

Windsor Historical Society

WINDSOR WALK

A Historical Journey to the Past for the Future July/Aug/Sept 2009

Windsor's Wonderful Walter Eagan

From Local School Boy to Sonoma County School Administrator

by **Barbara Ray**, from an interview with **Walter Eagan**

When I sat down with Walter Eagan in the sun-filled kitchen of his 1920s home on Jensen Lane, I anticipated gathering facts and stories about his boyhood in Windsor and his academic career in Sonoma County, but Walt provided so much more. In the best tradition of oral histories, Walt took me back in time, confidently citing names, dates and other relevant facts about his paternal and maternal families, some of whom settled in Windsor before 1900.

Joseph and Elizabeth Walker Walt's Great-grandparents

The first of Walt's ancestors to arrive in Windsor were Joseph Walker (1849-1932) and his wife, Elizabeth Dresser Walker (1850-1893), who traveled from England to America in 1870, lived in Chicago a short time, and moved to California in 1880. They settled on Starr Road (the house is still there) and Joseph worked for Reiman Winery, which was located south of the current Windsor High School. Joseph became the superintendent of the winery, where, among other activities, charcoal was made. Joseph and Elizabeth Walker had five children: Albert, John, Henry, Lawrence, and Margaret.

Although we usually hesitate to introduce skeletons in family closets, it is sometimes essential to do so when they significantly affect family history. Thus, Walt shared that around 1887 Joseph Walker "took off" with his sister-in-law, Jane Linney (1859-1939), and began another family in the San Joaquin Valley.

When Joseph departed with Jane Linney, his first wife, Elizabeth, remained in Windsor with her children.

Albert Walker and his brothers were fascinated with the latest technology: telephones and electricity. John Walker, who married but never had children, worked on telephone lines. Henry Walker, who never

and Donald. Mack Bacon was in the clay business and the family lived near Ione.

Walter and Anna Zweifel Walt's Great-grandparents

The Zweifel family also arrived in Windsor around 1880. Walter Joseph Zweifel (1850-1934) and Anna Held were born in Switzerland and arrived in Oakland, California, where they lived less than a year. During that time, possibly during childbirth, Anna died, leaving Walter with three young daughters: Pauline, Anna and Lena.

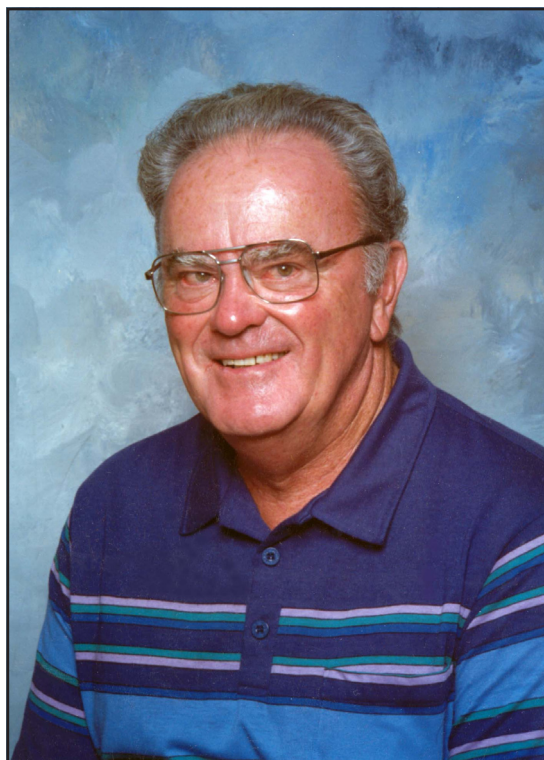
Walter Zweifel moved north to Windsor, purchasing 165 acres of fine land about a half-mile from where the Walkers lived. Walter Zweifel planted 40 acres of grapes, 20 acres of apples, peaches and pears, and had 40 acres of meadow and pasture. The Zweifel farm was on present-day Starr Road, property that would eventually be owned by the Pratt family.

In 1885 Walter Zweifel married Miss Carolina "Carrie" Scheidecker (1860-1952), who gave him three more daughters: Minnie, Edith, and Lulu. In addition to his six daughters, Walter and Caroline also helped rear his half-sisters.

The Zweifel family marriages bring back memories of well-known Windsor families. Minnie married Ernest Small and they lived in the area across from today's Windsor High School. Edith married George Henry Silk, for whose family Silk Road is named, and George and Edith's daughter, Lillian Silk, married Jack Beedie, who became one of Windsor's earliest historians. And Lulu married C. W. Butcher.

All the Zweifels were active in the Windsor Methodist Church. Walt Eagan

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Walter Eagan, 1970s

married, worked on the electrical side of things. Tragically, he was electrocuted on a power pole near the underpass at Eastside Road between Windsor and Healdsburg.

Lawrence Walker, who had a wife and several children, lived in Sacramento and died relatively young.

