

THE MOST IMPORTANT NEWS OF 1885

Transcribed from the St. Helena Star by Mariam Hansen

The year began for the St. Helena Star with Willis A. Mackinder buying Charles Gardner's half interest in the newspaper, thus making Mackinder the sole owner.

The German Turn Verein Club observed New Year's [Sylvester in German] Eve

At 8:00pm the Grand March opened the ball. At midnight there was a tableau of old father time, representing 1884, passing across the stage. The New Year 1885 came onto the scene in the person of Miss Tillie Heymann [daughter of saloon owner Karl], after which gifts were given. After dinner at the Hotel St. Helena Hotel dancing continued until almost daybreak.

Tiburcio Parrott of San Francisco purchased A.B. Forbes's Ranch of 800 acres west of town for \$28,000. [The deed shows the purchaser as Tiburcio's mother, Abby, recorded 1-3-1885].

Eight men purchased the property of the skating rink association [on Adams Street-now Sportago]

They built a substantial building with enlarged floor space for skating and a stage at one end. It provided the largest hall in town for entertainments and meetings. Later in the year the first ever skating carnival, a masquerade on wheels, was held here.

Theodore Moding purchased the farms of Mr. Reynolds, William Richie, and George Cook on Spring Mountain, totaling 360 acres.

W.H. Worrell built a two-story, ten room residence on Madrona Avenue west of Frank Kraft's place [Kraft Winery and home is now Spottswoode Winery].

Dr. C.R. Sabin from Ohio purchased Dr. W.A. Root's dental equipment and business. Dr. Sabin will locate here. Dr. Root leased the Palace Hotel in a change of profession.

Taylor, Duckworth and Genung completed the construction of their two story stone building on Railroad Avenue to house their foundry and machine shop. [The building is on the National Register of Historic Places and is today the site of Terra Restaurant.]

One more landmark disappeared with the removal of an oak tree from Main Street in front of Goodman's Store [then located at Main and Spring Streets, today Vintage Home.]

Marriages in 1885

- On January 28 I.N. Enright and Annie Cunningham were married at St. Helena Catholic Church.
- On January 29 Isaac N. Brown, a local hardware merchant, and Cara Van Fleet were married at Rutherford.
- On February 5 John C. Money, a local building contractor, and Sarah L. Richie were married at Oakville.
- On April 2 Willis Mackinder, editor of the STAR, and Minnie Meredith were married in Oakland.
- Louis Paulson and Annie Leuthold were married on March 11.

Among the first officers of the newly organized St. Helena Parlor #53 Native Sons of the Golden West, were Frank Hoffman, Edwin Bruck, Aleck Galewsky, Ed Cunningham, Jeff Vann, Chris Mills, William Hoffman and John Taplin.

John Thomann finished construction of his new home at Vineland [then a train stop on the highway south of Sulphur Springs Avenue]: a two story, eleven room house with a full cellar. [He named it Chalet Bernensis, after his native town. Today it is the Sutter Home Winery Victorian.]

The *Daily Moon* appeared in 1884, with R.F. Rammers and Charles Logan as editors. It was the first attempt to supply St. Helena with a daily newspaper. After a short existence the publication resumed a weekly schedule. On May 11 the *Moon* went into total eclipse and remained so.

The Summit Water Company filed articles of incorporation at the county seat, proposing to supply St. Helena with water from Heath Canyon, behind Edge Hill. The owners were William Scheffler, Theo Wagner, J.J. Lewelling, Thomas Watt, Byron O. Carr, Tiburcio Parrott and Theo Wayne.

Robert H. Pratt built a large two-story residence in Pratt Valley below Crystal Springs [The property was later sold to Ellen G. White, prophet of the Seventh Day Adventist Church and is now preserved as *Elmshaven Historic Site*.]

Mr. and Mrs. N.T. Outwaters [the latter a sister of Thomas Mooney's] came from New York to make their home here. Mr. Outwaters and the Mooney brothers leased the Kettlewell Blacksmith Shop on the corner of Adams and Oak Streets.

Henry Lange started a laundry at his home below town. The residents had long complained of having only Chinese laundries to choose from. At last there was one employing white help.

William H. Taplin went to San Francisco to study at Heald's Business College.

The Women's Relief Corps, an auxiliary of the Grand Army of the Republic [or GAR, a Civil War veterans group] was organized with Mrs Mary Simmons as president [her husband William was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for heroism in the Civil War.]

On April 3 Dr. C.M. Hitchcock died at the residence of his daughter Lillie "Firebelle Lil" Hitchcock Coit on Larkmead Lane.

At the town election the trustees elected were F.M. Vanderlip, mayor; M.F. Inman, Dr. H.M. Pond, William E. York, George A. Riggins as trustees [councilmen]. C.N. Hale was elected treasurer; R.L. Spurr, marshal; Edwin A. Bruck, clerk.

