



THE

ELECTROLIER

Illuminating St. Helena's History

A Publication of the St. Helena Historical Society

Winter 2011, Volume 9, Number 4



St. Helena Historical Society Membership Holiday Party

Tuesday, December 6th, 6:00–8:30 p.m.

Sunny Acres, 397 Main Street, St. Helena

Wine, appetizers & desserts provided; bring wine to share, if you like

Please RSVP by December 2nd with name & number in party
by emailing susanne@salvestrinwinery.com or calling SHHS at 967-5502

ChurchClipart.net

FOOTPRINTS IN TIME

Up-Valley Holiday Feasting in the 1880s

BY ROBYN ORSINI

In the early 1870s, Lillie Hitchcock Coit, separated for life from her philandering husband, Howard Coit, settled at the ranch she called Larkmead, located on Larkmead Lane near the Silverado Trail. Her parents, Charles and Martha Hitchcock, lived close by at a ranch called Lonely, situated along Ritchie Creek in the forested hills to the west of St. Helena Highway.

Martha kept a running record of life in the Upper Napa Valley with daily journal entries. Drew Sparks and Sally Kellman drew on the journals to compile *A Salon at Larkmead: A Charmed Life in the Napa Valley* (Ten Speed Press, 2000). The text is also sprinkled with recipes from Lillie's *Recipe Book*, written circa 1870–1880 (housed in the Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley). The book's photos and text convey a sense of what ranch life was like in the late 19th century, and there was food aplenty!

According to her mother, Lillie led "a charmed life"; Larkmead was often filled with guests, and parties lasted for days. Holidays were no exception. The following quotations are from holiday and Christmas times occurring between 1881 and 1895.

‡ *Christmas Day! It dawned pleasantly upon us all. Cook made a garland of evergreens and Christmas berries for the dining room at Larkmead, and Eugenie made wreaths and hung them.* (p. 135)

‡ *Found Lillie in the kitchen teaching the new cook to stuff the turkey. I dressed it with fringed paper and pink ribbons and rosebuds. To roast a turkey: Clean and wash the bird. Make a stuffing with one pound sausage meat, 1 cup bread crumbs, tablespoon of boiled onion cut fine, black pepper and salt to taste, tablespoon butter, 1 egg beaten well, half a can chopped truffles. Cover the turkey with pork (salt fat) cut thin, tie it on, then tie up the turkey in a sheet of well buttered letter paper. Bake for three quarters of an hour. Then take off the paper and finish baking, basting every five minutes until done.* (p. 87)

‡ *We had a splendid dinner. Oysters and salmon trout and an entree of foie gras and the great turkey which was perfectly cooked with cranberries and celery and sweet potatoes, and three squash pies which Lillie made herself, and a great plum pudding blazing blue with brandy, all of which went to the servants, who had a good dinner in the kitchen with all the wine they could drink.* (p. 135)

‡ *We had champagne frappe and a large pound cake. . . . She responded by saying, "let's take a drink," and the champagne poured like water.* (pp. 131, 133)



Cornerstone

By Skip Lane, President

Please welcome Shannon Kuleto to the board of directors. Shannon settled in St. Helena almost 20 years ago. She taught history at Georgia State University and is a local history buff, especially of the valley's rich wine lore. She contributes her energy to several other boards, including the *Star's* Editorial Board, the St. Helena Choral Society, the Beautification Foundation, and the public schools. She co-founded the Kuleto Estate vineyards/winery and is now the operations director of the nonprofit Napa Valley Vine Trail Coalition. She lives with her son (age 15) in a century-old Craftsman bungalow near the Tunnel of Elms.



I hope to see every one of the Historical Society's members at our gala gathering scheduled for December 6th; see details on page 1. At that time we'll be reviewing some of our many accomplishments this year and outlining some of our goals for next year.

One of the things to look forward to is the Historical Society's tenth anniversary, coming up in February 2012. Can you believe it? *Ten years!* Stay tuned for details about how we'll be celebrating this milestone.