Margaret Walker married Mack J. Bacon and they had two adopted sons, Lee

Windsor Historical Society Board Members

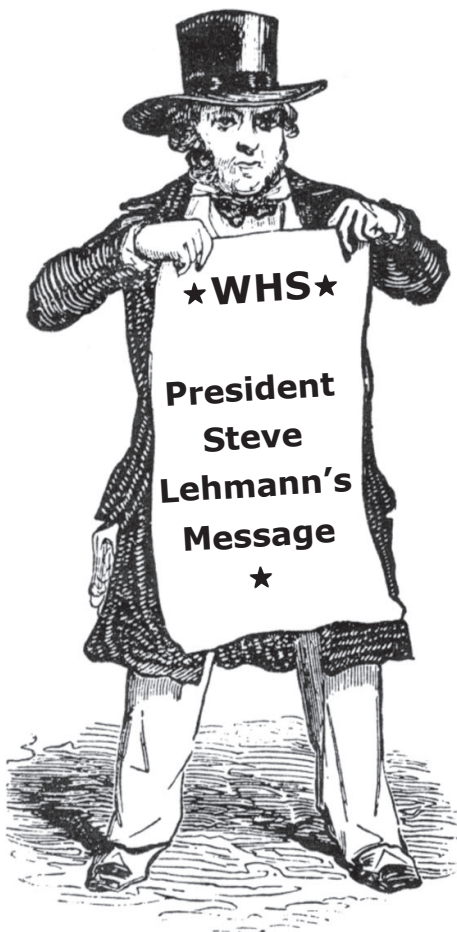
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HHCC Landscape Taking Shape

Master Plan Will Include Hops

First, thank you all for renewing your membership! We continue to grow and I think everyone will agree that we are a different looking organization than we were just one year ago. We have our beautiful museum and our superb newsletter and many new members to enjoy it all.

We received a donation of Bill Beedie Sr.'s slide show and narration (by Bill Sr.) of the Hop industry from the family of Bill Beedie Jr. It is wonderful to hear the story of the hop industry narrated in Bill Sr.'s own voice. We hope to have it transferred to DVD soon and available for viewing at the museum. This is a wonderful addition to our collected history of hops in the Russian River Township.

Speaking of hops, our plan is to plant at least two rows of hops on the museum grounds. We will have some plants

donated by Raford & Barbara Jones and John Bertozzi, and we will be looking for more. I know they continue to grow in the old hop fields. With a little luck we will have a hop-picking party next September. (Maybe make some beer!)

The hop garden will be part of the master plan for the Hembree House and we have received very generous assistance from Thomas Eddy, a fantastic, local landscape designer. Thomas is also the founder of the Windsor Garden Club and he has offered to assist our interested members in the development and guidance of a gardening subcommittee for the Hembree House. If you are interested in working on the gardens of the Hembree House please contact us. We will begin regular garden meetings soon.

I look forward to seeing you at the Town Reunion on October 31st. This is always a lot of fun and a great opportunity to catch up with each other and preview some of the Historical Society's latest acquisitions. This has also been a successful fundraiser for the WHS and has been responsible for many of our acquisitions.

Many of you know that Fred Wiseman is credited with being the first person in the world to deliver mail by airplane and many know that he built and flew his plane on the Laughlin ranch, but we recently discovered that **he lived in Windsor** while he did this record flight. I will talk more about this at the Town Reunion.

Finally, thank you for your support of the Brick Campaign to help rebuild access into "Clara's Garden." These bricks will be a handsome addition to the Hembree House and will remind all future generations of the community spirit that has preserved this "one of a kind" location forever. When we finish the garden it's "on to the Cunningham House."

Thanks for your continued support. See you at the Reunion!

Steve



Mission Statement

The mission of the Windsor Historical Society is to found, maintain and operate a community historical museum and association in order to collect, store and display historical artifacts, to develop a fund of information and knowledge of the history and culture of the Windsor area.

Membership News

Donations

WHS greatly appreciates receiving the following recent donations:

In memory of *Alice Evans Brooks*:

Robert and Edna Honsa
Norm and Barbara Ray

In memory of *Bill Beedie, Jr.*:

Larry and Janet Bowen
Lowell and Tressa Bowman
Marlene and Gordon Buckle
James and Constance Dempsey
Kenneth Dempsey
Mary Deos
Robert and Edna Honsa
Carol Merritt
Mathew and Kirsten Okamoto
James and Patricia Ontjes
Marilyn Perry
Clyde and Nancy Shigenaga
Thomas Wallner
Donald and Winifred Wilson
Jack and Bernice Woo

Thank you one and all!



Condolences

We extend our deepest sympathies to the bereaved families of . . .

Bill Beedie, Jr.
Alice Evans Brooks
Jack Eagan
Marvin Stubbs

We shall miss these dear friends who were valued members of the Windsor community.

Welcome New Members

Myrtle Pappas
Sheridan Peterson

And thanks to everyone who renewed memberships.

Thanks to Tom Thielman, Vintage Jewelers

A special thanks to Tom Thielman, owner of Vintage Jewelers, for appraising jewelry donated to Windsor Historical Society. Vintage Jewelers is a longtime (dare we say, almost historic?) local store located at 8796 Lakewood Drive.



Time for School

Museum Hours

Windsor'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.

