

Influenza in Windsor, the Pandemic of 1918-1919

“The period of the 1918 influenza epidemic was a time that tried people’s souls.”

-William L. Beedie, *Windsor History and Happenings*, 1978

By **Barbara F. Ray**

In 2016 most Americans don’t worry excessively about influenza. We get an annual flu shot, take a few extra health precautions to avoid contagion, and trust that if we do catch a flu bug, skilled physicians and modern medicine will quickly restore us to good health. But in 1918, life was different.

Although influenza, often followed by pneumonia, had been a familiar ailment for generations, and a major cause of death, especially among the very young, those with frail immune systems, and the elderly, the 1918 viral strain was something new — a vicious killer that relentlessly and disproportionately attacked healthy young adults.* Some died within 24 hours or less. Medical professionals and scientists were perplexed by this mysterious flu, and in 1918 America’s “wonder drugs” did not exist. Sulfanilamide and Penicillin would not be developed and in common use until the 1940s and later.

Spanish Flu

Medical scientists did not know what

*“Modern research, using virus taken from the bodies of 1918 frozen influenza victims, has concluded that the virus kills through a cytokine storm (overreaction of the body’s immune system). The strong immune reactions of young adults ravaged the body, whereas the weaker immune systems of children and middle-aged adults resulted in few deaths among those groups.” *Children and Encephalitis Lethargica and the Influenza Virus: A Historical Review*, Vilensky, Foley, and Gilman, 2007

viral strain was causing the devastating influenza of 1918, which began toward the end World War I, or how to control it. Although it was commonly referred to as “Spanish Flu.” Many researchers



Windsor’s James Raymond Welch, 33, died in 1919 after contracting influenza three days earlier. (photo courtesy Mike and Nancy Frost, inherited from Mike Frost’s grandmother Lois Welch Cameron)

believe it did not start in Spain.

Spain may have only *seemed* to be the source of the flu because the Spanish press was allowed to publish statistics on the country’s large number of flu-related deaths (some 8 million in May), unlike Germany, Britain and France, which censored any news that might have

negatively affected morale.

First Documented Cases

The pandemic may have begun in France where the first officially documented cases of the new, deadly influenza appeared among British troops in late 1916 and 1917. At Etaples more than 100,000 soldiers were encamped, an ideal setting for the start of an influenza pandemic. Dozens of men became ill with aches, pains, coughs and shortness of breath, and 40 percent died. Some men had what would later be recognized as a symptom of the Spanish Flu: faces tinged lavender, a condition known as “heliotrope cyanosis.”

In May 1918, among French military troops, nearly 25,000 were ill with flu. Only a few died, and the ailment disappeared during the summer.

Then, in late August and September of 1918, the flu reemerged worldwide, transported by thousands of soldiers throughout the world, who infected other military personnel as well as civilians. The flu virus mutated along the way, growing more deadly.

American soldiers in Europe were also stricken. At least half of those who died were felled by influenza, not combat wounds.

Nurse Rea DuVander - 1918

During World War I and the influenza epidemic/pandemic, there was a severe

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Happy Thanksgiving



Mission Statement

The mission of the Windsor Historical Society is to collect, preserve, and disseminate the history of Windsor and the Russian River Township through museum exhibits, historic sites, educational programs and printed materials.

President's Message



Thankful for an Incredible Year — 2016

Summer is all gone, hops are dried and packaged, apples picked, the pomegranates are bright red and the grounds at the Hembree House are covered in leaves. The outdoor display building is moving along but as a good friend would say, "at glacial speed". The Dozier Pressley wagon restoration is moving along also, the wheels are off and ready to be restored so, with our fingers crossed, we should have a wagon ready when the display building is completed.

Near Windsor Painting

The most exciting news is the campaign to purchase *Near Windsor*, a large and beautiful oil painting by noted turn-of-the-century artist Lorenzo Palmer Latimer. We are off to a good start and have been very encouraged by your response. We hope to have the painting purchased around the first of the year. Currently, we have a very nice print of *Near Windsor* on display at the museum, so come on by and take a look if you have not already admired it.

New Bricks Honor Old Friends

I have had the honor and pleasure of installing a new set of memorial bricks at the museum recently. I am honored because the individuals memorialized on the bricks — Bud Brock and Dorothy DuVander Johnson, Don and Irene Horvath DuVander, Lorraine Kimes Owens, Russ Mitchell — have special ties to the Windsor community, and my pleasure is derived from being able to reminisce about my own experiences with them.

Bud Brock's brick will always remind me of his stories of time spent growing up in the Cunningham House with his sister, Clara, and the rest of the family.

Dorothy DuVander Johnson, Irene Horvath DuVander and Lorraine Kimes Owens almost have too many memories to mention but those three were the ring

leaders of the Windsor School Reunions and personal inspirations to learn and love the history of Windsor. I visited with Lorraine and showed her her brick prior to installation.

Russ Mitchell will always be remembered by me for his early dedication to the Windsor baseball league I was involved with and also how important his wife, Jeanne, was in helping secure our museum site.

I only met Jack Orme a couple of times and never met his wife, Evelyn Binggeli Orme. Jack told me a couple of stories about his time as a U.S. Army soldier stationed at Camp Windsor and I wish I had taken more time to visit with him.