B. Crawford began operating a brickyard near John Howell's place.

Kettlewell & Son placed a water pump at the edge of the sidewalk on the Adams Street side of their store [today Vasconi's Drug at Main and Adams]. A tin cup for people to drink and a horse trough were also installed.

On April 25 the Oddfellows celebrated the anniversary of the founding of their order with a picnic and dance under fair skies. The cornerstone of their new building was laid on that day [and the date noted on it-still there].

Conn Valley colony "El Nido" established

A San Francisco promoter subdivided a portion of the Hall & Tubbs "Glendale Ranch" in Conn Valley and established a colony called "El Nido". The district was a saucer-like hollow in the midst of high hills. Fourteen purchasers acquired parcels containing 60 to 120 acres each. They improved their land by clearing it, planting vineyards and orchards, and building dwellings, barns, etc.

Leopold Lazarus was the Wells Fargo agent for 17 years and served as councilman for 7. He moved his family to San Francisco after living here 20 years.

George Schonewald built a stone wine cellar on his place on Hudson Avenue [naming it Esmeralda Winery, now converted to a fine residence].

Graduates of the grammar school were Lillie Bussenius, Frances Coutolenc, Miriam Gardner, Joe Graham, Sarah Haire, Anna Kohler, Lolita Krug (valedictorian), Ashley Tabor, Clara York, and John York. Their teachers were A. M. Armstrong, principal, Emma Graham, May Young, Minnie Howell and Anna Dixon.

Bernard Ehlers and family arrived from Sacramento and occupied their recently purchased property "Mound View" in the Lodi District, having purchased it from Rev. Alfred Todhunter [pastor at Grace Episcopal Church].

It was noted that the caption for a town ordinance read: "An ordinance to prevent gaming or gambling, or visiting gaming or gambling houses, and to prevent IMMORTALITY."

Three Pope Valley men killed a six foot cinnamon bear, caught in the act of devouring a sheep belonging to George Gibson.

The German Turn Verein held its annual picnic at White Sulphur Springs. Members, families and friends enjoyed dancing, games, a concert by the singers and a shooting competition.

An operetta "Red Riding Hood" was presented by the pupils of the public school in Kettlewell's Hall. After 500 spectators had been admitted, another 200 were turned away.

Memorial Day was observed by the GAR, assisted by the fire companies, which joined in their parade. Ceremonies were held at St. Helena Cemetery in the morning and literary exercises at the skating rink in the afternoon.

Midnight fire at the Dowdell farm

A disastrous midnight fire occurred at the James Dowdell farm on Dowdell Lane. Two large barns, two hop houses and a wagon shed were destroyed, together with large quantities of hay and 118 bales of hops. Loss was set at more than \$7,000, one half of which was covered by insurance.

The St. Helena Academy held its closing exercises in June 4. The first graduate was Earl A. Rodgers, son of the school principal L.L. Rogers. [Earl became famous as the foremost criminal lawyer in California.]

W.B. Bell came down from Germantown to visit his mother, who had recently arrived here. The reunion of Mrs. Bell and her four sons was the first time all had been together for six years.

G.A. Stamer sold his Main Street property (the former Druids Hall and glove factory adjoining) to John Greer for a recorded price of \$12,000.

On June 26 the STAR came out as a weekly on Friday, instead of being published on Mondays and Thursdays as previously.

Sven Alstrom, owner of the Windsor Hotel, died at the age of 59

Alstrom arrived in America in 1851 and by 1859 he owned the Occidental Hotel in San Francisco and in 1861 became a partner in the Lick House Hotel. He purchased the White Sulphur Springs Resort, selling it in 1879. In 1881 he built the Windsor Hotel [known as Hotel St. Helena today]. His wife Marie and seven children survived him.

A.B. Alsip, new to the area, purchased 230 acres in Conn Valley.

The death of Joseph B. Chiles

Chiles was a pioneer of early California, died at his home on Spring Street [later the Baptist Church]. A native of Kentucky, he crossed the plains from Missouri in 1841. He made several more trips, before obtaining a Mexican Land Grant of 1,000 acres in Chiles Valley. Chiles participated in the "Bear Flag Revolt" of 1846. In 1848 he brought his family to California.

Johanna Alstrom was awarded a teacher's certificate.

John McCully and S.A. Arnold purchased Villa Arbutus, the former Woodward home, for \$22,000. [Today the "Vine & Fig Tree Farm" on Sulphur Springs Avenue.]

Louis Pellet and his brother Frank became partners in the lumber business [at the site of today's Safeway Store].

Barrett's Circus visited the town in July in a special train with two engines and 21 cars.

July 4th was celebrated by Napa and St. Helena firemen in town. Their parade included St. Helena and Napa Bands, marching from Main & Madrona to Hunt's Grove at the east end of Hunt Street. Dancing was enjoyed until midnight.