Stylish Windsor Ladies, ca. 1915



Picture Perfect. This wonderful photo portrays Clara Walker, left, and her sister, Elvenah, in the popular styles of the new century — ankle-length skirts over high button shoes, a velvet collar for Clara, plus ornate button-work on her jacket, and a trim belted jacket for Elvenah. Ruffled cuffs cascade over soft leather gloves, and flowers are pinned over their hearts. Both ladies top off their ensembles with wide-brimmed hats modestly adorned with feathers and held in place with long, fancy hat pins. Clara married Jack Eagan in 1917, and gave birth to sons Jack, Jr. and Walter.

In Memoriam

William “Bill” Leroy Beedie, Jr.

October 28, 1931 - June 23, 2009

By Trish Darcy and Pamela Beedie, Bill’s daughters

After a battle with pneumonia, William (Bill) Beedie, Jr. passed away peacefully with his family by his side on June 23, 2009, at age 77.

Bill was born on October 28, 1931, in Windsor, California in the old DuVander house on Pleasant Avenue to Isabelle (MacDonald) and William Leroy Beedie Sr.

The family rented a house on Windsor River Road until William Sr. built the family home at 9092 Windsor River Road. Later Papa MacDonald built his red house on the property. Directly behind this was a chicken house that Bill and his grandfather built, so that Bill could raise chickens to sell. These buildings have since been torn down, and now the space is the Windsor Town Square. The large oak trees that grew just east of the yard are still standing, but that is all that is recognizable.

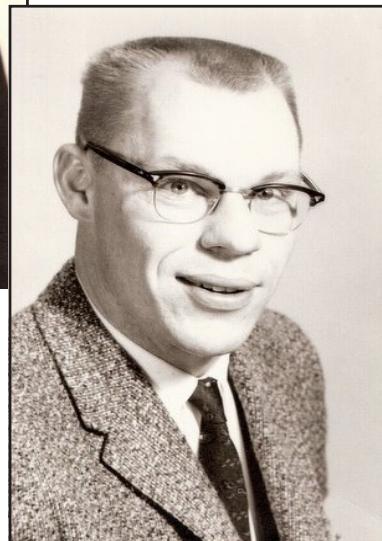
Bill lived a happy and carefree life growing up in the Windsor rural area. He attended the two-room Windsor Elementary School through 8th grade enjoying the freedoms of that era. He sometimes rode his bike to the Russian River to explore or camp, and often he helped family and neighbors with chores. His lifelong love of trains began in these early years. The trains were always anticipated, the load observed, and the engine and cars counted. This counting was later a favorite activity of his daughters, Pam and Trish, as they watched the trains rumble down the same street years later. He would also flatten coins on the railroad tracks, and was allowed to hop the train and ride it out of town as a reward for unloading the feed into his family’s feed store. Bill went to Healdsburg High where he played football and ran track. During World War II, although he was considered

too young at age 16, he took on the responsibility of spotting for enemy planes over the California Coast as part of a volunteer group of civilians. As a teen and young adult he worked at the Windsor Feed and Supply, which was later owned by his family, unloading sacks of grain, mixing feed, and making deliveries to local ranchers, including movie actor Fred MacMurray. Bill graduated from

Healdsburg High School in 1949 and then went on to Santa Rosa Junior College. He worked in the local prune dehydrators to pay his way



Bill Beedie, Jr., above, Healdsburg High School graduate, 1949, and, right, in 1960



through college and was on probation each fall because he started late so he could help finish the harvest.

After junior college, he served four years in the Navy, from 1951-1955, in Land Based Naval Aviation. He was stationed in the Pacific areas of Guam, Okinawa, Saipan, and Tinian. He purchased a camera, thus beginning a lifelong hobby of photography. He took many beautiful pictures of sunsets and later of family trips and gatherings. From his stops he sent his mother and sister sets

of china, pictures he had taken, and many other keepsakes and cards. Other stories from this time included hurricanes, Quonset huts, and the game Acey Ducey. After the Navy, he worked briefly for United Airlines as a mechanic in San Francisco.

Bill then went on to earn his BA and teaching credential from CSU, Sacramento, working as a cabin boy in Sequoia National Park to help pay his way through college, a supplement to his GI Bill. He then began his teaching career spanning the years from 1961-1987 at Arden, Carmichael, Greer, and Starr King Schools in the San Juan School District. While teaching he met many lifelong friends, as well as his wife, Bev. Bill and Bev Riddle met in 1959 while teaching at Arden School and were married on March 26, 1961. They purchased the

family home on Neptune Way in Sacramento in June of 1963, when Trish was just a month old. Pam came along 2 years later. This was the beginning of many happy family years together.

Bill especially enjoyed spending time with the family. They went camping and fishing many times each summer, including yearly trips to Tuolumne Meadows in Yosemite National Park, road trips to Vancouver B.C., Lassen National Park, the North Coast, and Lava Beds. In 1968, they bought property near

Grizzly Flatts off Capps Crossing Road and, two years later, began building a cabin together. This is where they spent many enjoyable years with family, friends, and the local wild life. Each Mother’s Day the family would plant 500 Christmas tree seedlings. One year many fell victim to the deer. The family spent every Thanksgiving at the cabin feasting, visiting, and choosing the perfect Christmas tree before winterizing and boarding up the cabin for winter. In 1984,

(Continued on page 9, Bill Beedie, Jr.)