I wish I could still visit with all those who have left us. But like I said earlier, I feel honored every time I walk by and see their memorial bricks, and I have pleasant memories of each person.

Other newly installed bricks in honor of ATC Walter Bud Brock include 1) Melody Brock-Snyder and Steve Snyder; 2) Casey and Trevor Will, 3) Mackenzie Will, Cooper Will.

Memories of Gene and Harold Oxsen

Gene Oxsen passed away shortly after she surprised me with a visit during the Hop Harvest. Gene and her husband, Harold, were long time volunteers at the museum and good friends. Gene always had a good thought about everything. She encouraged us with every step we took at the museum and she always had a suggestion to help make the museum better. Jan and I miss Gene and Harold very much.

It is the season to be thankful and Thanksgiving is just around the corner. The Windsor Historical Society is very thankful for an incredible year and the support of all our members and our community. We hope you can join us at our annual Holiday Party on December 10th.

Cheers and see you around the museum.

Steve

WHS Member News

WHS's Exciting Opportunity to Acquire Historic Painting, *Near Windsor*, by Lorenzo P. Latimer

A special message from WHS President Stephen Lehmann



Near Windsor, 1894

One of California's first native-born painters, Lorenzo Palmer Latimer, 1857-1941, flourished as a leading landscape painter in California between 1880 and 1940. He spent much of his youth in Windsor, having been introduced to the area when his father, Lorenzo Dow Latimer, married the widow Sarah Meyers Rich in 1865.

The combined new family settled in on Sarah Rich's beautiful ranch on Chalk Hill Road. Her picturesque property, no doubt, gave young Lorenzo his appreciation for some of California's most scenic landscapes.

The ranch featured rolling hills, a lake, hot sulphur springs and redwood forests. The giant redwoods became a favorite subject during Lorenzo's career as an artist, as seen in *Near Windsor*, painted in 1894.

Lorenzo Palmer Latimer lived much of his adult life in San Francisco and Berkeley, making

many painting and sketching trips throughout California, but returned often to the family ranch. His love of natural beauty found its origins in his rural upbringing near Windsor.

Please Help

Windsor Historical Society is excited to announce that we have been given a unique opportunity to purchase *Near Windsor*. The oil painting is currently owned by the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, which has owned it since 1941 when it was gifted to the City and County of San Francisco.

The painting is estimated to bring \$18,000 at auction and was initially offered to Windsor Historical Society for \$14,000, but recently the price as been established at \$10,000, only to Windsor Historical Society.

The WHS Board of Directors believe this to be one of the most significant acquisitions our museum can make, and Jan and I personally have pledged \$1,000 toward the painting's purchase.

All contributions for this acquisition are 100% tax deductible and for contributions over \$500, a permanent acknowledgment of that gift will be displayed at the museum. All other contributions will be acknowledged at the museum for one year.

I hope you agree with us that there can be only one home for *Near Windsor* and that is *In Windsor*. Thanks for your help,

Steve Lehmann, President
Windsor Historical Society

The Windsor Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization qualified to receive tax deductible gifts. Employee Identification Number (EIN) 68-0359264

Yes, I want to help Windsor Historical Society. Enclosed is my donation: \$ _____
(Please mail to Windsor Historical Society, PO Box 1544, Windsor, CA 95492)

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____

Name(s) for acknowledgment of gift _____, or

In Memory / Honor of _____

Welcome New Members

Jeanette Doyel

Thomas Jacobson

Donations

Sincerest thanks to the following for their recent donations to WHS:

In-Kind Donations

Certified Farmers Market

Terry Carroll: Copy of an aerial photo of the Bandau Hop Ranch on Eastside Road.

Brad Thomas & Doble Thomas & Associates: Scanning and printing services for Bandau Ranch photo

Cash Donations

Don Arata

Clara Brock

June Dericco

Arden Dunton

Shirley Nell

John & Sue Nelson

Don & Patty Stevens

Toward Purchase of *Near Windsor*

Karen & Mike Alves

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Brian & Candace Bailey

Wynn & Heide Bailey

Tim & Michelle Cambra

Steve & Glenda Castelli

Cathy Landis

Steve & Jan Lehmann

Marijana Mei-ling

Myrtleann Pappas

Norm & Barbara Ray

Eleanor Rich

Sam Salmon

David & Ann Schleeter

In Memory of Walter Brock

Katherine Ferguson

Janet Lange

Joyce Lange

Martin Lange

Marita Rawski

In Memory of George Hinkle

Steve & Jan Lehmann

In Memory of Mary Gene Oxsen

Steve & Jan Lehmann

Norm & Barbara Ray

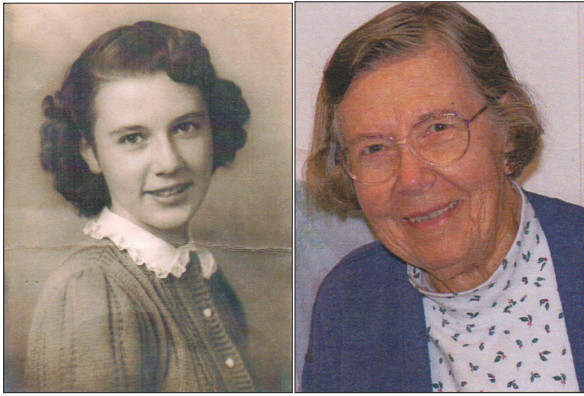
In Memory of Eleanor Urmann

Steve & Jan Lehmann

Norm & Barbara Ray

Condolences

Mary Gene Oxsen (1924-2016)



Contributed by Harold and Mary Gene Oxsen's children

On September 19, 2016, Mary Gene Oxsen, aged 92, passed away peacefully to be with her Savior. During her final moments, she was surrounded by her loving family at her home in Santa Rosa, California.

