

## THE LATEST NEWS OF 1887

By Leo Martin, Edited by Mariam Hansen, St. Helena Historical Society

Both the St. Helena Star and the Times newspapers are urging the town trustees [city council] to have the business houses and homes numbered and to place street names at the corners.

The firm of Bell & Greenfield Brothers was dissolved in January. William Bell of Germantown became associated with his brother Alphonse Bell, naming the enterprise Bell Brothers.

Philo Grant left for Sacramento, where he obtained a position as fireman for the Southern Pacific Railroad.

In a boxing tournament in Yountville, James Hill was said to have knocked out six men in succession.

The Catholic Church, which heretofore had been served by a priest from Napa, was to have a resident pastor.

A cold storm left one foot of snow on Howell Mountain.

### **A sensational homicide occurred in Wooden Valley--twelve miles from Napa**

Mrs. Herman Lyons was found murdered. As Mr. Lyons returned home a hired man named Pete Olsen fired three shots at him. No murderer was found, although there were conflicting reports about the manhunt. There was a rumor that the suspect had been "liquidated" by some pursuers.

B. F. Kettlewell purchased and installed at the firm's store one of the finest barometers available and a rain gauge with which to keep weather records. It was rumored in later years that two boys poured water into the rain gauge, causing a sudden and incredible increase in the rainfall record.

About this time Mr. Kettlewell had the daring to purchase a high-wheel bicycle to ride between his home and business.

Nathan Lauter entered into partnership with Abraham Goodman & Co.

A choral union was organized by C.E. Merwin (president), Willis Mackinder (secretary), and Frank Alexander (music director).

John Wheeler was chosen chief viticultural officer for the State of California.

Clayton Adsit went to San Francisco to hear the great Edwin Booth in *Hamlet*. [Edwin was the brother of John Wilkes Booth, the man who assassinated President Abraham Lincoln.]

Again there was agitation to reduce the wages of Chinese from \$1 per day to 85 cents and ultimately to 75 cents. The claim was made that a Chinese was able to live on \$1.25 a week.

On March 15 Harvey Lewelling and Annie Alstrom were married at the Windsor Hotel [today Hotel St. Helena] by the Rev. James Mitchell. The couple left immediately on an extended tour of the eastern states.

### **Ben Bell leaves Hale & Bell**

He purchased the grocery business of Krekler & Wentzel. He moved into new quarters in the building which later became Smith's Pharmacy [now Market Restaurant]. The Wells Fargo & Co. Express office was in one corner.

In February William W. Lyman [whose descendants still live in town] was appointed lieutenant colonel and aide-de-camp on the staff of Governor Bartlett. [Lyman's appointment did not last long. Washington Bartlett was governor for only nine months, dying in office September 12, 1887.]

## **Elections 1887: by men only**

At the town election 315 votes were cast [by men only, as women could not vote]. The new trustees [council] was C.N. Hale, Henry Pellet, F. Duckworth, George Riggins and B.F. Kettlewell. Treasurer was J.G. Johnson and marshal, J.B. Swartout. The adoption of a new city charter won 158 to 139 votes. Opponents contested the election on the grounds that sufficient notice had not been given. The court agreed and the re-incorporation of the town failed again.

St. Helena at this time had three newspapers: the Independent, the Times and the Star. L.L. Palmer merged his Independent with Major Hay's Times.

Captain George Gluyas, a native of England, a pioneer resident and town trustee for several terms, died at the age of 75.

On April 28 Frank Alexander and Carrie York were married at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Eli York.

Fritz Beringer, Jr., after several years studying in Europe, arrived in St. Helena to make his home with his parents.

Amelia Chiles Elgin, wife of Clarence Elgin, died on June 3 at age 31, survived by her husband and two children.

Graduates from the St. Helena Grammar School were from the following families: Alexander, Berry, Buell, Cook, Coutolenc, Gluyas, Jessen, Maguire, McCarty, Newman, O'Brien, Roberts, Simpson, and Shepardson. Principal/teacher was C.E. Merwin. Other teachers were Misses Emma Graham, Minnie Howell, Anna Dixon, Maggie Fountain and Cassie Lane.

D.R. McLennan won first prize as a piper at the Caledonian Picnic at Sacramento. Mr. McLennan used to walk to and fro on the front porch of his residence while playing his pipe.

Jacob Wehrli sold his harness business to Charles F. Rednall of Shasta County, who moved it down to the bank building.

Due to the shortage of water in the reservoir, the Water Company restricted use for irrigation to the hours of 4 to 6pm.