Memories of Windsor in the 1950s

Cars, Gas Stations, and Old-fashioned Service

By Jim DuVander

There were several gas stations in Windsor during the 1950s, but not the kind that you see today. Each was, I would say, unique, and did not follow any set pattern as we see today. The first thing you would notice is an attendant who pumped the gas for you. In the pump area, there was usually no paving, just dirt or gravel.

Larkin and Hume's Shell Station

Larkin and Hume's was a Shell station across from the intersection of Pleasant Avenue on Old Redwood. It was mostly a bar, with about five bar stools, usually occupied by local characters and alcoholics, smelling of beer, while they chortled over off-color jokes, their eyes glassy and almost tearing up from the perpetual alcohol. The room was no larger than a small kitchen, with dark stains on the wooden floor from years of spills and dirty boots. But it was also a small grocery and gas station. They did have sodas, because my Dad would usually buy me one, a real treat in those days. Harry Humes, the bartender/gas attendant/grocer, would go to the cooler and pick out my favorite, Squirt, and pull the bottle out of the cool water and wipe the bottle down with a rag, and pop off the top. He'd hand me the bottle over the counter while keeping up the conversation with my dad, Don DuVander. This drink tasted heavenly to me. The modern formula must have changed or my taste buds have, because they don't taste nearly as good now as they did then. Harry and Mrs. Humes lived in the back of the store. Mrs. Humes would often walk from one part of their living quarters to the other, passing the open door of the bar on her way. I'd say hi to her as she silently glided by, a slight smile on her face. Sometimes I wondered if she thought she was invisible, since she rarely stopped to talk.

Bing's, Phil's, Mike & Dot's

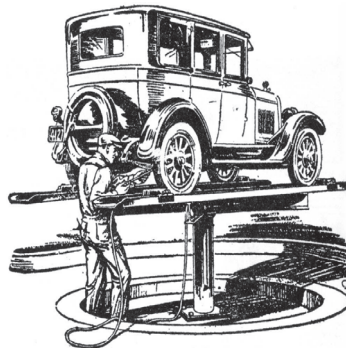
Then there was Bing's Garage, a Union 76 station downtown, across from McCracken's store, where Pohley's is today. This was a hang-out for hot-rodders, and was usually quite busy with car buffs.

These were the older boys and I avoided them as they could be a bit intimidating to my tender young self. An occasional local car might risk being repaired there, but most folks fixed their own cars. Cars were oh so much simpler then.

Phil's was down near the intersection of Arata Lane and Old Redwood. Mike and Dot's was on Old Redwood between Windsor Fuel and Phil's. I never spent too much time at either one.

Law's Shell Station

At the corner of Old Redwood and Windsor River Road was Law's Shell station, almost exactly where the Shell station is today, only with a different road configuration. This was the most decrepit establishment in town, smelling of old oil



and dust. Blackberry vines crept over the ancient ramshackle wooden structure, obscuring windows and creeping toward the garage door. The floor was dirt, with old time Model T-era parts scattered about. Everything was filthy dirty, with cobwebs and dust. A pit was in the floor for servicing cars, black with years of spilled oil and discarded trash. I don't know if old Mr. Law did any mechanic work or not in the '50s. His grooming and overalls matched the decor, looking every bit as dirty and decrepit as the building. This establishment was probably the leftovers of an earlier time and he stayed on in his retirement, in need of the nickels and dimes that came to him a few at a time selling gas. My Dad talked to him respectfully, as though they shared some kind of history and his appearance and housekeeping were inconsequential. In thinking more about this

place, old Mr. Law was old enough to have been an adult when the automobile came into being. Mechanics were very important to the first owners of these cantankerous horseless carriages. They broke down a lot and the garage mechanic was like your computer geek today, a respected and valued member of society. Perhaps this was the place to go to get help in Windsor if you had a "crash" (as in computers) of your Model T. But I am speculating.

Few New Cars in Windsor

It was just a few years after World War II and Windsorites were slow to buy the new postwar cars. Most people were still driving the one that got them through the war. Financial recovery from the Great Depression was still going on in Windsor in the '50s. Our family car was a 1940 Desoto which we used until 1956. This car was rather modern looking for its age, because it had a light pea green paint job. Most cars of this era were dark, often rusted, or had highly oxidized paint. These earlier paints degraded rapidly in the sun. The bright primary colors or white used today were nonexistent then. It was not unusual to see late '30s or early '40s Fords, Chevrolets or other boxy sedans around town. There would be an occasional newer '50s car, but not many.

Any needs that weren't served by the local grocery, feed store or gas stations, such as clothing, pharmaceuticals, doctoring, lumber, hardware, paint etc. required a trip to Santa Rosa or Healdsburg on Old Redwood Highway. It was two lanes all the way and was busy even then. Trucks (and cars) traveled up and down it night and day. Overnight visitors to our house on Brooks Road would complain of the incessant truck noise all night. We didn't hear it. We had tuned it out.





Four Generations, ca. 1923. (from left to right, back row) Lena Walker, Walter Zweifel, Clara Eagan, with children Jack Eagan, Jr., and Walter Eagan, ca. 1923.

recalled that during the 1930s, a major church fundraiser was the annual Zweifel dinner, held after the first frost during butchering season. Each year, the main course at the dinner was a Zweifel hog.