Mary Gene, who was called "Gene," was born on January 19, 1924 to Mary and George McCarty in Brookings, Montana. Her father was a professor of speech at South Dakota State University in Brookings. In Brookings during World War II, Gene met and fell in love with Harold Oxsen while he was in the army engineering school at SDSU. They married in 1946 following her graduation from Iowa State University with a degree in Early Childhood Education.

The newlyweds moved to Berkeley, California, where Gene worked as a preschool teacher while Harold finished his university studies at Cal. After graduation in 1950, he was offered a job at Punahou School in Honolulu, Hawaii.

They sailed to Honolulu with daughter Margi, aged 6 weeks. After two years of teaching and serving as resident advisors in the boys' dorm, they returned to California, Doug aged 2 months.

Walnut Creek became their home for the next 40 years. Harold had teaching jobs and Gene was an at-home mom. Carolyn was born in 1956. They enjoyed being active members of Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church where Harold and Gene both sang in the choir and their interest in missions was cultivated.

In the later 1970s, through their church, Harold and Gene heard about some teenaged girls from Ethiopia who needed asylum from persecution. They both were convinced in their souls that these girls should come to live with them, Thus the family expanded to include Bethlehem and Tsion Taye. What a blessing!

After Harold retired, the duo moved to Santa Rosa to a property in common with Margi and Steve Vonk, With the Vonks' loving care and company, Gene and Harold were able to stay in their home and remain active. They were members of Santa Rosa's First Presbyterian Church and enjoyed being part of the Windsor Historical Society.

Words are not adequate to express all the joy Gene brought to her husband, children and friends, all of whom are already missing her bright presence. They take solace in the fact that she lived a wonderful, long life filled with abundant love, laughter, thoughtful conversation, wise advice, hiking in the mountains and singing.

Mary Gene is survived by five children, seven grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren, all of whom miss her already. A memorial service was held for Gene on October 10, 2016, at the First Presbyterian Church in Santa Rosa.



Harold and Gene were valued members of Windsor Historical Society and received WHS's Volunteers of the Year Award in 2012.

Eleanor M. Urmann (1924-2016)



On October 7, 2016, Eleanor M. Urmann, aged 93, died peacefully at her home in Windsor, California. A lifelong resident of Windsor, Eleanor was born November 13, 1922, to Asa Belt and Carrie Rochester Smithers. In a 2012 interview, Eleanor said she was born in a house at the corner of Starr and Windsor River Roads. Later, the family lived on Chalk Hill Road in Windsor, which Eleanor described as "up on a hill, a lovely area." When she was a little girl she loved her dolls and never parted with her last doll. "My Grandmother Hattie Rochester bought it for me. Grandma was janitor of the Odd Fellows Hall for a long time. I used to go to dances there, then stay after and help her clean." Eleanor attended Windsor and Lafayette grammar schools and graduated from Healdsburg High School in 1942. During her youth she worked picking prunes, stringing hops, pulling potatoes, and candling eggs, all of which Eleanor described as "so much fun." On June 21, 1947, she married Frank Urmann, who passed away in 1991.

In addition to her parents and husband, Eleanor was preceded in death by her brother, Floyd Smithers, and sister, Georgia Stevens. She is survived by her son, Steve Urmann (Paula), daughter, Sue Camilleri (Rick), granddaughters Stephanie Davis (Antoine), Stacey Wyrick (Dan), great-granddaughter, Amber, and great-great-granddaughter, Kayleigh. Eleanor's funeral and celebration of life services were held on October 14.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in Eleanor's memory to the Sutter VNA Hospice, 110 Stony Point Road, Suite 200A Santa Rosa, CA 95401.



Eleanor Smithers, ca. 1943

Mystery Photo Identified — The Great Pigeon Race

Until recently, no one had been able to identify the event that drew crowds to Dave DuVander's store and was captured in vintage photos. Then, I came across the following articles in the *Sotoyome Scimitar* and discovered that DuVander's publicity stunt was a pigeon race on October 15, 1927.

-Barbara Ray, Editor



Left above, at Dave DuVander's Department Store in 1927, children hold pigeons to be released for their race to San Francisco.



Below, children and onlookers watch pigeons fly away.

Upcoming Race Announcement

October 13, 1927

DuVander Store Has a Prize Pigeon Race

Next Saturday morning [October 15, 1927] at 9:30 is the day and hour and the DuVander Department Store at Windsor is the place, of one of the most interesting and exciting pigeon races every held in this part of the state.

At that time three little girls and three little boys, Jean Packwood, Joy Reiman, Frances Guillan, Berwyn Richards, Barbara Hayes and Walter Eagen are the sextette, will release 6 of the famous Sperry carrier pigeons from in front of the DuVander store on a given signal and the birds will race to their home loft in San Francisco. This event alone would be a rare attraction, but in addition Mr. DuVander offers attractive prizes for the two best estimates of the time the first and second birds will arrive at their loft; the next five closest estimates will be given \$1.00 merchandise orders on The Department Store.

