

THE LATEST NEWS OF 1888

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

The Daily & Weekly Independent suspended publication at the end of the year, leaving the Star alone in the field.

Many of the St. Helenans who went south to the "boomland" began to straggle back to the old hometown.

The new building for the Catholic School was completed at a cost of between six and seven thousand dollars. It was situated between the Catholic Church and Tainter.

Palatial home of Sarah E. Bourne on Sulphur Springs completely destroyed by fire

As there was not a supply of water available, nothing could be done to save the building, however most of the furniture was removed. Loss was about \$75,000, half of which was covered by insurance. In appreciation of the assistance given by the firemen of the town, Mrs. Bourne presented each fire company with \$50.

Phil O'Donnell sold out his stock of dry goods and moved to San Francisco.

Harry Prouty found a roll of currency of considerable amount floating in a pool of water on the sidewalk on Spring Street. A claimant not appearing, he was permitted to retain possession.

William Dinning, a pioneer of the valley, died at his home northwest of Rutherford on March 20. He was 57. A native of Tennessee, he came to California in 1850 and in 1851 settled on his Rutherford property, the present River Bend Farm.

"If you do not sell wine to us exclusively, we will not buy it at all"

San Francisco wine merchants attempted to place the squeeze on Napa and Sonoma Valley winemakers with the dictum This caused a demand for a wine warehouse. Small manufacturers could then store their product until a market could be found, instead of being forced to accept whatever the San Francisco wine merchants chose to offer. Bourne & Wise committed to providing a storehouse and built Greystone Winery. The three-story building is 400 x 76 feet and 66 feet high. The cellar was to provide storage for one million gallons and thirteen 400 foot tunnels to store one million more. An engine room and electric light plant were installed on the ground floor. Besides the winery, a distillery was constructed.

The Calistoga-Lakeport stagecoach was again held up, this time by two masked men who stole the Wells Fargo box.

No new charter

At the annual town election in April the trustees chosen were George Worrell, Marcus Inman, William York, Dr. Henry Pond, and J.W. Holihan. J.G. Johnson was elected treasurer and A. B. Swartout marshal. A new charter was carried by 19 votes, but later it was learned that the notice of election had been faulty, invalidating the vote. Once more the attempt to adopt a new charter failed.

Bullet kills young 29-year old man

A most distressing tragedy occurred on April 20 when a promising young man of 29 was shot and killed. Bud Vann was one of several sons of a prominent pioneer family. He was murdered by a mere boy of 18 named John Graham (alias John Wright). Late at night several young men of the town were going the rounds. When near the Pink Saloon [on Pope Street at the tracks] in the lower part of town one of the gang threw a stone through a window. Wright, who was inside, grabbed a pistol and fired through the window. The bullet struck young Vann, wounding him and he died 24 hours later. Wright was arrested immediately and taken to Napa. On May 11 he was brought back for a preliminary hearing and at the end of the first day's proceeding was locked up in the town jail [located where the Catholic school is today]. Although all had been quiet, the officers were uneasy. Marshal Swartout did not want to keep his keys to the jail, so he turned them over to

Judge W.E. Elgin. This precaution failed as the act was evidently seen by someone. Shortly after midnight 15 to 20 men went to the Elgin home, called him out and took the keys from him. They proceeded to the jail and after entering through the main door, they found they did not have the key to the cell door. The lock was broken with a sledgehammer. The crowd then rustled the prisoner up Main Street to the York Creek Bridge [at Beringer's entrance] where he was hanged. John Wright was only 18 years old.

In May the Lakeport stagecoach was held up near Cloverdale.

White Sulphur Springs Resort was sold to Sanford Johnson of Los Angeles

Johnson was visiting relatives here and drove out to the resort. He was so favorably impressed and upon learning the property was for sale bought it for \$20,000. One week later a Mr. Dunham purchased half interest.

The post office was moved up Main Street to the building formerly occupied by the *Independent* newspaper opposite the Odd Fellows building.

On May 15th John Taplin and Frances St. Ore were married.

Graduates of the public school were Ida Beringer, Orpha Cook, Alice Fountain (valedictorian), Virginia Graham, Ettie Meacham, Kate McLennan, May Wade, and Mary Walker. The four boys in the class failed. Teachers were C.E. Merwin (principal), Stella Ames, Cassie Ives, Anna Dixon, Maggie Fountain, and Ida Fulton.

Caboose leaves the track!

Philo Grant and Thomas McCarty, two St. Helenans working as trainmen for Southern Pacific Company, had a narrow escape in a wreck when the caboose left the track. McCarty, who was on the platform, was thrown some distance and received bruises. Grant was inside and when the caboose settled bottom up he found himself lying on the ceiling, a trunk resting on his head and a stove hanging precariously from the inverted floor above.

A new one mile track on the fairgrounds

The Napa County Fair Association built a one mile track on the fair grounds at the northern edge of Napa City. It was a splendid track, and fast, and for many years was the scene of both running and harness races and during the bicycle era of wheel races. Walter Foster, a famous bicycle racer, made a trial on this track for the record, paced by a quad (a bicycle with four riders).

On Memorial Day it rained from 8 o'clock until 2:30, so the parade planned for the morning had to be abandoned. In the afternoon the citizens gathered in Turner Hall for exercises, at which Samuel Shortridge was the orator.