Albert and Lena Zweifel Walker Walt's Grandparents

On January 13, 1895, Albert Walker (ca. 1873-1937), the eldest son of Joseph and Elizabeth Walker, married Lena Zweifel (ca. 1877-1963). Albert's mother, Elizabeth, who had been in poor health for some time and went to live with friends, died in 1893, leaving four children: John, Henry, Lawrence, and Margaret.

Albert and Lena, like Joseph and Carrie Zweifel before them, finished rearing the orphaned siblings, plus their own four children: Clara, Bob, Elvenah, and Walter.

Walt Eagan recalled, "Grandfather Albert Walker was a member of the Windsor Odd Fellows and a deputy sheriff 'of some nature,' authorized by the county sheriff. Grandpa kept order at dances and arrested drunks. I remember one night he marched a drunk down the railroad tracks to Judge Opfer's house. The judge, old and thin, came out in his night shirt and held court right in front of his house." Judge Opfer was also the local justice of the peace and the mortician.

For a long period of time, Albert Walker patrolled power lines for the Sonoma Mountain Power Co., riding horseback between Fulton and Preston.

In the fall during hop processing season, Albert Walker worked as a hop dryer. It was a 24-hour job, and he set up a little camp near the kiln and supervised the drying of the hops. He worked for Warren Richardson, Warren Jones, Ben Steele, and

others. Walt Eagan added, "As I recall, the hop processing season took about three weeks, ending with the baling of hops."

Albert and Lena Walker's Children

Clara Walker married John "Jack" Eagan. Bob Walker married Thelma Wright, and they lived east of Sacramento. Elvenah Walker married a Mr. Maudlin, a San Francisco house painter. Elvenah acquired tuberculosis during the mid-1920s and died from the disease in 1927. Walter Walker never married. He was in the Navy during World War I, came home with tuberculosis, and died in 1921.

Jack and Clara Walker Eagan Walt's Parents

In 1915, Clara Walker, age 20, left Windsor to work as a cook in a San Francisco home. There, she met John Joseph "Jack" Eagan, an Army man who had been detailed from Hawaii to San Francisco as part of the security force at the Panama Pacific International Exposition. According to Walt Eagan, "Apparently they saw quite a lot of each other at the fair, because when he returned to Hawaii a few months later, she followed him."

Jack Eagan (1891-1970) and Clara Walker (1895-1987) were married on August 1, 1917 in Hawaii. Their first child, John Joseph Eagan III (Jack, Jr.), was born in Hawaii May 11, 1918.

After his discharge from the Army, Jack Eagan, Sr. moved his family to his home town, Brooklyn, New York, where he and his half-brother operated a tire shop.

On November 10, 1920, Clara gave



Off to Work. Albert Walker, lunch pail in hand, and his pretty wife Lena stand in front of their Windsor home.



The Walker Sisters. Clara, left, and Elvenah, ca. 1913. (Eagan family photo)

birth to a second son, Joseph Albert Eagan, born in Brooklyn, New York. Before long, the boy was called "Walter" because he looked so much like his uncle Walter Walker. Surprisingly, Walt Eagan was not aware of his actual birth name until he acquired his birth certificate when enlisting in the Navy during World War II.

Return to California - 1921

In the spring of 1921, the Eagan family received word that Uncle Walter Walker was dying. Walt's mother, Clara, wanted to go home to California to be near the Walker family and since the Brooklyn tire shop was struggling, the family relocated to the 37-acre family ranch in East Windsor that had been purchased by Joseph and Elizabeth Walker in 1903.

The house Walter Eagan lives in today had just been built in 1921. Prior to this house, the family lived in what Walter described as a New York type combination home and barn. Soon, Jack Eagan was busy helping develop and improve the Walker ranch. Jack and his father-in-law, Albert Walker, also had a well-drilling rig for a time and dug wells around Sonoma County but, ultimately, the business was not successful.

When old Highway 101 was paved, Jack Eagan worked with a contractor, operating a cement leveling machine. From around 1927 until 1942, he was a school bus driver and custodian for Healdsburg High School. The 1932 *Sotoyoman*, the school yearbook, was dedicated to "our faithful janitors Jack



Brand New Home, ca 1921. The house built for Albert and Lena Walker later became the home of Jack and Clara Eagan and, today, their younger son, Walter Eagan. (Eagan family photo)

Eagan and Ralph Sandborn” who were praised for their excellent work, concern for the welfare of students, ready advice and assistance, and true and loyal friendship.

One of Jack Eagan’s favorite pastimes was dancing and in those days, Saturday night dances were held in Windsor twice a month. No matter how hard Jack had worked, he always went to the dances.

Jack and Clara Eagan had hearts of gold and never hesitated to help others in need. Some of the many people they aided included an elderly penniless uncle who lived on the ranch until he died; the son of Clara’s brother, Lawrence Walker, who, after his father’s death, grew so rebellious his mother couldn’t handle him, so he stayed at the ranch for several months; Clara’s sister Elvenah, ill with tuberculosis, for whom a living space was converted into a private room and extreme sanitation measures were enacted to protect other family members from the disease; and three young children, offspring of a shirttail family member whose wife committed suicide, remained on the ranch for five years. The Eagans, especially Jack Eagan, Sr., loved the children like their own. When the children’s father remarried and took the youngsters, Clara and Jack were brokenhearted.