Every member helps keep St. Helena history alive by joining the St. Helena Historical Society. Call the office if you would like to join or renew. Or maybe you'll want to give a membership as a gift to someone interested in local history. See page 4 for a list of those who have given at or above the \$100 level.

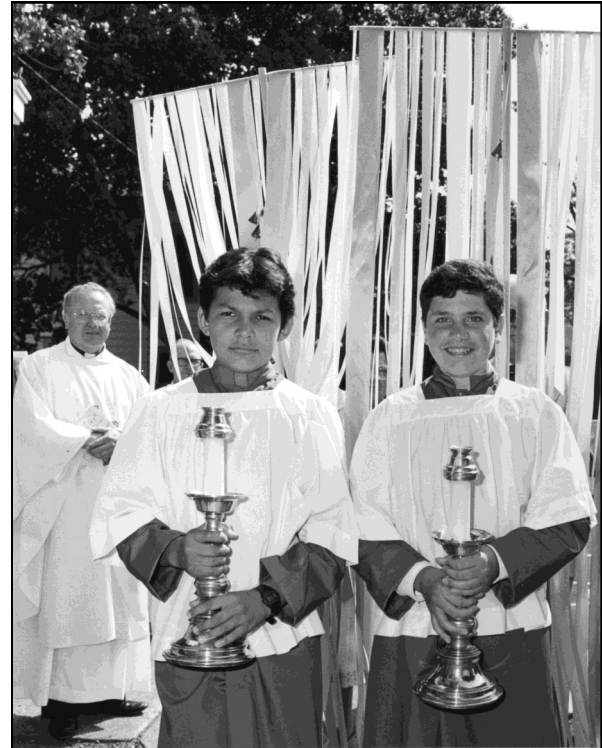
Page 4 also lists a bequest and donations given in memory of loved ones. There just wasn't an appropriate category to once again thank Vera Trinchero-Torres for her grant of \$25,000 to upgrade our computer and office equipment. It came at just the right time and was well used!

Special thanks also go to those loyal volunteers who continue to dedicate so many hours of their time on behalf of the society. Your efforts pay off, and you can never be thanked enough.

In the same vein, thank you, Tricia Westbrook, for devoting so much energy this year to leading the Historical Society through a number of hurdles. The board and volunteers look forward to building on your many accomplishments.

Glasses up: let's toast a merry holiday and hope for a wonderful new year!

New to the Collection



One important accession in 2011 was a suitcase of photos and archival material from the St. Helena Catholic Church. They were found by Deacon Bob Little in the garage behind the rectory during the earthquake retrofit and remodel in 2009. After construction was completed and church members began putting things away, they came to the conclusion that the Historical Society would take care of this collection better than if it was once again stored in a garage.

The photo shown above was probably taken in 1987 during the church's centennial celebration. The two altar boys are Jaime Velazquez (left) and Dominic Beltrami. Father Brenkle, stands behind them to the left. Father Serado, standing behind Velazquez, can barely be seen.



Another important accession this year was a series of old postcards depicting St. Helena scenes, donated by Carolyn Kelperis. The postcard above shows the Hotel St. Helena sometime in the 1920s.

SOLDIERS OF ST. HELENA HONORED BY SHHS AT THE LIBRARY



On the evening of Thursday, November 10th, the Historical Society held an event at the library commemorating the lives of those from the St. Helena area who died in five wars. Mariam Hansen (shown at left) presented her research on these victims of war, who were as follows:

- *World War I:* Giulio Brovelli, Dayton Gardner, Harry Groteguth, Ervin Hurd, Bernard Korte, Theodore Lyman, and Arnold Maggetti
- *World War II:* Robert Bergendorff, Dwight I. Brown, Oliver Eisan, Paul Engeli, Robert Glos, Dodge Lincoln, Ervin McMillen, Leander Paulich, and Henry Rutherford, Jr.
- *Korea:* Robert Jursch
- *Vietnam:* Robert Flannery, Jr., Jack Lanelli, Dan Long, Lawrence Peterson, and Gary Rodrigues
- *Iraq:* Darrik Benson



Victor Cole dressed in his military uniform.