The show is open to everybody; indeed, everybody is invited to be present and witness the start of the race, and everybody may file a guess or estimate and become eligible for one of the prizes. There are no restrictions, just be present and witness the start of one of the most interesting and less cruel of all races, enjoy it to the utmost, and win a prize—if you can.

-*Sotoyome Scimitar*, Oct. 13, 1927

Pigeon Race Results

October 20, 1927

DuVander Bird Race an Attractive Event

THE WINNERS - THE GUESS

Fred Green	2.56
Lillian Silk	2.57
Mrs. Geer	2.57
Lucile Dutro	2.45
E. Gondola	2.45
H. W. Ward	2.56
Fred Walker	2.45

(Flying time: 2 hours, 52 min.)

The Windsor Department Store sec-[sic, possibly "second"] carrier pigeon guessing contest which took place last Saturday as announc[ed] in this paper, was such an attractive event, that it seemed as the hour for the three little boys and three little girls to release the birds woul[d] find standing room only in front of D. H. DuVander's big store at Windsor.

Promptly at the hour stated the choldren [sic] appeared, each coddling one of the birds in its hands with the loving tenderness of a child toward a faultlessly beautiful pet. But promptly upon the signal the birds were tossed into the air and they circled around the

town for a few moments and then straight as an arrow from a bow they sped southward toward the homing roof. Just a little short of thre[e] hours later came the message to Mr. DuVander that the birds had arrived and upon checking up the many guesses filed with him he listed the winners of the contest . . . as shown above. The first three named each won a sack of flour. To the four others, Mr. DuVander gave a merchandise order on his store valued at one dollar.

It was a very interesting contest and the beauty of the birds added not a little to the zest the participants all took in it.

Mr. DuVander plans other contests in the near future; some more novel even than his homing pigeon races. One may be hinted at here. It has to do with a very popular peace officer of Russian River township, and how many grains of corn he can feed a mammoth bird in a given time. It will supply ever increasing interest and not a little amusement to the people of the Windsor trading district, which, by the way, is growing very nicely, and details of it will be given in this paper in due time. Watch for it.

-*Sotoyome Scimitar*, Oct. 20, 1927

shortage of doctors and nurses. One young woman who responded to the government's appeal for nurses was Windsor's Miss Rachel May "Rae" DuVander, who became a Red Cross nurse. Rae was the daughter of George A. and Johanna DuVander.

In March 1918, Rae, 36, arrived in France as part of a medical team with the Stanford Naval Base Hospital, Unit No. 2. She was one of seven nurses and one physician from the United States with the unit. Rae also worked at the Navy Base Hospital at Strathpeffer, Scotland. In both hospitals, she helped care for the wounded and, among other ailments, those with influenza.

After the war, Rae returned to California and became a matron (director of nursing) at Cloverdale's hospital. Early in 1926 she took a leave from the hospital to care for her brother George F. DuVander, 43, who was ill with influenza in Windsor. Sadly, George died on February 26, and Rae, 45, died a week later, on March 2, 1926, while undergoing emergency surgery in Cloverdale. Rae's funeral was held at the home of her late brother George, where his funeral had also been held.

At her passing, Rae DuVander was recognized as one of the few female members of the American Legion and one of the first women in Sonoma County to be buried under the auspices of the American Legion.

Influenza in the U.S.A. - 1918

Spanish influenza arrived in the U.S.A. in 1918, on the East Coast, in Massachusetts, then traveled west. By late September, influenza was prevalent throughout the West Coast, first in

**I had a little bird,
And its name was Enza
I opened the window
And in flew Enza.**

During the influenza pandemic, children jumped rope to the rhyme above.

southern California before heading north.

Within two weeks, more than 35,000 people throughout California had contracted influenza, and the death toll was high, possibly higher than officially recorded.

In the United States and worldwide, by late August and September, influenza deaths increased so quickly over such vast areas, it became impossible to record all of them. Millions of people died, but how many millions is unknown. Some estimates say 30 million; others, 100 million or more. Within a matter of months, influenza killed more people than any other illness in recorded history!

Twenty-five percent of all Americans were stricken with influenza, resulting in an estimated 675,000 deaths during the pandemic.

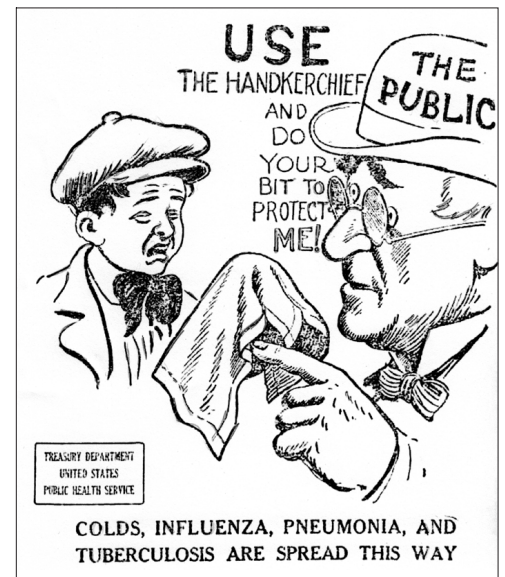
Masks Required

Masks were required throughout the world. In October of 1918, California's Governor, William D. Stephens, issued a proclamation calling on all citizens to aid in the fight against the epidemic of Spanish influenza. "Our health authorities advise it is imperative that all persons wear a gauze mask over the nose and mouth, thus preventing the spread of this disease."

