Issue

This issue is organized around the theme of "Lake Sonoma: Before and After," the current Healdsburg Museum exhibit. The construction of Lake Sonoma and Warm Springs Dam was the largest environmental undertaking in the history of the county and it became the most embattled. This publication, like the exhibit, presents many perspectives, but does not seek to refight old battles.

We appreciate the kind permission of Adrian and Mary Praetzellis of the Anthropological Studies Center to excerpt from some of their cultural and historic overviews that were prepared for the Warm Springs project studies. Lauren Carriere, our graduate student intern from Sonoma State University, has written about ethnobotanical mitigation, which included relocation of sedge plants from beds that had been long-cultivated by the Dry Creek Pomo. Sedge root is an essential component of traditional Pomo basketry.

Flooded by Lake Sonoma, Skaggs Springs was a popular hot springs and hunting resort that drew recreational visitors as early as the 1860s. We

include historical descriptions from the *Healdsburg Tribune* about Skaggs Springs, 1869 and 1895. Museum staff Jane Bonham presents a 1902 promotional pamphlet from the resort, newly scanned from the Museum's ephemera collection. Bourdens descendant Gary Wilson has written a fond remembrance of Pierre and Lucie Bourdens' Strawberry Ranch near Skaggs Springs.

In 1979, Guion Kovner of the *Healdsburg Tribune* wrote profiles of Gail Jonas and F.M. "Milt" Brandt, the key adversaries in the Lake Sonoma battle. We have reprinted Kovner's articles, plus the speech that Congressman Don Clausen made at the Groundbreaking Ceremonies for Warm Springs Dam. Dave Henderson's poignant story set at Lake Sonoma closes the issue.

We hope you find this issue—and the exhibit—engaging and informative. The exhibit will be on display through August 9.

Holly Hoods, Curator,  
Pamela Vana-Paxhia, Editor



### **RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER**

*The Official Publication of the*  
HEALDSBURG MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Edwin Langhart, Founder**

### ***Officers***

**Jim Brush, *President***

**Ken Spadoni, *Vice-President***

**Phyllis Chiosso Liu, *Secretary***

**Phil Hartlaub, *Treasurer***

**Barry Stallard, *Ass't Treasurer***

**Ted Calvert, *Past President***

### ***Directors***

**Rawleigh Fjeld**

**Louise Fowler**

**Sally Freelen**

**Lockie Gillies**

**Ann Howard**

**Jeanne Leal-Hartlaub**

**Larry Orr**

### ***Staff***

**Holly Hoods, *Curator***

**Whitney Hopkins, *Asst. Curator***

**Jane Bonham, *Office Manager***

### ***Publication Staff***

**Pamela Vana-Paxhia, *Editor***

**Healdsburg Printing, Inc, *Printing***

**221 Matheson Street**

**P. O. Box 952**

**Healdsburg, Ca 95448**

**(707) 431-3325**

**[www.healdsburgmuseum.org](http://www.healdsburgmuseum.org)**

# Contents

**Russian River Recorder**

**Summer, 2015 \* Issue 129**

- 4 Gone, But Not Forgotten: Historical Glimpses of the Lake Sonoma Area** excerpt  
*by Adrian Praetzellis and Mary Praetzellis, 1984*
- 5 Before Warm Springs Dam: A History of the Lake Sonoma Area** excerpt  
*by Adrian Praetzellis, Mary Praetzellis and Suzanne B. Stewart, 1985*
- 6 Of Baskets and Sedge**  
*by Lauren Carriere, 2015*
- 8 Skaggs Springs Resort**  
*Russian River Flag, October 28, 1869*
- 10 The Strawberry Ranch**  
*by Gary Wilson, 2015*
- 12 Bourdens' Strawberry Ranch Near Skaggs Springs**  
*excerpt from Healdsburg Tribune, July 15, 1897*
- 13 Healdsburg Wheelmen Prepare for a Bicycle Ride to Skaggs Springs**  
*excerpt from the Healdsburg Tribune, September 26, 1895*
- 14 A 1902 Artifact in Review**  
*by Jane Bonham, 2015*
- 16 Water-bearing in the Stars for Brandt**  
*by Guion M. Kovner*  
*reprint from Healdsburg Tribune, April 12, 1979*
- 19 Gail and the Dam: Mutually Devastating**  
*by Guion M. Kovner*  
*reprint from Healdsburg Tribune, April 19, 1979*
- 22 Remarks of Congressman Don H. Clausen at Groundbreaking Ceremonies for Warm Springs Dam, August 20, 1967**
- 24 Yellow Roses Trailing in the Water**  
*by Dave Henderson, May 15, 2015*



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Before Lake Sonoma*

## **Gone, But Not Forgotten: Historical Glimpses of the Lake Sonoma Area** excerpt

*by Adrian Praetzellis and Mary Praetzellis, 1984*

At present, only the Fish Hatchery staff actually lives on the seventeen thousand acres of government property around Lake Sonoma, a little over two hours' drive north from San Francisco. But the area was not always characterized by this emptiness. For thousands of years, native peoples made this their home and occupied permanent villages and seasonal campsites throughout the area. The pressure of Euroamerican Settlement changed the size and location of these native settlements, but Pomoan Indians continued as a part of the region's population. In the 1840s, part of the area was

occupied by Mexican settlers who raised horses and cattle on large, unfenced ranchos. A few years later, following the California Gold Rush of 1849, many Americans came to the area and established farms and ranches. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the area flourished with people and activities. Large families kept several schools in session, and settlers socialized and quarreled with their neighbors. This bustle of activity, and the families who thrived on it, had been nearly forgotten when the Warm Springs Cultural Resources Study began its investigations.





Source: Mauritsen Family

*S. P. Hallengren ranch in 1912 is representative of the ranches described in this excerpt.*

## **Before Warm Springs Dam: A History of the Lake Sonoma Area**

excerpt

*by Adrian Praetzellis, Mary Praetzellis and Suzanne B. Stewart, 1985*

The studies conducted at Warm Springs revealed many things about past uses and connections with the land. What had been major resources often became unimportant, while new sources of sustenance or income were recognized and emphasized. Timber, now a major resource of the North Coast Ranges, was virtually ignored by Indian people, while early White settlers destroyed trees to increase grazing land. The sedge beds of Warm Springs and Dry Creek, which have produced roots greatly valued by Pomoan basket makers, had become overgrown and tangled from years of disuse by Euroamerican settlers. Geographer Carl Saucer described the phenomenon succinctly: "Natural resources are in fact cultural appraisals."