After the death of Albert Walker in 1937, Jack Eagan, with the help of his wife and sons, continued to develop the ranch. On its 37 acres, 20 acres were planted in grapes. But Jack was a big believer in diversified farming so he also planted a variety of trees: prune, apple, pear, cherry, apricot, almond, and walnut.

World War II Years

In 1942, after the Eagan sons, Jack, Jr. and Walter, left home to pursue careers, Jack

Eagan, Sr. went to work in Sausalito as a pipe fitter at Marina Ship (a shipyard). Because it was far from Windsor, he rented a room in Sausalito where he stayed during the week. Clara Eagan stayed on the ranch and managed everything efficiently. She hired laborers to do the heaviest work, but she pruned vineyards, tended gardens, cared for 1000 chickens, and handled myriad other farm and home tasks.

During summers, Clara was assisted by an old San Francisco friend, Ann Nolan. Her oldest son was in the Army and when school let out in June, Ann came to Windsor with her younger son and worked alongside the Walker women. She was especially skilled at canning, helping to put up the 100-plus quarts of peaches, cherries, apricots, apple sauce, ketchup, mustard, pickles, etc. that were processed annually. Sadly, Ann’s younger son died when his ship was torpedoed during the invasion of North Africa.

Clara Eagan was also active in the Windsor Grange and the Ladies Aide at Windsor Methodist Church. Walt described her as a happy, positive woman who loved people and work. In many ways, she had a hard life, but Walt said he doesn’t remember his mother ever complaining.

Memories of Jack Eagan, Jr.

Walt beamed with pride as he described

big brother Jack’s accomplishments. “Jack was absolutely fascinated with aircraft. He read *Wings*, a 1930s publication, for years.” After graduating from Healdsburg High School in 1937, Jack went to Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo and spent three years in the aeronautics program.

Following that, he was hired by Pan American Airways and worked his way up to flight crew. Jack worked on Canton Island during World War II. He was selected for flight crew and was a flight engineer on a China Clipper aircraft. When props and jets became popular, the union contract changed so Jack had to be certified for multi-engine aircraft.

Further clarifying Jack’s role as a flight crew member, Walt explained that it was like a third officer. His duties were those of a flight engineer but at that time there was no official position with that title.

Jack married Ruth Hamilton of Geyserville and they had two daughters. Jack recently passed away, on July 19, 2009, at the age of 91. He is survived by his daughters, Joanne Eagan and Linda Melgar, two grandchildren, and his brother Walter Eagan.

Walt’s Early Years

During grammar school years, Walt walked or rode his bike to Windsor School on the main highway. He was a good student, loved sports, and learned to play the trumpet. Leisure hours were often spent playing cowboys and Indians with buddies Berwyn Richards, Allen Erickson, and George Hinkle.

Other vivid memories of the 1930s include working in Alton McCracken’s
(Continued on page 8, Eagan)



Happy Family Gathering, ca. 1933. (from left to right) Albert and Lena Walker proudly pose with son-in-law Jack Eagan, Sr., daughter Clara and grandsons, Walter and Jack, Jr. (Eagan family photo)

(Eagan, continued from page 7)

store located in the Odd Fellows Building, and the Dust Bowl migration when folks following the crops came to town. The same people came year after year, working in the hops. They shunned the migrant workers camp on Windsor Road, preferring to stay down on the river where they had a regular campground. "There were a lot of real interesting, fun people," Walt said. "Blacks, whites and everything in between."

Walt was popular during his years at Healdsburg High School. Intelligent, athletic, handsome, tall, and personable, he had it all. He played on the basketball team, tooted his trumpet in the school band under the direction of Charlie McCord, and, a natural leader, he was elected Healdsburg High School Student Body President.

Some of his best friends during those years were Don McMinn, Bud Penry, Jimmy Shinn, Walter Galiardo, Sherwood Osborn, his sister Lorraine Osborn, and Mildred Nealy. Walt's high school girlfriend was Pat Ratchford.

In 1939 Walt graduated from Healdsburg High School, then attended Santa Rosa Junior College for three years.

Military Service

In 1942, not long after the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor, Walt enlisted in the Navy. His deployment was deferred until the Navy needed him, so he enrolled in U.C. Berkeley as a chemistry major.

In the spring of 1943 Walt was called for Navy active duty, sent to Farragut, Idaho for boot camp, and spent 3 months in the hospital corps school. Following graduation, he was allowed to choose where he would be sent, and he opted for Oak Knoll Naval Hospital in Oakland, California. He worked there until November 1943, then transferred to the Oakland Naval Supply Depot dispensary, where he remained until April 1944.

Next, he went to the Advanced Corp. School in Portsmouth, Virginia for

training to serve as the only medical person on a ship, and in August 1944, he headed to Camp Schumaker Medical Hospital in Pleasanton. This was the holding place for people on the Pacific Coast until a ship could be built for them. Walt was assigned to a supply ship that went to Honolulu and Eniwetok Atoll. "At Eniwetok," he said, "large convoys regularly came through. I'd go to sleep and there would be few ships in the water; the next morning, there would be 200 to 300 ships!"