Wearing masks seemed prudent, and many people wore them out of genuine health concerns or simply from fear of being ostracized for not wearing one. In some parts of the United States, an unmasked person could be fined or jailed, and in at least one city, a man who refused to wear a mask was shot. In fact, according to today's medical professionals, most gauze masks of that era likely had little impact on preventing the spread of the virulent influenza.

High-Risk Crowds

Major influenza outbreaks were more prevalent in areas where large numbers of people congregated — military



Public Health Service Poster, c. 1918

bases, prisons, health care facilities, orphanages, schools, gymnasiums — and although many health officials were optimistic at the start of the pandemic, by the middle of October 1918, fearful and afflicted communities were closing schools, churches, theaters, and social events such as lodge meetings and dances,

In Healdsburg, after attendance dropped to 50 percent in local schools, it was thought advisable to close them, following the lead of other cities.

In December 1918, Sonoma County Commissioner of Secondary Schools Will C. Wood issued a ruling that academic losses due to the epidemic should be made up by focusing on "those things that are extremely essential," and eliminating the "less essential" so that students would not be held back. "In other words ... the commissioner does not entertain the idea that the school year be extended to make up the loss of time."

By October 1919, schools were in worse shape. "The school year had been cut by nearly one-third due to two influenza epidemics making it necessary to close city and rural schools for many weeks, every effort is being made to round out the year's work without holding back the students."

In October 1918, a local newspaper

reported that “nearly every child is down with influenza at Lytton Orphanage,” north of Healdsburg. Dr. J. C. Condit took charge of the young patients but when he could no longer handle the caseload, he sent for help from the State, which promptly sent another physician and several nurses.

By the end of November 1918, 44 residents, plus a medical staff member, Dr. Lawlor, had died as a result of influenza at Sonoma State Home for the Feeble Minded at Glen Ellen (now Sonoma Developmental Center). The facility, which was overcrowded, primarily housed individuals who suffered from mental handicaps, epilepsy, physical disabilities and those diagnosed as “psychopathic delinquents.”

Also in November 1918, the *Healdsburg Enterprise* reported that many cases of influenza had been reported among local Indians. In the Geyserville area, a few deaths were reported among the Indians and an ambulance was dispatched to take others who were ill to the county hospital, but they declined, “preferring to remain among their own people.”

That same month a Healdsburg farm manager complained that he was having difficulties harvesting a large acreage of tomatoes because his entire work force of Indians “were either ill with influenza or engaged in waiting on those down with it.”

In December 1918, Indians in the Manchester District of Mendocino appealed to the State Board of Health, pleading for help because they were “without means for buying coffins to bury their dead or to buy food and medicines while in the midst of an epidemic of influenza.” The State ordered Mendocino County to immediately take care of “the Indians’ needs, as required by law in caring for indigents.”

Spanish Flu’s Third Wave - 1919
Influenza cases peaked in the fall of 1918,

and in December the State Board of Health issued a statement that the epidemic was over. The State Board was proved wrong when the flu continued throughout California during the winter of 1918 and into the spring of 1919.

In February 1919, the State Board of Health issued another warning that a third wave of influenza had begun, and early that year the dreaded virus in Sonoma County had resulted in 175 deaths, possibly more. At Lytton Orphanage, 160 children were reported to be ill. And the death toll continued to climb in subsequent years as many succumbed to complications of influenza.

In June of 1919, Cloverdale reported a reappearance of influenza resulting in 40 cases and one death.

Bill Beedie’s Memories of 1918

William L. “Bill” Beedie grew up in Windsor when the town’s population was about 200-250 citizens. In his book, *Windsor History and Happenings*, he describes the influenza epidemic as he experienced it:

“The period of the 1918 influenza epidemic was a time that tried people’s souls. It struck young and old alike. It seemed to strike those in the prime of life, especially the strongest and seemingly the healthiest. Not many families escaped losing a loved one. Although it was very contagious, each family would help the others with no thought of the risk they took.

I recall not being able to sleep one night (and for a young person that was unusual) and the next morning I learned that a brother and sister had died next door during the night. Another family lost a mother and a grown daughter. I worked with one man whom I believed to be one of the strongest men I ever knew. He weighed around three hundred pounds and could pick up a piano on his knees. I worked with him one day, and two days later he was gone. I escaped the epidemic with it all around me.”



Estella Lindsay and her brother, Walter, ca. 1884. As an adult, Estella “Stella” married Laurel Packwood. In December 1918, Stella, 43, and her daughter Esther, 22, contracted influenza and died at their Windsor home. (Photo courtesy Judy Sabin)

Bill Beedie didn’t provide the names of his neighbors and friends who succumbed to influenza, but with some historical sleuthing, the others he mentioned have, I believe, been identified through family, genealogical records, historic newspapers, and Shiloh Cemetery records.

Bill Beedie, being a youngster during the 1918-1919 pandemic, was not aware of all Windsor’s deaths. I have unearthed the facts on one additional influenza victim, but the others are yet to be discovered.