Although resources were continually being redefined, one attribute – diversity – characterized the area through the centuries. There were some important specialists among the Dry Creek Pomo, but most individuals developed all their skills to get as much as possible from the land. The average Mihilakawna (Dry Creek Pomo) man was a hunter, toolmaker, house builder, fisherman, trap builder and maker of sturdy baskets, and he knew when and where to direct his attention as the seasons shifted. Diversity was also the hallmark of the early subsistence years of historical period occupation, when new settlers were trying a variety of means to stay alive while slowly building up their new holdings.

By the 1880s, two main emphases had developed along geographic lines: stockraising (primarily sheep) in the Dry Creek uplands and grapegrowing at the head of the valley. But even with these specialties, landowners always viewed their land as a multiple resource. Thus the uplands rancher raised not only sheep or cattle, but also a variety of barnyard stock. He hunted in the mountains to rid his rangeland of pests, to collect valuable hides to sell and to bring variety to the table. He also cut and sold his timber and his tanbark, explored the potential in his mineral springs and attempted to tap into the chromium, mercury or manganese beneath his soil. The valley farmer may have emphasized fruit, but he also kept stock to feed his family and even raised sizable herds where grazing land was available.

One year a landowner might list himself in a local directory as grape grower; in another he chose to be known simply as a farmer, or as a stock raiser, a winemaker, or even a blacksmith. These changes in occupational title rarely represented actual change in activities. Instead, they reflected the diversity that typified the Lake Sonoma Area until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As corporate ownership increased, diversity declined. The area has been returned to diversity more recently; government plans are characterized by their variety, providing for public recreational facilities, education, hydroelectric power, flood control, and fish and wildlife maintenance.





Source: Coni Beeson

*Expert basket weaver Laura Somersall with sedge root*

## **Of Baskets and Sedge**

*by Lauren Carriere, 2015*

The Warm Springs Dam was initially suggested in the 1930s amid concerns over the seasonal flooding of the Russian River. While the initial purpose of the dam was to protect property from damage, the disruptive nature of the dam was expected to have negative effects on the project area. One significant area of concern was the dam's impact on plants in the flood area.

In addition to being part of the regional ecosystem, the plants of the area were culturally significant to Native American groups of the area. In order to ensure that the Native peoples were able to continue to use the same plants they had been using for generations, crews were formed to preserve the culturally significant plants used for basket making.

The focus of the sedge transplant project was to preserve the sedge plants that had been cultivated for generations to have straight and long roots, which were optimal characteristics for basket weaving. Sedge with straight and long roots were a result of human cultivation, thus the basket weavers would not have been able to use new sedge beds nearly as well to dig up the materials for their baskets.

Baskets made in the Warm Springs area were not only well-made with premium materials, but they were also beautiful and imbued with spiritual significance for the Native American people who made and used them. Following specific rituals and practices was essential for the success of the baskets and the basket makers. If an individual strayed from the traditional practices that surrounded basket making, they could be putting the sedge beds, the baskets and themselves in danger.

In order to ensure the health and wellbeing of the basket sedge and the basket weavers, crews were assembled to transport the basket sedge from its current location to a new location that was not in the flood zone of Lake Sonoma. The crews included representatives from the local Native Americans tribes, local basket weavers, members of the Warm Springs Cultural Resources Study, members of the Army Corps of Engineers and the Edgar Hill Environmental Analysis and Planning firm. While the purpose of the crews was to transplant the sedge successfully, the project was very experimental and



modified as they learned more through the transplanting of earlier sedge beds.



Source: Coni Beeson

*Lucy Smith digging sedge root*



Source: Coni Beeson

*Kathleen Smith checking sedge root*

Along with the scientific requirement of recording the transplant process, each transplant followed spiritual rituals guided by tribal members. At the start of each sedge relocation project, ceremonial dinners were held to honor the sedge plants that were to be moved. These ceremonial

dinners were quite important to the relocation project because they functioned as “a religious appeal, on behalf of participants to the creator, for the well-being of the parent plants” and the well-being and safety of the crews who would be transplanting the basket sedge. The start of each sedge transplant was preceded with a ceremony led by a Native American representative. These ceremonies included prayer, singing and other ritual practices as an offering to the “Earth Spirit” to ensure safety and health of the crews and the plants.



Source: Coni Beeson

*Crew transplanting sedge. Laura Somersall in foreground*

In the end, the crews transplanted over 18,000 plants to almost three acres of land. Not only did it help preserve an activity that was so important to the Dry Creek Pomo who lived in the area, but it also had other benefits including educating the public on the unique plant resources of the area and the traditional Native American uses of those plants. The project also influenced the Army Corps of Engineers to reconsider their water intensive land management practices in light of Native American plant uses and management strategies that were more conducive to periods of drought. In the end, Lake Sonoma flooded and destroyed the parent sedge beds; however the culturally significant materials continued to be utilized because of the sedge transplant.

Sources:

Peri, David W., Scott Patterson, Jennie L. Goodrich, Richard Lerner, 1982, *Ethnobotanical Mitigation: Warm Springs Dam-Lake Sonoma California*.

Stewart, Suzanne B., 1985, *Time Before Time: Prehistory and Archaeology in the Lake Sonoma Area*.





Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Visitors pose at Skaggs Springs Resort*

## Skaggs Springs Resort

*Russian River Flag, October 28, 1869*

*This popular resort for invalids and pleasure seekers is located in Sonoma County, fourteen miles northwest of Healdsburg.*

On last Friday, we were condescending enough to accept a seat in a carriage with Mr. E.A. Kent of New York City, and off we started for the Springs. The first mile of our route was due north on the road to the Geysers; then we turned west passing the splendid farms of Jas. Miller and I.C. Laymance, where we struck Dry Creek valley. We followed its meanderings, in a northwesterly direction, now on the level, smooth and hard road, now crawling up and sliding down the edges of the hills that formed the sloping sides of the valley – still passing fine farms and many good farm houses. A.M. Green lives half a mile to the west of the road. “Uncle Johnny” Peck five, and D.D. Phillips eight miles from town, and they all have rich, productive land, and are doing well.