In July 1945 Walt was ordered to Rensler Polytechnic Institute in New York. Before heading there, he had two weeks military leave, which he spent in Windsor. While there, much to his and his family's relief, the Japanese surrendered.

Walt went on to New York, and when Rensler Institute closed, he was sent to a receiving ship at Pier 98 and worked in the dispensary until March 1946. He was discharged from the Navy in New York and immediately returned home.

Back to Berkeley

In June 1946 Walter returned to U.C. Berkeley, graduating with an AB degree. Originally he had wanted to be a chemist but, although he was a gifted chemistry student with an unquestioned bright future in the field, after wise counsel from a professor and friends, Walt decided he would be happier in a more people-oriented job. So, he enrolled in postgraduate classes at Cal, attending summer school until he earned a masters degree, and, ultimately, his doctorate (EdD).

While preparing his job placement file, Walt wrote to Byron Gibbs, Superintendent of the Healdsburg School District, requesting a character reference letter. Not only did Gibbs send a glowing letter of recommendation, he also enclosed a job application for the Healdsburg School District.

Mr. Eagan, Teacher

From 1947 to 1949, Walt taught sixth grade at Healdsburg Elementary School. The classes were crowded (48 students in a 780-square-foot room his first year). Principal Byron Gibbs was a good administrator, Walt said, and parents were supportive, acting on their belief that the teacher was "number one" in the classroom.

Beyond work, Walt was active in the Red Cross, the Democratic Club of Healdsburg which Clem Miller organized, and the Masonic Lodge, primarily in Healdsburg but also in Windsor. He served as a Masonic Grand Lodge officer.

Windsor District Superintendent and Principal

Walt was living at his parents' home during those years and one day Windsor school board member Ben Conde drove into the yard, announced that Windsor had an administrative vacancy, and offered the position to Walt. Walt accepted and served as Windsor's School District Superintendent and Principal for five years.

Walt said that being the Windsor superintendent was one of the best jobs he ever had. The teachers were eager and competent. Dorothy Johnson was teaching first grade and Ilma Kirkpatrick and Vi Santucci were also



Sailor Walter Eagan, 1944.



The Eagan Brothers at Windsor School, ca. 1926. Walter Eagan is in the front row, second from right. Jack Eagan is in the middle of the back row, fifth from right. (Eagan family photo)

teachers. "Time for kids was what the teachers wanted. We really had a good time."

Sonoma County Superintendent

One good thing led to another, and in 1956 Walt was offered and accepted the job of Assistant Superintendent of Sonoma County Schools, the administrative end of county educational office duties. Then on October 1, 1968, after the sudden death of the Sonoma County Superintendent of Schools in early September, Walt was appointed to fill the position, which he held until his retirement.

Marriage and Children

On the night of VJ Day (August 14, 1945) at a French resort on the Russian River, Walt met his future wife. Walt and a friend had gone to Guerneville to see what was happening and found things "not too lively" but they met two girls, one of whom was Beverly Spencer of San Anselmo. She was a nursing student at St. Luke's Hospital in San Francisco. Three years later, in 1949, Walt and Beverly were married.

Beverly worked as a surgical nurse at Memorial Hospital in Santa Rosa, California until the children — Gail, Gary, and Terry — were born. Some years later, Walt and Beverly divorced.

The Eagan Center

During the 1980s, the old Windsor Junior High, which was part of the Healdsburg High School District, was closed and the buildings used by the Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE) for offices, including the superintendent's office. Recognizing Walt Eagan's numerous contributions to Windsor and Sonoma County, the facility was named the Eagan Center. Later, when SCOE built a new complex near the airport, the Eagan Center was closed. After incorporation, the Town of Windsor bought the property and converted it to another public use with a new name. Walt is gracious about the name change, stating it is a practical designation for its current use.

Given the historical significance of Walter Eagan's ancestors in Windsor, his dedicated military service, untold community contributions, and exemplary academic leadership, many of us are hoping that he will once again be honored with permanent, visible recognition in the community he loves.



(Bill Beedie, Jr., continued from page 4)

Bill finally got his dream of a windmill when it was installed above the cabin to pump water from the well. Now we had a new cabin activity — waiting for the winds to pick up. It was a sad day when the property was sold 33 years later in 2001.

Bill was an avid vegetable gardener and shared the fruits of his labor with friends, family, neighbors, and anybody else he ran into. What wasn't eaten fresh was canned, pickled or frozen. Like all aspects of his life, nothing was wasted. He continued his father's tradition of planting pumpkins for his grandkids, scratching their names in the pumpkins while they were still green, and then harvesting them together. He left a legacy of a bountiful garden for his family to enjoy and continue together.

In 1989 the joy of grandchildren began coming his way, and they were a source of happiness and pride. He thought highly of Lizz's kind spirit and contemplative personality. Emily impressed him with her humor and creativity. Christopher, who shares a birthday with Papa, is following in his athletic footsteps and sense of humor. He enjoyed Nicholas' curiosity for and knowledge of the outdoors and attention to details. Patrick spent many hours with Papa in the garden and they had many conversations centered around Patrick's fanciful imagination. He had a special place in his heart for each grandchild.