Estella and Esther Packwood (1874 -1918) and (1896 -1918)

The “mother and grown daughter” mentioned in Bill Beedie’s book were Mrs. Estella Lindsay Packwood and her daughter Esther. Estella was the wife of Laurel Evan Packwood. Their daughter Esther was a teacher at Manzanita School in Healdsburg’s Dry Creek area, and although she was reportedly “not feeling well” on December 19, the Friday before Christmas, she taught her students until school let out for the holidays. Six days later, on Christmas Day, Esther, 22, passed away. Two days after that, on December 27, her mother,

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Estella, 43, died.

**James Raymond “Ray” Welch
(1885-1919)**

The young man whom Bill Beedie described as weighing “around 300 pounds” and was “one of the strongest men I ever knew” was probably Raymond Welch, whose photograph appears on page 1 of this newsletter, Ray’s World War I draft registration form, completed in September 1918, just months before his death in January 1919, described him as “tall and stout.” Ray was the son of Frank T. and Ella McClelland Welch, and his obituary described him as a “strong man ... of magnificent physique” so robust that “it seems impossible that he should be cut off in the prime of his manhood.”

Ray was a lifelong resident of Windsor and his strength and athletic ability were evident during his youth. He was a member of Healdsburg High School’s football team, and he also played football at College of the Pacific. Just a few days before his death, he appeared to be in good health, visiting with friends,

Ray’s obituary in the *Healdsburg Enterprise* reported that he had been ill for only a few days. “From the first, when it was found that pneumonia had followed influenza, his physicians had but little hope of his recovery as the disease had taken such a strong hold on the young man.”

Lurella Friis, Ray’s niece, recalls that although the Welch family lived on Mark West Creek, Ray lived independently at his Windsor home, located on what the family called “the lower ranch,” where Old Redwood Highway and Shiloh Road meet. According to Lurella, Ray hadn’t been seen for several days and when someone went to check on him, they found him deathly ill. He was carried to his parents’ home. Lurella recalls, “My Aunt Crita (Mary Clarita Welch, Ray’s older sister) told me that Ray died in her arms.

Crita was the eldest of the three Welch girls and she and Ray were very close.”

In addition to his parents and Mary Clarita, Ray Welch was survived by sisters Lois Lavinia and Lura Isabella.

**Giovanni “John” Volpe
(1876-1918)**

Although not cited among Bill Beedie’s list of 1918 deaths, a relative newcomer to the Windsor community, Giovanni “John” Volpe, was also a victim of influenza.

John Volpe, 42, died at his Windsor home on November 4, 1918. He was born in 1876 in Dogliani, Italy, arrived in the United States in 1904, and became a naturalized citizen in 1916. His witnesses for the naturalization proceedings, which took place in Santa Rosa, California, were Mateo Qualia of Windsor, and Peter Busso of Oakland. Both men were business partners with Volpe in a Windsor hotel, which they had been managing since around 1913. Mr. Volpe was survived by his wife, Josie Volpe, a brother in Oakland, and a brother and sister in Italy.

Admirable Community Strength

Those who survived the influenza pandemic of 1918-1919 were fortunate. Those who cared for those who were ill are admirable. So many people died, many of them young, leaving thousands without those they loved: parents, children, friends, and relatives. Communities across the country did what they could to help, closing their schools, churches, theaters, shops and saloons. Doctors, nurses, and volunteers committed themselves to caring for the ill, sometimes sacrificing their own lives. Likewise, family members, heedless of risks to their own health, tirelessly tended to close and distant relatives, neighbors and friends during the influenza epidemic.

The 1918-1919 influenza pandemic is a powerful reminder that



Giovanni “John” Volpe

This Windsor hotel owner, a relative newcomer to Windsor, died of influenza in 1918. (photo courtesy Volpe family)

mankind has endured devastating crises in the past and survived, and that individuals are often stronger than they believe they are when called upon to help others.



News Sources, Articles in Chronological Order:

- “Lytton Orphanage Has Epidemic,” *Healdsburg Enterprise*, 19 Oct 1918
- “Governor Makes Appeal to Halt Influenza,” *Healdsburg Enterprise*, 26 Oct 1918
- “Health Conditions Improved Here, Health Officer Says Epidemic Seems to Be Lessening,” *Healdsburg Enterprise*, 2 Nov 1918
- “John Volpi [Volpe] Died in Windsor Monday of Influenza,” *Healdsburg Enterprise*, 9 Nov 1918
- “Geyserville News Items,” *Healdsburg Tribune, Enterprise and Scimitar*, 9 Nov 1918
- “Many Die at State Home,” *Healdsburg Tribune, Enterprise and Scimitar*, 14 Nov 1918; Sonoma Developmental Center web site
- “Mendocino Indians Make Appeal to State Board,” *Healdsburg Enterprise*, 21 Dec 1918
- “Influenza Epidemic Is Over, Says State,” *Healdsburg Enterprise*, 21 Dec 1918
- “Teachers Not to Lose for Enforced Vacation,” *Healdsburg Enterprise*, 21 Dec 1918
- “Mother and Daughter Die of Pneumonia. Miss Esther Packwood and Mother Answer Summons,” *Healdsburg Enterprise*, 28 Dec 1918
- “Young Man’s Death Causes Sorrow,” *Healdsburg Enterprise*, 11 Jan 1919
- “State Health Board Warns of Influenza,” *Healdsburg Enterprise*, 22 Feb 1919
- “Teachers Institute To Be Held in Fall, Epidemic and Short Terms Cause Change,” *Healdsburg Enterprise*, 15 Mar, 1919
- “Cloverdale Has Return of Flu Epidemic,” *Healdsburg Enterprise*, 14 Jun 1919
- “Miss Rae DuVander Dies in Cloverdale,” *Healdsburg Tribune*, 6 Mar 1926