On our route we passed two temples of education. As these are a type of country school

houses in general, it might be well to describe one for the benefit of our Eastern friends as well as for the coming school boy: it is about thirty feet long by twenty feet wide. The construction is very simple; rough redwood lumber forming the sides, floor, roof, sills and everything but the windows. The benches inside are of the same dark wood. All the wood work of the establishment, unlike the city belles, is innocent of paint. Everything is coarse and unforbidding; the grounds are not even fenced. No rude hand has decorated them by planting trees – that’s an innovation never practiced or encouraged, to our knowledge, in the rural districts – and we need hardly except the towns. It’s true, nature often adorns the grounds with beautiful firs, oaks, manzanitas, and madronas, but she is left to work unaided...

Eleven miles from Healdsburg we cross Dry Creek, which at this point and at this season of the



year, is entitled to its name, as it is perfectly dry, but is a fine running stream eight miles further down. Bending around to the left we follow up Hot Springs Creek, leaving the comparatively level ground for a winding, hilly and picturesque road. At times we are fifty feet above the creek on the edge of the precipitous bank; the scenery growing more wild and beautiful as we continue up the creek. Redwood trees and mountain live oaks are found at intervals. We are soon in sight of the hotel at the Springs, which nestles cozily at the base of lofty hills. The location is charming.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Resort guests dipping mineral water at covered well.*

On entering the bar-room of the hotel we noticed the wreck of a lamp that had been hanging over the counter. Being thirsty we made for the pitcher and gulped down half a glass of a fluid, which from its appearance, we took to be mineral water. From its hideous taste we knew it was mineral water – the tincture of stone coal. The pitcher had caught a liberal sprinkling of the lamp’s contents. Editors are supposed now and then to have a fondness for “benzine” but kerosene can never become a popular beverage – at least with us. We taste that abominable coal oil yet, and are afraid to blow a candle out for fear of taking fire ourself.

The hotel is a neat two-story building and is, of course, the Head Quarters. About a hundred yards up the creek are several cottages containing sixteen suites of rooms that can be used either for single persons or for families. Eighty guests can be comfortably accommodated, but one hundred can be squeezed in, as they were this summer. The Springs has had a large run of customers this season and the place is becoming more popular every year.

The bath houses are nine in number, and the visitor can take his choice of baths – torrid or frigid. All the water used in the baths is from the same source; some is cooled by passing in troughs through the open air. Each bath house has its cold and hot water, any desirable degree of heat or cold can be obtained by mixing the waters. There are two springs. The upper one affording very hot water is much used for rheumatic diseases. Mr. J.P. Williams of Gualala was afflicted for three years with a contraction of the cords and muscles of his legs, making him an object of pity. He came to the Springs last June, stayed five weeks, and departed, joyously, completely cured. We could multiply instances, but our space forbids. The other spring is very large and really consists of a dozen different springs. They all contain sulphur and iron.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Iron well at Skaggs Springs.*

The hack leaves Healdsburg daily; fare \$2 each way. Board at hotel (including all charges) is \$10 a week; or \$2 a day for transient visitors. Mr. John Leonard is the popular landlord, and spares no pains to make everyone feel at home. Plain and unassuming in his manners, he is well calculated to please all. Freedom Leonard, his son, is a great hunter and keeps the table well supplied with venison. This season he has killed over sixty deer. The day before our visit he brought in three fine bucks.

After enjoying a hot bath and a huge dinner, we started home well pleased with our trip.





Source: Gary Wilson

*Cottage at Strawberry Ranch*

## **The Strawberry Ranch** *aka “Dinner at The Frenchman’s”* by Gary Wilson, 2015

Pierre and Lucie Bourdens were married in Santa Clara Court on May 18, 1875. Both were from Bordeaux, France.



Source: Gary Wilson

*Pierre and Lucie Bourdens*

Daughter Emelie was born in South San Francisco. Daughter Anna, and son Frank were born on the Ranch.

In fall of 1880, Pierre and Lucie exchanged a piece of land in South San Francisco for the Ranch and a semi-reclusive lifestyle in the hills. The house and barns were already in place. The property was located about two miles southeast of Skaggs Springs Resort. Access was via a very crude wagon trail leading away from the resort. Their travels were mainly limited to Geyserville or an occasional few days to the coast via horse and buggy when low tides were anticipated.

They started out raising chickens and selling eggs to the Resort restaurant. The chicken manure was placed in barrels and rain water ran into them. The overflow was used to raise strawberries which they started serving (covered in cream from their cows) to the resort vacationers who were willing to traverse the two mile trail to their ranch.

Thus, the name “The Strawberry Ranch.”

They also raised and processed their own chickens. Baby chicks were delivered by rail to Geyserville.



Lucie Bourdens was said to be an excellent French cook. She started serving “French Chicken Dinners” to patrons from Skaggs Springs. The chicken was stuffed with homemade bread stuffing, browned, and simmered in sour cream from their cows and white wine from their vineyards. Seasonings for the meals came from their gardens. It became so popular that a single copper wire was installed over the hills between the office of the Skaggs Springs Resort and the Bourdens’ kitchen. In the morning a magneto was wound in the office that rang a bell in their kitchen. Eight rings meant to expect eight people for dinner.

Lucie and Anna would go about preparing dinner - choosing and processing the chickens, on occasion locating local game to serve. Lucie prepared a very elaborate dinner table for her patrons -- white tablecloth, fine crystal, porcelain china, and sterling silverware -- only the best. Lucie also imported key items from their home country with the assistance of family members still living there. A kerosene lamp was hung in a limb of the oak tree. Underneath was the dining table.



Source: Gary Wilson

*Anna Bourdens harvesting prunes*

Anna was the “pioneer hunter.” She would ride her horse clear to the coast and harvest seafood from Stewarts Point to Black Point (now Sea Ranch.) Emil Sioli (a grandson of Pierre and Lucie) remembered camping with Anna at Black Point, gathering mussels and drying seafood by the smoke from wood campfires with her. She also excelled at fishing. The streams surrounding the Ranch gave her

an easy way to find a quick meal as fish were plentiful in that period.

Pierre, Anna and Frank maintained their extensive orchards and vegetable gardens. Pierre also had vineyards and made his own wine which was served at the dinners.