Lou Williams, flashy shortstop of the Unity Baseball Club, was signed for the same position with the Alcazars of San Francisco.

Sunset Telephone Company extended its line from Napa in May and St. Helena was connected to the outside world by telephone. [In October 1886 the company established new headquarters in San Francisco.]

Fourth of July was celebrated with a picnic in Crane Park [then located on the El Bonita area] under the auspices of the firemen's Americus Hose Company No.2.

In July, James and William Rennie, Scotsmen from Australia, purchased the Furstenfeld property on Inglewood for \$35,000. [Today most of this property is owned by Flora Springs Winery.]

Clayton Adsit and Ernest Tabor drove to San Diego with a span of horses and a light buggy. [A span of horses, consists of two of nearly the same color, and otherwise nearly alike, which are usually harnessed side by side.]

The Carver National Bank was formed after Dimsdill B. Carver saw overwhelming demand for a real bank. Capital stock was \$50,000 and directors were D.B. Carver, Daniel Hunt, Matthew Richie, William

Bourn and Alton Williams. Carver was president and Williams was cashier. [The cashier is the officer who superintends the books, payments and receipts of the bank.]

The Renos baseball club was defeated at Santa Rosa by 3 to 2. Each side made two hits, the Renos made five errors and the Santa Rosas made 11 errors.

The St. Helena Academy failed to open in August for the fall term and the property was sold to N.T. Outwaters. [The building was moved to Adams Street east of Kearny and converted to the Gray Gables Hotel.]

J.H. Livernash moved his stock of furniture from Kibbler Building [1424 Main] to 1350 Main in the Oddfellows Building.

### **Capitalists from San Francisco visit St. Helena**

In September Senator Leland Stanford, Charles Crocker and other capitalists from San Francisco visited Napa Valley in a special train, stopping St. Helena. [Stanford was a US Senator from 1885 to 1893. Charles F. Crocker (son of Stanford's partner in the railroad) was on his staff. The Crocker family owns property in St. Helena.]

A real estate boom struck St. Helena and many transfers of property were recorded.

### **Duckworth & Genung's foundry and machine works grows its reputation**

The machinists. at 1345 Railroad (what was Terra Restaurant) became a widely known and highly reputable business. The company produced wine crushers, hydraulic presses and other machinery at rapid rate. A recent order came from the Italian-Swiss Colony at Asti north of Santa Rosa.

Tiburcio Parrott had a grove of five thousand olive trees at his ranch on Spring Mountain [now site of Spring Mountain Winery.]

On September 8 William Taplin and Clara Griffith were married at the home of bride's parents, Calvin and Lydia Griffith, on Silverado Trail.

### **Celebrating by the Native Sons**

On Admission Day Napa held the greatest celebration ever known in the county when the state Grand Parlor of Native Sons met. It was estimated ten thousand visitors came, severely straining the accommodations. The parade lasted one hour and over two thousand dancers enjoyed the evening. Frank Coombs was the chairman and Henry Gesford grand marshal of the parade.

W.A. Mackinder's real estate office was supplied with a typewriter, the first in town. Sarah Galewsky, a shorthand writer and typist, was hired to operate the machine.

Judge Serranus Hastings [founder of Hastings Law School] brought suit in Lake County against Mary Keller to have their marriage certificate declared a forgery and null and void. The judge denied the marriage had taken place and said the woman's motive was to extort money from him.

### **A mandate for water rationing**

The Water Company gave notice to subscribers that the use of water should be limited to between 5-7pm on Wednesdays and Saturdays. President Ewer said there was only 14 inches of water in the lower reservoir. Water needed by the wine cellars would be trumped if there was a fire and insurance policies would be invalidated. The town trustees ordered sprinkling only on Main Street. The marshal was to report anyone who used water contrary to regulations.

On September 21 Willis Mackinder sold the *St. Helena Star* to his brother Frank and Jesse Dungan, a newsman from Nevada. Frank had been an employee for four years and learned the trade from the ground up. [Frank owned the newspaper until his death in 1937, working for 54 years in the trade.]

**Lillie Langtry buys a Lake County ranch for \$80,000**

Fee & Carr, the local realtors, sold a Lake County ranch for \$80,000. The purchaser was the famous actress Lillie Langtry, the “Jersey Lily”. [The ranch was 4,200 acres, today Guenoc Winery is located there. The winery and ranch are owned by Malulani Investments Ltd.]

Miss Anna Dixon took her callisthenic class to Napa to perform at the teacher training institute.

On October 10 the Water Company ordered that all irrigation must stop until further notice, as only water for firefighting can be used. The company stated that unless the rains came, there would be enough water for only three or four more days.