Other:

- “The American Influenza Epidemic of 1918-1919,” *Influenza Encyclopedia*, online
- Beedie, William L., *Windsor History and Happenings*, 1978, p. 71
- “The Great Pandemic, California,” U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, online
- “The Great Pandemic, Medical Care in 1918,” National Library of Medicine, online
- “The Great Pandemic, The United States in 1918-1919,” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- “The 1918 Influenza: A Pandemic,” Ancestry Learning Center
- “The Influenza Epidemic of 1918, A Pandemic,” National Archives, online
- Navy Nurse Corps History, online
- Sonoma Count Death Records, 1918-1919, Steve Lehmann research
- Shiloh Cemetery Records, Windsor, California

Individuals:

- Carol Ann Beedie, Lynn Cornelissen, Marilyn DuVander, Jim DuVander, Lurella Friis, Nancy and Mike Frost, Steve Lehmann, Patty Stevens

Windsor Newsmakers from the Past

Christmas Babies

December 22, 1927

December 25, 1909 Native Daughter at Windsor

Mr. and Mrs. Lueder Lehmkuhl of Windsor are celebrating the arrival of a fine little native daughter who came to the home of papa and mamma Lehmkuhl on Christmas night. Mrs. Lehmkuhl was formerly Miss Ethel Philpott. Dr. Condit was the attending physician.

Sotoyome Scimitar, Dec. 30., 1909

December 24, 1934 Santa Claus Leaves Christmas Babies

Old Doc Stork played the role of Santa Claus and left holiday gifts at the home of two families. He called on Christmas eve and brought a six and a half pound daughter to Mrs. Anne Lee Catlidge of Windsor, and on Christmas day he gladdened the home of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Clark of Cloverdale, with a seven pound son. The latter was born in a Santa Rosa hospital, and the Catlidge baby was born at home.

Healdsburg Tribune, Dec. 29., 1934

December 25, 1941 Santa Brings Girl to Windsor Family

Doc Stork paused a few moments. It was 1:10 o'clock Christmas morning and he was playing the role of Santa Claus. Neatly done up in a Christmas package was an eight-pound girl. "Yes, that's the place," he murmured as he flew over the home of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Larue of Windsor and, with a "Merry Christmas" greeting, left the gift there, to make the second girl in a family of four children. Mother and baby are doing nicely.

Healdsburg Tribune, Dec. 29, 1941

A Merry Christmas

By Mary Jane Carter

Asleep in a manger, a tiny babe lay—
Mary, his mother, was couched in the hay—
Ever the bright Star shone overhead,
Radiant beams over Bethlehem shed;
Royal gifts unto Him the wise men did bring
Your Saviour and mine—acknowledged as King



Carols were sung by angels above,
Hosannahs to God for this proof of His love!
Resting so peacefully there midst the kine,
In swaddling clothes—the Infant divine.
Such are our thoughts on this Christmas day:
Tender, toward mother and babe—as we pray
May the light of their sacrifice strike inner fire
As nearer to God our spirits aspire
Softly and tenderly, our prayer shall be:
"Christ on this day, bring us closer to Thee."

Windsor, California, December 22, 1927.



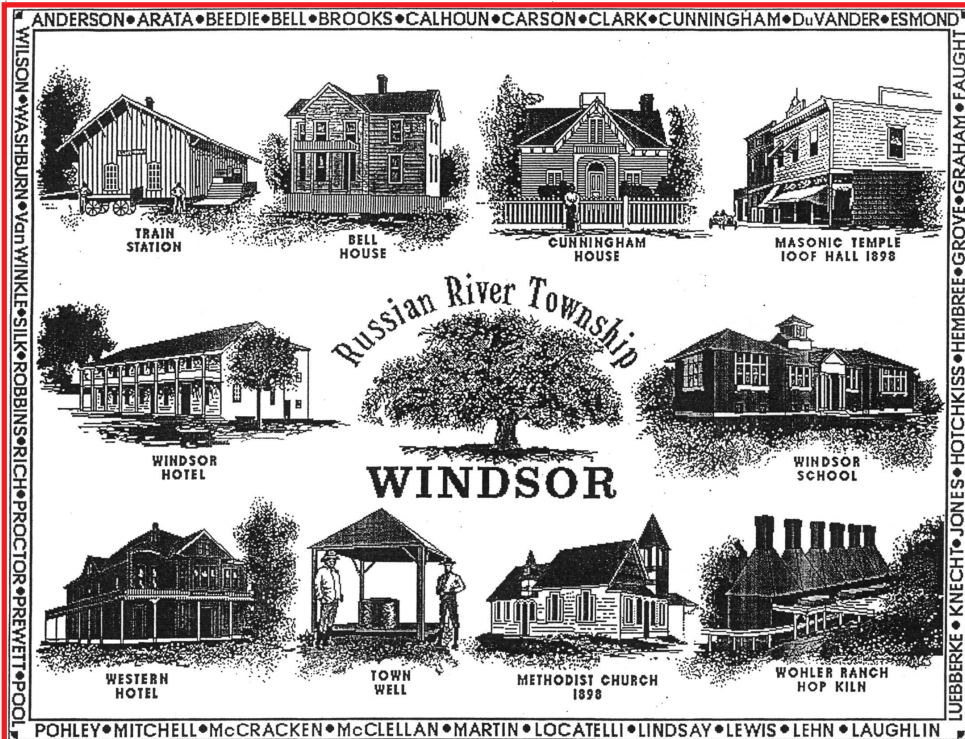
November 1924 Accidentally Shot While Hunting Quail