Source: Gary Wilson

*On the road to Strawberry Ranch*

The Ranch became the excursion to attend when visiting the Resort. The views to the east were said to be spectacular. The Bourdens family placed a bulletin board on the oak tree trunk where people left their business cards. Over the years, there were numerous newspaper articles published about their hospitality. The Mayor of San Francisco and his brother dined here. It is believed they are in the “table picture,” (pictured below) which was taken by a San Francisco newspaper reporter who accompanied them. In that era many in the Bay Area claimed that the first pairing of fine California wines and French foods in California began here.



Source: Gary Wilson

*Bulletin board on tree and guests at Strawberry Ranch, including San Francisco Mayor James Phelan, c. 1897.*



Over the years the Ranch was also known as "The Frenchman's" because of their Bordeaux, France ancestry. Both Lucie and Pierre were 100% French.

After Pierre and Lucie died, Anna maintained the restaurant and upkeep of the working ranch, along with the assistance of her brother. Frank married a Cloverdale native, Myra, and all three continued the same operation.

Sister Emelie married Victor Sioli in approximately 1893. They lived on a ranch about three miles southeast. Occasionally Lucie's young grandson, Emil Sioli, would ride his horse over the mountains to stay with them; his parents never knowing if he arrived safely or when to expect him back!

Lucie's brother was a manufacturer of Surry carriages in New York. Geyserville General Store owner, Obed Bosworth, told the family that he would ship the Bourdens family custom made carriages by railroad. They were very elaborate.

In 1925, the three siblings decided to sell the Ranch. Anna moved to Petaluma and purchased a home, car, and learned to drive! Frank and his wife, Myra, purchased a small ranch on upper West Dry Creek Road. Emelie moved into Healdsburg, and became a live-in housekeeper for a Petaluma couple.

With the exception of Emelie, all of the Bourdens are buried together in a family plot at Olive Hill Cemetery outside of Geyserville.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*View toward Mt. St. Helena from Frenchman's Hill, Strawberry Ranch*

## **Bourdens' Strawberry Ranch Near Skaggs Springs**

*Finest of French Dinners Served by Mme. Bourdens*

*excerpt from Healdsburg Tribune, July 15, 1897*

For grand, romantic scenery and genuine, open-hearted hospitality pay a visit to the Strawberry Ranch, and you will long remember it. This picturesque resort is located in the mountains about 16 miles from Healdsburg and 3 miles from Skaggs Springs. The first 8 or 10 miles pass through the beautiful Dry Creek Valley, a wonderfully fertile section. Next, the way leads up through a narrow and precipitous canyon, climbing through the forests of stately redwood and spruce. Under overhanging oaks the shade is delightfully cool although it is a hot

day in the valley.

One of the principal attractions is Madame Bourdens' chicken dinners; few country resorts can equal her. Everything served at these famous dinners is produced on the Ranch: oranges, peaches, cherries, apples, pears, figs, berries are grown to perfection. They make and bottle their own wines and the feast is presented to please the most fastidious epicure. And from this romantic spot a sweep of horizon 50 miles in extent is spread to view.





Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Healdsburg bicycle club, "Healdsburg Wheelmen," pictured on West Street (Healdsburg Avenue), 1895.*

## Healdsburg Wheelmen Prepare for a Bicycle Ride to Skaggs Springs

*excerpt from the Healdsburg Tribune, September 26, 1895*

Sunday the weather could not have been more favorable for the second club run of the Healdsburg Wheelmen and their trip to Skaggs' Springs, after the pace set by Captain A.W. Garrett, was more of leisure than a test of speed. Exclusive of three or four Windsor cyclers the following named men left this city [Healdsburg] at 10 o'clock and arrived at their destination an hour and forty minutes later: J.H. Gunn, Fred Cashin, Ben H. and Will Barnes, Hubbard and Robert Thornton, Fred Merchant, Albert Bloch, John Reid, Quim Sewell, Harvey Fuller, Will Moore, W.H. Lowry, Lou Stewart, Ed Hamilton, George Bell, Julius Fried, Abner Starks, and Taz Alley.

On the road the boys gathered upon themselves a liberal quantity of dust belonging to the country. However, they soon got rid of it after their arrival at the resort, for they all took a plunge in the large bath-house tank. After this was done they were handsomely and hospitably entertained by the host

and everything was at their disposal. The lunch, which was prepared expressly for the club, was excellent and the boys, with their groaning appetites, discussed it until there was nothing left to discuss. For a few hours they enjoyed various outdoor amusements and then started on their return.

Julius Fried left the party to go by the way of Geyserville to Healdsburg. Just why he did so is not authentically known, but by reason of recent observations it is not hard to guess and it has been conjectured that there was a pair of bloomers containing a bewitching damsel in that direction which was awaiting him.

At Will Lambert's farm the "biking" party stopped to make a raid on a tempting patch of watermelons. The enormity of their appetites was again demonstrated by their devouring thirst of the biggest specimens in the field. This performance lasted a short time and at dusk the second outing of the Healdsburg Wheelmen's Club was finished.





Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Trout Stream, Skaggs Hot Springs, c.1902*

*“The climate is all that can be desired;  
The scenery is most picturesque;  
There are but nine miles by stage;  
The best natural bath in the state;  
There are tub and plunge hot mineral baths;  
Fresh water boating and bathing;  
Hunting in the vicinity is good;  
There are few better trout streams.”*

## A 1902 Artifact in Review

*by Jane Bonham, 2015*

When I was young, the influx of summer folk to the river beaches, cabins and many attractions around Fitch Mountain seemed an exotic seasonal migration, somewhat like the annual return of the Monarch butterflies to the south of us -- not really a part of the natural order of Healdsburg life. In later years, my mother would fume angrily every time we passed the highway sign proclaiming Healdsburg to be “the best kept little secret.” She wished that the quiet little town would remain out of the limelight

What a surprise for me, then, to learn that this area has had a long and intimate relationship with tourist trade! Assisting with research for the exhibit, “Lake Sonoma: Before and After,” I worked with a 1902 brochure that provides a wonderful picture of Dry Creek Valley’s Skaggs Springs Resort.

One of the earliest resorts in this area, it began operating in the 1860s. With the help of the new railroad to Healdsburg, by the late 1870s the

hotel played host to as many as 300 invalids and vacationers on a good day. Most of them were from San Francisco or city centers in Marin and Sonoma Counties.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Crossing a stream to the resort*

“Within four and one half hours after leaving San Francisco, you are landed at the Springs, with but



nine mile of staging, which, by the way, you will pronounce the most delightful part of the journey. If there is a pretty bit of stage road on the Coast, it is from Geyserville up the Russian River Valley, thence westerly over rolling hills and through Nature's groves to the Dry Creek Canon, and then through the canon to the Springs."