A parlor of Native Daughters, La Carita parlor, was organized with 41 charter members. Jesse Elgin was president, Sarah Galewsky, vice president; Emma Randall, 3rd vice president; Mrs. R.B. Bell, recording secretary and Grant Elgin, marshal.

Lillie Langtry makes an appearance on the way to her ranch

Lillie Langtry, the Jersey Lily, accompanied by a group of friends, visited St. Helena in June on the way to her Lake County [Guenoc] Ranch. A large crowd assembled at the station to see the famous beauty, but the lady stepped off the last rail car, took a short cut through the saloon, and then up the street to a hotel. The crowd moved over to the hotel, but only a few saw her when she went to lunch. Later her group took a carriage at the rear of the hotel, avoided the gaze of the curious, and proceeded to Lake County.

Dr. McTaggart of San Francisco succeeded Dr. Burke at the Rural Health Retreat [later St. Helena Hospital].

David Hudson, pioneer of the 1840s, died at Lakeport on June 10th. He was a brother-in-law of John York and came to St. Helena in 1847. Interment took place here.

A railroad was completed between Santa Rosa and Vallejo Junction. It caused suspension of the stage coach line between Napa and Sonoma, which had been in operation for more than 30 years.

George A. Riggins put his "Wonderful Wagon" on the road

It was a traveling drug store, designed like a traveling butcher shop to bring merchandise to the country dweller in Napa, Lake and Sonoma counties. The wagon was stocked with a large line of drugs and flavoring extracts, which Mr. Riggins was prepared to dispense anywhere along the route.

The opening of White Sulphur Springs Resort

It was opened by Dunham, Eaton, and Ottarman with a grand ball attended by four hundred persons. Music was by Professor Schnoor's orchestra. A supper was served at 11:30pm, after which dancing continued until 3am.

On July 1st Thomas Vann and Mina Williams were married in Yountville.

Independence Day celebration was under the auspices of the Native Sons

During the evening of July 3rd a concert was given on Main Street by the famous Independence Band of Mare Island and a drill was executed by the Flame Club of San Francisco with their brightly lit flares. There was a fireworks display during intermission of the band program.

Grand Marshal of the parade on July 4 was Mariano Bale

He rode Fred Loeber's beautiful horse, Alcona. In line were the Independence Band, lodges, fire companies, floats, town officials and advertising wagons. The march was to Cruvey's Grove (at the far side of the stone bridge) where there was a barbecue, the usual oration and morning and afternoon dancing. About three thousand persons were in attendance.

John Howell, a native of New York State who settled near St. Helena in 1846, died on July 6 at the age of 64.

The new Veterans Home had 218 residents, of whom 20 were in the hospital. The directors were having trouble with insubordination among the inmates.

Louis Zierngibl's new home on Tychson Hill [near Freemark Abbey winery] commanded one of the finest views of the valley.

A forest fire that swept across the western hills from the Parrott place [Spring Mountain Winery] threatened White Sulphur Springs Resort.

Little Fay Prouty was nearly crushed to death while riding on some freight railroad cars being switched. As the car bumped, he was thrown upon the track and the brakeman stopped the cars only a few feet from the boy.

The Republicans organized a campaign club, the Tippecanoe Blues. For the Democrats, a branch of the Iroquois Club, a permanent organization, was formed.

John Greer, an early settler and viticulturalist, lost his life

He died in a collision in the Golden Gate between the "*City of Chester*" and the "*Oceanic*". He was on his way to Eureka to purchase some property and had a large sum of money in his satchel. After the collision he went to his stateroom to get it, but the boat sank so quickly that he did not have time to return to the upper deck. One of the passengers on the "*Oceanic*" was Dr. D.E. Osborne, who moved to St. Helena five years later.

Daniel O. Hunt sold his wood business

For many years he had been known as "the wood king" and he had crews of Chinese workers removing hundreds of oak trees that dotted the valley. At the same time he helped the farmers who were clearing land to plant vineyards.

Abraham Goodman's new home on Main Street was completed

Peter Jackson, the phenomenal Negro pugilist, recently arrived in this country, easily vanquished Joe McAuliffe, the heavyweight champion of the Pacific Coast, in a 24 round contest in San Francisco. "Me poor, bye Joe" said McAuliffe's father.

On October 24 in Napa Tiburcio Parrott of St. Helena and Teresa Tufly of Carson City, Nevada were married.

On October 23rd Clarence Elgin and Florentine Delcescaux were married.

The Catholic Church was burned to the ground and two story school building adjoining, just completed, was so badly damaged by fire and water that it had to be razed.

A freight train on its way to Calistoga and another coming down the valley collided at Charles Krug's, one engine climbing upon the other.

The November election resulted in the Republicans capturing every office except that of county clerk, to which our D. Shakespear was elected.

Ward Avenue (now Spring Mountain Road) was opened from Madrona to Brewery Lane (now Elmhurst Avenue).

On December 27th Dr. C.R. Sabin and Jennie Greer were married at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Greer.

The Democrats celebrated the passage of the Chinese Exclusion act, sponsored by Thomas J. Geary, congressman from this district.