While quail hunting Sunday [Nov. 2, 1924] Alex Skee, a youth of Windsor, was accidentally shot by Walter Walker, his companion. The shots, about twenty in all, entered Skee's leg from the hips down. Skee is well known here having attended high school and is a nephew of James Skee.

Healdsburg Enterprise, Nov. 6, 1924

The Windsor Coverlet

Bring the Spirit of Windsor into Your Home



This beautiful coverlet was commissioned by the Windsor Historical Society and created by *We Love Country*. It is 100% cotton, two and a half-layer, jacquard woven in the U.S.A., preshrunk, colorfast and machine-washable. It is handsome and practical, measuring approximately 48 x 68 inches and fringed on all four sides.

The design captures the history and spirit of Windsor and the Russian River Township with the depiction of early Windsor and the families that settled the township. The perfect gift for family members and friends both near and far, it captures special memories and will become an instant keepsake.

This unique, custom coverlet is woven with multicolor yarns for a rich look. The price is only \$65.00 and proceeds from coverlet sales benefit the Windsor Historical Society.

Please enter the desired quantity.

_____ Windsor Coverlet(s) @ \$65.00 each \$ _____
(sales tax included)

Shipping is free in Windsor.
To other cities, \$12. \$ _____

Total enclosed \$ _____

Make your check payable to the Windsor Historical Society and mail it to P.O. Box 1544, Windsor CA 95492.

Ordered by

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____



Happy Holidays!





Windsor Historical Society Announcements



Thanksgiving 1955

With
Bowed
Heads...



"Please bless this land, and those we love,
And bless our humble board, we pray...
For all the past blessings, Lord above,
We thank Thee, this Thanksgiving Day."

IN OBSERVANCE OF THANKSGIVING... OUR BANK WILL
NOT TRANSACT BUSINESS ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24



Healdsburg Tribune, November 1955



Museum Hours

WHS's Hembree House Museum is open every Friday, Saturday and Sunday (except holidays) from 9:30 to 4:30. It's a great way to experience Windsor's past.

WHS Hembree House Museum
9225 Foxwood Dr.
Windsor, California



New Museum Exhibit

Don't miss WHS's new exhibit featuring historic items from Windsor's Diamantini family.

Help Needed!

WHS's annual polenta dinner is our most important fundraiser, helping us meet the financial needs of our museum. We need your help to make the polenta dinner a success. Volunteers are needed to plan, solicit door prizes and auction items, prep food, oversee auction tables, sell raffle tickets, work in the kitchen, and other fun tasks. Please call a.s.a.p., 707-838-4563.



Happy New Year!



Cheers to Volunteers!

Get 2017 off to a great start by signing up to serve as a docent at the Hembree House Museum. It's easy and fun. For more information, call Jan Lehmann, 838-6152. We really do need you!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



Polenta by Pietro Longhi (November 5, 1701 – May 8, 1785)

WINDSOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

7th Annual Benefit

\$25 Polenta Dinner \$25

February 25, 2017

Social Time & Auction 6:00

Dinner at 7:00

Windsor Community Center

901 Adele Dr.

**Complete Dinner Including
Wine and Dessert**

**For tickets and more information,
call Windsor Historical Society**

838-6152 or 838-4563

Silent Auction. Lots of Raffle Prizes.

***P.S. Get your tickets soon. This
event always sells out!***

Windsor Historical Society • P.O. Box 1544, Windsor, CA 95492

Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

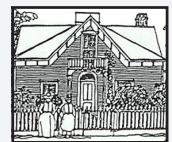
Phone _____

Email _____

Type of Membership _____

Please select from the following list of memberships:

- Life Member \$300.00
- Family Membership \$ 25.00
- Family of Seniors (60+) \$ 20.00
- Individual \$ 20.00
- Individual Senior (60+) \$ 15.00



Area of Interest

- Museum Receptionist _____
- Research _____
- Publicity _____
- Garden Club _____
- Grant Writing _____
- Board Member _____
- Newletter Articles _____
- Fundraising _____
- Other _____



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The epidemic that tried people's souls. -William L. Beedie, 1978

SURNAME INDEX

Names in parentheses are married surnames

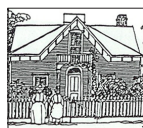
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Happy Holidays!



Windsor Historical Society
P.O. Box 1544
Windsor, CA 95492

Dec. 10, 2016. WHS Holiday Party, 2-5 p.m.

Feb. 25, 2017. WHS Polenta Dinner, 6-9 p.m.



Happy Holidays!