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Guests relaxing on the front porch of the resort*

Once at the resort, guests could pursue a wide number of activities, both relaxed and energetic.

Of course, the central feature for the Resort was the natural hot springs, now flooded by Lake Sonoma. The brochure includes an analysis of the mineral content of the water, which was made by Eugene W. Hilgard, Professor of Agricultural Chemistry at the University of California.

These included: chloride of potassium, sulphate of potassium, chloride of sodium, iodide of sodium, bi carbonate of sodium, bi borate of sodium (Borax), carbonates of lithium, barium strontium, calcium, magnesium and iron, along with alumina and silica.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Boating at Skaggs Springs Resort*



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Guests playing tennis*

The brochure further claims "The diseases for which these waters have been particularly celebrated are rheumatism, rheumatic gout, lumbago, sciatica, neuralgia, bronchitis, asthma, catarrh, throat affections (sic), diseases of the bladder and kidneys and stomach troubles.

"In addition to the fine climate, grand scenery, great medical merit of the waters, luxurious baths and picturesque walks and drives, the fact that the Springs are so accessible to residents of San Francisco and other portions of the State will insure their permanent popularity as a health and pleasure resort."

And to support that statement, a picture of contented visitors posed on the resort front porch is featured in the brochure.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Guests posed on the front porch of the resort*





Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection  
*Milton Brandt, February 1962.*

## Water-bearing in the Stars for Brandt

*by Guion M. Kovner*

*reprint from Healdsburg Tribune, April 12, 1979*

Frederick Milton Brandt is an Aquarius, born under the sign of the water bearer.

For the past five years, he has been standard bearer for the largest water project in Sonoma County -- the \$240 million Warm Springs Dam.

But one need not look to the stars to see why Milt Brandt supports the idea of storing 124 billion gallons of water behind an earthen barrier at the west end of Dry Creek Valley.

Born in 1923, the year of a drought that devastated crops throughout the county, Brandt was raised amid the ravages of water -- too much and too little -- in the Dry Creek Russian River region.

He remembers the big flood of 1937, when water in lower Dry Creek Valley reached the fifth layer of sacked and dried prunes in a warehouse. The clean-up involved washing the silt out of 300-400 tons of prunes and re-drying them.

"This is the thing that impresses you when you see water running wild," Brandt says, "You figure it's kind of foolish to have it happen."

From his father, young Milt learned the advantages of controlling water for agricultural use.

Frederick John Brandt, the son of a German immigrant who came to Healdsburg in 1887, was an inventive man.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection  
*Healdsburg flood, 1937.*

The elder Brandt bought 27 acres of the Bailhache estate in 1906, land Milt has lived on nearly all of his 56 years. Following the 1923-24



drought, his father installed the first underground irrigation system in the county in his prune orchard. For water, Frederick Brandt obtained one of the first diversion permits issued by the state on the Russian River.

Contemporaries "pooh-poohed the irrigation idea." Brandt says, "but my dad felt you couldn't grow anything without irrigation.

When Milt began raising prunes himself on a 40 acre ranch in Dry Creek Valley in the 1940s, he put the third diversion permit issued for Dry Creek to irrigate his orchard. But it was no defense against high water.

"Every time we had flooding" Brandt recalls, "we ended up with an orchard full of silt and driftwood."

### **Nary a Negative Word**

Farmers throughout the Dry Creek Valley shared the problem. They talked about a dam on the creek as far back as 1946. Brandt recalls nary a negative word was said in those days.

After World War II -- during which Milt loaded bombs and ammunition on Navy warplanes in the South Pacific -- the flood hazard got worse. Human greed, rather than rainfall was the culprit.

Prune prices soared upwards in the postwar boom, giving farmers in Dry Creek Valley and beyond the incentive to expand their orchards. Some of them did so by knocking down the willows and cottonwoods that formed natural protective barriers along the creek bed.

When floodwaters subsequently arose, trees that once helped slow down the fast water were gone. Acres of unprotected orchard were washed downstream.

"It was greed and short-sightedness" Brandt says bluntly "a lot of the farmers overdid it." But the unavoidable solution, he says, was to build a dam. "People aren't going to give back their property to willows."

Coyote Dam and Warm Springs Dam were originally supposed to be built at the same time, Brandt says. More political power was pushing for Coyote, so the Russian River Dam was installed first. Warm Springs finally won Congressional authorization in 1962, but the Vietnam War delayed its construction.

Still, there were no naysayers, Brandt contends. No referendum was held to get Warm Springs started because "it would have been a landslide."

Then in the late 1960s, Congress approved the National Environmental Policy Act, the law that created environmental impact statements or EIS. Intended to provide a channel of information to Congress on federal projects, Brandt says the EIS became a legal monkey wrench for people who opposed those projects.

The Warm Springs Task Force was a group of such people and in 1974 its legal challenge halted work on the dam. Taking advantage of the delay, the Task Force successfully petitioned for a countywide vote on the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers project.

### **Support Group's Start**

In July 1974, a group of Healdsburg ranchers and businessmen gathered for lunch to discuss the situation. "We realized that no one had come out on the pro-side for the dam," Brandt recalls. Thus was born the Citizens for Community Improvement (CCI), adversary of the Warm Springs Task Force. And here, Milt Brandt made a mistake that dramatically altered his life.

He was about 15 minutes late for another lunch with the founders of CCI and when he arrived, he found that he had been elected chairman.

At first the job did not seem too bad. CCI's sole purpose was to secure a "yes" vote on the dam in November. "I could see a few months of hard work," Brandt recalls. "That was my fateful decision."

The dam won by a 54.3 to 48.7 percent margin, but the Task Force kept right on fighting. So did CCI. And as the summer of 1979 approaches, Milt Brandt finds himself back where he was five years ago, facing the prospect of a countywide referendum on the Warm Springs Dam.

Meanwhile, he had poured time and money into the pro-dam campaign, made dozens of public appearances, attended countless hearings and spent up to three hours straight on the CCI telephone line in his office.

### **A Bummer**

Asked how he feels about the CCI responsibility, Milt Brandt says flatly. "This has been a bummer."