Victor Cole, a veteran from World War I, was also featured in the talk. He was born in St. Helena and served in France.

Jacky Young gave a brief history of Paul Galleron's internment experience in Russia during World War II, based on his war diary (donated to SHHS), and recent interviews.

Audience members filled in background about what

life was like in World War II: rationing, blackout curtains and neighborhood wardens checking for lights at night because St. Helena was in the "fly zone," victory gardens, knitting clothing for the troops, rolling bandages, gathering scrap metal, and working in defense industries.



Paul Galleron, third from the left, is shown with other crew members on the bomber that he piloted. All were interned in Russia after their plane was shot down by the Japanese, causing an emergency landing in Russia.

The discussion was enhanced by exhibits put together by Susanne Salvestrin showing photos and articles from local newspapers of World War II soldiers. On display in November was the actual World War II footlocker and contents brought home by Master Sergeant Edwin H. Learned (donated to SHHS).

Society historians are interested in information you may have about other soldiers from the St. Helena area who served during wartime.



On Memorial Day 2012, at the St. Helena Cemetery, St. Helena's American Legion Post 199 will be unveiling a memorial to the soldiers who died in wars since World War I. The photo above was taken this Veterans Day, at the cemetery, during a ceremony dedicating a grave marker for Lt. Clyde Lewis, whose grave went unmarked for 75 years.

Thank You, Members!

The St. Helena Historical Society could not exist without the ongoing support of its members. In 2011, the following people contributed monetarily to help the society continue its work. Thank you, one and all, for your generosity!

Life Members (\$500):

James Barbour
Luc & Jodie Morlet
Richard & Barbara Shurtz
Sloan Upton
Jacky Young

Business/Corporate Members (\$200):

Napa Valley Vintners
1915 Main St. Association

Contributing Members (\$100):

Van & Betty Ballentine
Del Britton
Karen Caldwell
John & Ann Marie Conover
Jeff Feeney
Don & Dianne Fraser
Marcos & DeAnn Gonzalez
Lester Hoel
Mabel Johnson
Jennifer Lamb
John Muhlner
Robyn Orsini
Stanley & Linda Rice
John & Joanne Sales
Libby Shafer
Patel Sushil
Jim & Tracy Sweeney
Bonnie & John Thoreen
Leslie Wilks
Harry & Gayle Willett

Dues of \$30 for individuals and \$50 for families are equally appreciated! All help the society to continue its work in preserving the history of St. Helena.

Memberships are due a year from when you join. If you have not received a request for renewal or wish to check on whether your membership is ready for renewal, please contact the office.

In Memory Of . . .

This year, donations were given to the society in memory of two of our members who passed away. Peggy Wood and Don Kumamoto gave in memory of Laurie Wood, a founding and life member.

Babe Learned, a founding member who was passionate about her family's role in St. Helena history, was remembered by the following friends:

Van & Betty Ballentine
Eleanor Buehler
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Caffo
Jerry Decker
Mary Elizabeth Fryer
Donald Houghton
Guy & Connie Kay
Betty McCormick Malmgren
Elizabeth Martini
Jean Michels
Joseph Peatman
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Putman
Mr. & Mrs. Ted Rosshirt
Susanne & Ed Salvestrin
Dawn Thomas
Upper Napa Valley Garden Club
Judith & Craig Wolcott
Jeannine Yeomans

As mentioned in the last issue of the *Electrolier*, Babe Learned's estate donated \$10,000 to the Historical Society. Contact the office about how to mention SHHS in your will or trust.

+ + The Collection + +

An important way to uncover the past is by collecting photos, documents, memorabilia, and physical objects of all kinds related to St. Helena history. If you have items to donate, please call the Historical Society to make an appointment with Helen Nelson or Kim Farmer. See page 2 for two donation troves that have recently been accessioned.

ABOUT US



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VOLUNTEERS WELCOME!

The Historical Society is run by volunteers, and there are lots of things you can do. Please think about how you'd like to help!

Images of America: St. Helena may be purchased for \$24, including tax. Contact the office to order your copy.