Anyone who was lucky enough to know Bill found out very early on that he had a dry sense of humor. He raised his kids to be strong, independent thinkers and workers.

He was quiet, yet had very strong beliefs. If you ever needed any sort of information, you could go to Bill and he would have the answer, often with a story to go along with it. He will be greatly missed by family and friends who knew him well and also by those who were mere acquaintances. The lives Bill touched were many.



Note from WHS President Steve

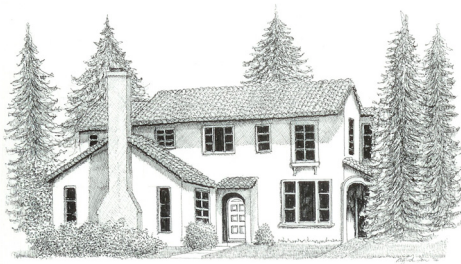
Lehmann: Bill's father was also Bill — Bill Beedie, Sr. — and the street alongside Pohley's market is named for him. Bill, Sr. was one of the earlier Windsor Historians and the author of *Windsor, History and Happenings* published in 1979. The Windsor Historical Society was the recent recipient of many items from Bill Sr.'s collection due to the diligence and thoughtfulness of Bill Jr., who, along with his wife, Beverly, have been longtime members and supporters of our Historical Society.



Bill Beedie Way — A Family Honored. On an April 2009 trip through Windsor, Bill Beedie, Jr. and family posed on the street named in honor of Bill Beedie, Sr. Standing, from left to right, are Bill, grandchildren Trish Darcy, Nicholas Lemke, Emily Darcy, and Patrick Lemke, and Bill, Jr.'s wife, Beverly Beedie.

Windsor Historical Society

"Help Pave the Way"



HEMBREE HOUSE
CULTURAL ART CENTER
WINDSOR, CALIFORNIA

The Windsor Historical Society invites you to help improve access to "Clara's Garden". You can purchase an engraved brick to line our existing pathways and raise money to build a new stairway into the garden. Years of wear and tear have rendered the existing stairs unsafe and the result is that the garden area has become isolated from the rest of the Hembree House Cultural Center.

Your tax-deductible contribution will help ensure that this beautiful garden will forever be incorporated into the grounds of the Hembree House Cultural Center and accessible to everyone.

The bricks are engraved using state-of-the-art laser technology. Their strength and durability will create a lasting impression! You will be able to bring your children, grandchildren and friends to see your personalized bricks for years to come. This is your way to become a part of Windsor's history!

The initial installment will be to line the path between the Windsor Senior Center and the Hembree House entry way.

Engraved Brick Order Form One order form per brick

4" x 8" Brick — Minimum Donation \$100.00 each — 1 - 3 lines of inscription, 20 characters per line

Each line has a maximum of 20 characters (this includes spaces and punctuation)

Please print clearly, use capital or lower-case letters as you wish and make sure your engraving information is spelled correctly. All inscriptions will be centered.

Each 4" x 8" brick will accommodate up to three lines of text.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

We will send you a receipt for your tax-deductible contribution. Include your name, address and telephone number with your order, and if you'd like an acknowledgement sent to someone, include their name and address.

Please mail form and check to:

Windsor Historical Society, PO Box 1544, Windsor CA 95492

Questions? Please call Marilou Del Greco at (707) 837-9830

Or

Steve Lehmann at (707) 838-6152

The Windsor Historical Society is a 501(C) (3) California Non Profit Corporation.

Come to the Windsor Town Reunion, October 31, 2009 and on Oct. 17, an Antique and Art Sale Plus Car Show



"Get those nags moving! I don't want to be late for the Windsor Town Reunion."

Mark Your Calendars! Windsor Town Reunion, October 31, 2009

Please join us for another happy gathering at the Windsor Town Reunion on **October 31**. The fun will begin at **11:30 a.m.** when you'll visit with old friends, look at displays of historic photos, and enjoy other entertainment. Lunch, which is always delicious, will be served at 12:30 p.m.

- WANTED - Jewelry Donations for the Gift Shop

Ladies, please look through your jewelry boxes and donate old pieces you no longer wear for use in the Windsor Museum gift shop. Antique and vintage jewelry, including inexpensive costume jewelry, broken pieces and individual earrings will be welcomed. The miscellaneous pieces can be used by Marj Tynan to craft new jewelry. Marj's jewelry has been a big hit with museum visitors and WHS members. To donate, or if you have questions, contact Marj at 838-7885; Mbtyn@aol.com.

Mark Your Calendars Again! Oct. 17, 2009

The Windsor Historical Society and the Windsor Arts Council will host an antique car display and "artists attic" sale at the Hembree House on **Saturday, Oct. 17th, from 10:00 to 4:00**. There will be approximately a dozen 1930s cars and other antiques on display, and the Arts Council will have a sale of frames, pictures, art supplies, etc. that have been cleaned out of their "attics." WHS will also be selling a collection of frames and anything else we can think of, and we will also have refreshments, hot dogs, soda, potato chips etc.

Volunteer Opportunities

Don't forget to volunteer! There are a variety of areas in which you can help. (See the form below for details.) For more information and to volunteer, call Jan Lehmann, 838-6152.

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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Windsor Historical Society

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