"I've sacrificed a lot to stay involved, he adds. The time CCI has taken away from his insurance business has hurt. If not for his sons, John and Joseph, working in the insurance office, Brandt says he would have been forced to give up the CCI chair.

Nothing aggravates him more, he says, than the accusation occasionally that he supports the dam because it will mean more profit for his business.

Yes, he has gained clients because of his public role in the controversy, and he has lost some too. "I had a nice letter from a Humboldt State student telling me I was completely haywire and I was ruining the country. Shortly afterwards, his parents canceled their policy."

To the argument that his business will benefit from growth the dam will bring to the Healdsburg areas, Brandt says growth will roll in regardless of what happens to the project.

"Would he do it all over again?" Definitely not. "I'd like to get out of it tomorrow," Brandt says. "But it's not in the nature of a man raised by a stern German taskmaster."

"I'll see the thing through. I'm not the type to back off in the middle of the stream."

And Milt Brandt is no stranger to hardship.

Family roots go way back. His mother's family, the Lamberts, came to Dry Creek Valley around 1850. Charles Lee Lambert, his great-grandfather, was one of the first white settlers in the area.

The land Brandt briefly owned in Dry Creek Valley was part of the old Lambert holdings.

Brandt and three of his four children still live at the "Brandt Commune," nine acres on Bailhache Avenue that were part of his father's prune ranch. Brandt's house sits on a knoll overlooking the Russian River, the original home site of Captain Henry Fitch.

As a young man, Brandt took over his father's orchard and commercial farming operations. He also established a cattle ranch in Alexander Valley and in the off-season operated his bulldozer in construction jobs.

In July 1953, Brandt was bulldozing a couple of farm dams near Gualala. One day he got a headache and three days later he was lying in an iron lung unable to move more than his right arm.

Brandt's recovery from polio was a battle. It took two years of therapy to get back on his feet, and today Brandt gets around with braces on both legs and crutches.

At that Brandt says he is lucky because other polio victims never walked again. Selling off his farm buildings, Brandt went to work in the Young and Engelke construction company in Healdsburg. He later became a partner in Young-Engelke, then in 1962 he decided to start an independent insurance firm on his own. Getting business was an "uphill grind," Brandt says, "Especially when you couldn't get out and run after it."

Today Milt Brandt General Insurance is one of the larger agencies in the county. His office at the corner of Healdsburg Avenue and Matheson Street is a community fixture. So is Milt Brandt who managed a host of community projects before tackling the dam campaign.

He has no plans for retirement. "You gotta have money to retire," Brandt says. Polio and switching to the insurance business were both major financial setbacks. "I wouldn't do that again, I'll tell you that," he says of the career change.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection  
*Milt (left) and wife Mary (third from left) Brandt meet Dr. Jonas Salk (right).*

In the fight with polio, Brandt says he applied the same philosophy he had on shell-torn islands in the Pacific during World War II.

"It never entered my mind that I wasn't going to make it."





Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection  
*Gail Jonas, 1966.*

## **Gail and the Dam: Mutually Devastating** *She delayed it; it broke up her marriage*

*by Guion M. Kovner*

*reprint from Healdsburg Tribune, April 19, 1979*

But for Gail Jonas, the Warm Springs Dam might have been completed on schedule.

But for the Warm Springs Dam, Gail Jonas might still be a Healdsburg housewife and mother.

Since 1972, when she instigated the Warm Springs Task Force's protracted battle with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jonas and the dam have had a mutually devastating relationship.

Today, the \$240 million project to create a 3,600-acre lake at the west end of Dry Creek Valley is roughly half complete and may face its second countywide referendum in five years.

And Jonas, who turns 39 tomorrow (Friday), has watched her marriage disintegrate, become an attorney and remarried. From the turmoil of her political and personal life, she has emerged as "a whole new human being," she says.

"I don't think it was the dam, it was me," she says in a candid discussion of her divorce. "My singlemindedness over the things I do."

Jonas has learned to be more perceptive of other people's needs. "I've developed some qualities

I lacked before," she says, "plus I learned that democracy works. A group of people can do something everyone says you can't do."

As the Warm Springs Dam battle picks up again with a petition campaign for a second referendum, Jonas remains involved, but not as a leader.

"I decided in my mind that the price would be too high," she says. Too high for the clients in her legal practice; for her new husband, Terry Cole; and for her sons, Jeff, 15, and Rody, 13, who live half the time with her and Terry and half with her ex-husband, Ron Jonas.

Attorney Jonas' clients include people who support the dam. "They come to me because they know I'm a fighter," she says.

The fight that altered Gail Jonas' life dates back to a sunny day in February 1966, when Ron and Gail Jonas drove north on Highway 101 looking for a place to start Ron's dental practice and to raise their family. It was an idyllic day — puffy clouds in the sky, winter greenery highlighted by mustard in



yellow bloom. They took the Healdsburg Avenue exit, and Gail instinctively knew she had found the place she wanted to call home.

Ron established his practice and the Jonases settled into rural residential tranquility in Dry Creek Valley. Their sons both reached school age, and things might have remained peaceful had the role of an artsy-craftsy housewife satisfied Gail Jonas.

### Getting Involved

But dabbling with paints and needlepoint failed to quench her thirst for having “a lot of people in my life.” So Gail Jonas got involved in politics.

Her first joust was not with the Warm Springs Dam, but rather the plan to develop the Healdsburg peninsula (near Magnolia and Kinley Drives.) Toward that end, the city had amended its general plan, extended a sewer line west of Highway 101 and annexed 50 of the 500 acres scheduled for development which would ultimately double the population of Healdsburg.

Jonas helped organize the Committee to Save the Healdsburg Peninsula, which launched a petition drive to put the proposed development to a citywide referendum. The City Council dropped its plan for the peninsula, but Gail Jonas was just hatching her plans.

### A Man's World

Her role in Healdsburg's first major environmental battle was not popular. Threats of violence were “incredible,” she says, but perhaps worse were the problems she encountered as a housewife entering the male-dominated forum of public affairs.

On one occasion, a City Council member turned his back and refused to listen to her, Jonas remembers. Becoming a lawyer would change that, she decided.

Meanwhile, the dam moved to the center of her attention. Jonas admits to a knee-jerk opposition to the Warm Springs project, but says her first step was to reinforce that with research. From landowners who had lost condemnation battles with the Corps of Engineers Jonas collected complete documentation of the project's beginnings.