Seven year old Frank Davis was seriously injured when climbing into a moving wagon. The lad's leg had to be amputated and he lived but a day longer. Frank asked to witness his father's impending marriage to Mrs. Taylor and after the ceremony, died with wedding cake in his hand.

Memorial services were held for former President Ulysses Grant, who died July 23. All businesses closed and a parade of eleven organizations marched in the parade, which ended at the skating rink with the service.

W.F. Mixon was appointed city clerk to replace Edwin Bruck, who had resigned.

Louis Zierngibl, manager of the Napa Wine Company, married Minnie Weinberger at the Weinberger home [now William Cole Winery] on August 8.

A disastrous fire on Howell Mountain raged for a week, causing considerable damage to property and destroying forests.

The mullein (*verbascum*) plant, which grows along our highways, was brought to Napa County by Mr. F.E. Kellogg, who planted the seeds in 1846.

Calistoga was entertaining hopes of being chosen for the new college to be endowed by Senator Leland Stanford.

A lecture room was added to the Presbyterian Church [celebrating its 140th anniversary in 2014].

Emanuel Galewsky was appointed bonded warehouse keeper for this district, to be stationed alternately here and in Sacramento.

James O. Kettlewell and Katie Hanson were married September 16th at the home of Mrs. Dorothea Rohlwing.

James Allison shot and seriously injured a Chinese worker

The incident occurred while trying to retrieve a buggy cover. He had gone to the Chinese camp with his two sons to arrest the thief, when the son was attacked with a heavy pole. Marshal Allison shot the Chinese man to protect his son.

In order to rid the town of unsanitary Chinese wash houses, the town trustees levied a tax of \$150 per quarter on laundries.

The county board of supervisors set the sum of 15 cents per hour as the price to be paid for working teams on Napa County roads.

The Lakeport stagecoach was held up on Mt. St. Helena near the tollhouse and the Wells Fargo strong box taken. The robber backed up his demand with a Winchester rifle. His haul was small, as the box contained little of value.

St. Helena Rifle Club was organized with a membership of 25 and a rifle range was built near the reservoir [on Spring Mountain Road].

The German Turn Verein Society completed their new hall [the present site of Lyman Park]. The building was 55 X 120 feet in size, with an auditorium, stage, dressing rooms, a saloon, and banquet rooms.

Articles of Incorporation were filed for Ritchie Creek Water Company to furnish water to St. Helena, Calistoga and intermediate points.

The new Oddfellows Building was completed

At \$20,000, it was the finest building in the county at that time. It was built of stone, with a pressed brick façade. Downstairs was divided into two large stores. Upstairs was a banquet hall, lodge room, offices, and Oddfellows regalia room [most of which was recently restored].

Progressive euchre [a trick-taking card game] was a new fad that appeared at the end of the year. The first party was at the home of Col and Mrs. Byron O. Carr at Inglewood.

The board of supervisors voted to build a 22-mile road to connect Rutherford with Monticello [now under Lake Berryessa] via Chiles Valley and Sage Canyon [today Hwy 128].

A Thanksgiving Masked Ball given by the Native Sons at the skating was a large affair

The unmasking and distribution of prizes took place at midnight; dinner was served at the Palace Hotel, followed by dancing into the wee hours. Jacob Merk, an expert gymnast, masked as a clown and walked about the hall on his hands.

Anti-Chinese sentiment culminated in a mass meeting at the town hall

The Anti-Chinese Protective League was formed. Their purpose was to exclude Chinese from the town limits and vicinity by all lawful means. The STAR described Chinatown [at West Charter Oak and the creek] as "an eyesore, disgrace, tumbledown, smoke begrimed shanties; miserable hovels with filthy and diseased heathen; dens of infamy and gambling". The farmers pointed out that Chinese labor was needed to bring in the grape harvest.

The STAR moved into the new Oddfellows Building

It's now across the street from its former home. It shared the store front with the new public library and free reading room, stocked with coast newspapers and magazines. Use of books was free to library supporters and available to the public for a 25 cent monthly fee.

The Potterton family had a skunk under their house, which the father shot in the basement

A terrific explosion followed, which tore away one whole side of the house. The father was thrown and severely burned with powder. A small can of dynamite hidden near the skunk exploded when a bullet struck it. The skunk was killed.

George Lauder resigned as postmaster and three weeks later died at the age of 29. He had lived here three years and survived by a wife and son.

Thomas Watt sold a lot south of the Oddfellows Hall to Joseph Reichert, who renovated the old store and opened a Wine Hall called the "Elite".

Charles R. Vann, a tried and true Democratic war horse, was appointed postmaster.

Volunteer firemen included Louis Clark, John H. Steves, Frank Pellet, Jacob Merk, George Rammers, James Haire, Frank Hoffman and Frank Mixon.

At the skating rink prizes for the best skaters were awarded to Dixie Chiles Bell and Ashley Tabor.