Poring over the dam papers in her leisure hours, Jonas was struck by several facts: the Corps' contract with the Sonoma County Water Agency

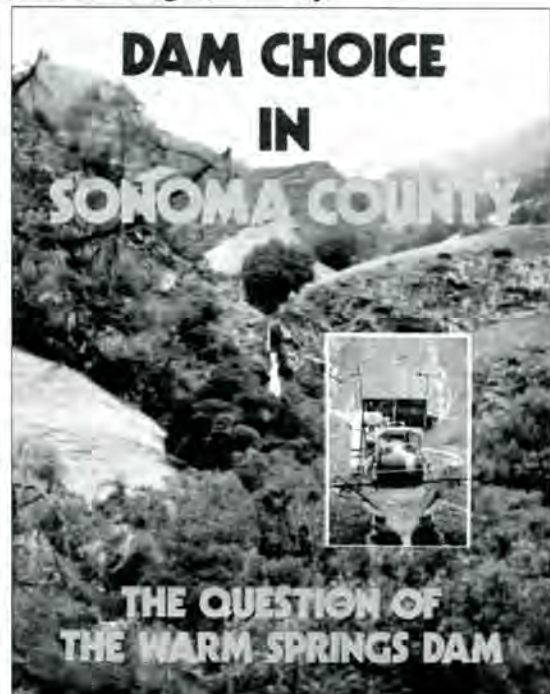
stipulated that water from the dam was almost exclusively for municipal consumption; only farmers downstream from it could use the water for agricultural purposes.

Second: The Lake Sonoma reservoir would hold enough water to supply the annual needs of more than 500,000 new residents in Sonoma County.

She concluded that the dam was the brainchild of “a group of people who wanted a water supply to urbanize the county.” Jonas adds that she was “appalled” by that prospect.

That concern was translated into action by a fateful note Jonas received from the veteran conservationist Richard May of Cal Trout following an informal meeting with Corps officials in 1972. May's note said that if the Corps awarded an outlet contract on the dam — as it planned to do within a week, Corps officials had mentioned during the meeting — then opposition to the project was doomed.

The Corps had not done an environmental impact statement (EIS), as required by the national environmental Policy Act of 1970, and “had no intention of doing it,” she says.



Source: Gail Jonas

*Anti-dam publication by Warm Springs Task Force, 1974.*

Jonas hastily contacted the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) in Berkeley, and at a subsequent meeting with an EDF attorney, May and Jonas, top



Corps officials promised to do an EIS and withhold the outlet contract.

### Law School

In late 1972, the Corps began the EIS and Jonas applied to only one law school — Hastings, part of the University of California in San Francisco. She got in. But by the time she started school in August 1973, Jonas had been named co-chair of the Warm Springs Task Force, organized to prepare a response to the Corps' EIS.

Jonas coordinated the Task Force's 80-page response, which raised questions of mercury contamination of the dam reservoir, contended that erosion of the Dry Creek Valley watershed would fill the reservoir with silt in 50 years, and charged that the EIS was inadequate.

The Federal Council on Environmental Quality agreed that the EIS was inadequate in early 1974, but the Corps said it could proceed with the project nonetheless. The Task Force appealed to Jonas — then in the midst of her first year of law school — to organize the legal battle to block the dam.

Most of the rest is history. The three-week trial in federal court (coinciding with law school final exams at Hastings); the appeal to former Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas; his subsequent order halting the project; the Task Force's campaign first to establish and then to support a countywide referendum on the dam in November 1974.

How Gail Jonas, on top of it all, also managed to complete one year of law school and start the next one is another story. It had an unhappy ending.

At the height of the referendum campaign, Jonas attended law school classes by day in San Francisco and returned to Sonoma Country to countless dam debates in the evenings. She left home around 5 a.m. to beat the morning rush back to the City. Her role as wife and mother had reduced to "appearances" at home, she says.

Ron Jonas, who was working long days to build up his dental practice, remained a silent supporter — or so his wife thought at the time.

"I understand now what was on his mind: "If she loves me, why can't she see that she's making me miserable," Jonas says. She also comprehends, in retrospect, how her over-commitment to a cause destroyed their love and disrupted their family.

"Life in a family is like a boat with two oars," she says. "Both people have to row. When a person gets involved in a cause, you tend to put your oar down. I don't care how noble a cause is, I know now you can't do that."

On Valentine's Day in 1975, Jonas says she was riding home on the bus with a friend when she realized she was no longer "married to my sweetheart."

Ron and Gail Jonas separated that month. They still talk, and Gail says she admires the way he reacted to their break-up.

Gail dropped out of the dam battle completely and concentrated on law school. In May 1976, she finished school and returned to Healdsburg to study for the Bar exam. During that time she learned to ride a skateboard and lived by herself "for the first time in my life" at her Brown Street house.

The Bar exam came up in February 1977, and afterwards Gail took a one-week trip to Hawaii, opened her law office at home and took a part-time job as baker at the Cloverdale Inn. During this time, she met Terry, a carpenter who is now 27. They got married last October, celebrating the event with a softball game in which his team beat hers by one run.

When the old dam issue reared up in her new life, Gail offered to fix lunch at her house and conduct business on the lawn. Environmentalists "should spend as much time as possible outside," she says.

Thus in two Sunday afternoon meetings in March was born Taxpayers Organized Against the Dam, or TOAD, and the plans to petition for a second referendum on the dam. (The 1974 vote favored the dam by a 51.3 to 48.7 percent margin.)

TOAD needed leaders, but Jonas did not volunteer. Other people did.

Gail Jonas says she has no regrets. She went to law school to gain clout for political battles, not to depend on it for a living. Now as a breadwinner, she relishes the challenge of practicing law without compromising her integrity.

Lawyers are a "fascinating breed" whose habits include letting their clients lie in court and collecting fees to file papers in cases they know are hopeless, she says. Jonas intends to build her legal reputation by "caring about the people I represent."

As for the dam, she says: "I still believe the project is a disaster and shouldn't be built."





Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

*Don Clausen*

## **Remarks of Congressman Don H. Clausen at Groundbreaking Ceremonies for Warm Springs Dam, August 20, 1967**

*Representative Don Clausen of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District served the North Coast from 1963-1983. Among his many career endeavors, Clausen was a member of the Water Resources Subcommittee and an avid proponent of the Warm Springs Dam. Clausen not only lobbied for the building of the dam, but also procured funding for the \$330 million dam and \$10 million fish hatchery.*

*The Press Democrat noted that the dedication of the dam was especially important to Clausen because the beginning of his career in the House coincided with the infancy of the Warm Springs Dam, and the end of his career in the House was marked by the dedication of the Dam. In recognition of Clausen's contributions to this massive project, the Warm Springs Fish Hatchery was named after him.*

It is a great pleasure and, indeed, a privilege for me to be able to be here today and participate in groundbreaking ceremonies for Warm Springs Dam — another great milestone in flood control here along our North Coast of California.

As the ranking minority member on the Subcommittee on Flood Control in the House Public Works Committee, I am keenly aware of the work and time that is required to reach this all-important

point of any major public works project. As most of you know, the original resolution for the dam that we are starting here today was introduced by my predecessor — Congressman Hubert Scudder and the authorization of the project was obtained by Congressman Miller. I believe that these ceremonies today should properly serve as a great tribute to their efforts in the service of their country. We are all deeply indebted to them for their efforts.



The principal burden for obtaining the federal appropriations has been placed on my shoulders, shared, of course, with President Johnson, Senator Kuchel and Senator Murphy. I hasten to add, however, and I'm sure everyone would agree, that the construction of Warm Springs Dam, or any major public works project for that matter, is never the result of any one man's efforts. The building of a dam is complex business requiring team work — whether it is being debated in the halls of Congress or under construction here in Sonoma County.

At this point, I want to remind the people of Sonoma County of the exceptional teamwork and the fantastic cooperation we've had from so many people — almost too many to mention, for fear of leaving someone out.

To name a few — your very responsive members of the Board of Supervisors, who adopted the original resolution agreeing to assume the local sponsorship requirements — the Mayors, City Council members and civic leaders of Healdsburg, Cloverdale, Sebastopol, Guerneville, etc. — the property owners affected — the engineering staffs of the County, State and Corps of Engineers — the Eel River Association — Bob Moir, California State Chamber of Commerce — the California Water Commission — the neighboring County of Marin — Governors Brown and Reagan — Senator Joe Rattigan and Assemblyman Bill Bagley, and now Senator Collier and Assemblyman Delotti. And, most important of all, Mr. and Mrs. John C. Taxpayer.

I particularly want to express publicly my appreciation to the late Senator Clair Engle, Senator Kuchel and Senator Murphy for upholding our interests as the legislative process moved our projects through the Senate. Both Senators Kuchel and Murphy express their regrets in not being here today.

Here in the "Backyard of a Big City" we are witnessing what will soon become an "Investment in America." The impact this dam and its associated activities will have on Sonoma County and our entire North Coast region cannot now be fully calculated in dollars and cents. I SUBMIT, HOWEVER, THAT WARM SPRINGS DAM CAN AND WILL DO MORE FOR THE ECONOMIC EXPANSION OF SONOMA COUNTY THAN ALL OF THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

## PROGRAMS COMBINED WHICH HAVE THUS FAR BEEN IMPLEMENTED HERE.

The primary purpose of this Dam, of course, is to furnish much needed flood control protection for the Russian River area and the communities of Sebastopol and Guerneville. I need not recount for you the repeated destruction and devastation nature had heaped on this area. Nor need I remind you of the effect those floods had on the residents and businessmen in the areas which were hardest hit.

In addition to giving us long overdue flood relief, this Dam, in many respects, will have the effect of a major new industry coming into the area. It promises new jobs and opportunities for increased participation by existing business and industrial firms.

This Dam will ensure a guaranteed water supply for agricultural commercial, industrial and home use which, in many sections of the Nation, is considered a precious commodity today.

It will broaden the tax base in Sonoma County at a time when tax relief of any kind sees only a "far cry in the wilderness."

The Warm Springs Dam project will enhance real estate opportunities in this area and open up new horizons for home building.

It will make possible new opportunities for recreation never before dreamed of in Sonoma County — which has been blessed in so many ways.

And, in addition, it will expand existing educational opportunities by providing areas for research and field trips, and your educational institutions are already exploring these possibilities

While all of us like to be remembered for our efforts, and we wouldn't be human if we didn't admit it, I will state here and now — if and when we complete the vast water resource projects now underway on the North Coast, I just hope you will remember me as a "builder."

I am dedicated to the purpose of "building the North Coast," in cooperation with all of you, to its full potential, in the most orderly manner possible.

In closing, it is my fondest hope that Warm Springs Dam will long serve all the people of Sonoma County in the same spirit as we have presented it here today — as an "Investment in America!"

Thank you very much.



# Yellow Roses Trailing in the Water

by Dave Henderson, May 15, 2015

Bob ("Duke") Snyder, uncle by marriage to Healdsburg residents Dave and Matt Henderson, worked with the Army Corps of Engineers on the Warm Springs Dam construction project and later created a beautiful ritual on its waters long after the filling of the lake.

Snyder, a proud ex-Marine hailing from Pennsylvania, traveled extensively about the country with his wife Pauline (Polly). They finally settled down in Cloverdale, close to Polly's sister's family, Harold and Vivienne Henderson and their nine sons, in Ukiah.

While the dam was under construction, but not yet filled, Bob & Polly would go for long walks in the soon-to-disappear countryside, including picnics at a favorite rock not too far from the present Cloverdale boat ramp. When Polly died in 2008, Snyder took her ashes, sailed out to the waters over the picnic rock, and lovingly let them drift downward, in contravention perhaps of man-made laws, but following those of the heart.

Nor was that the end, since every year thereafter, he would rent a party-boat at the dock, putter out to the same hallowed spot, and silently drop a bouquet of yellow roses, slowly, one by one, that gently trailed in the placid water above the rock. In what became a family tradition, many of his Henderson nephews and their wives would join him every year, with Snyder firmly at the wheel, all enthusiastically enjoying the local wines and foods that he and Polly had enjoyed those many years before down beside the rock.

Bob Snyder died in Ukiah, in 2014 at the age of 85, and his family was deeply touched when members of the Army Corps of Engineers from the dam showed up at his funeral.

The story has not yet concluded, though, since there will be a final cruise to bring ... yellow roses (or something else, perhaps) to his beloved wife, just above the rock.



Third Class

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

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

NON PROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE PAID  
HEALDSBURG, CA  
PERMIT 149