

## The Mattie Washburn House

### *A Historic Home Where Walks and Washburns Thrived*

By Barbara Ray

This past summer the historic Windsor home at 8660 Franklin Street, known as the Mattie Washburn House, was listed for sale, which elicited a concerned e-mail to Windsor Historical Society from a historically minded citizen. She, knowing that the circa 1912 structure was a local treasure, feared it would be destroyed or seriously compromised



**The Mattie Washburn House.** More than 100 years old, this historic American Craftsman style home on Franklin Street in Windsor looks almost exactly as it did when it was built around 1912. Washburn and Walk family members lived here for many decades.

historically. Efforts were initiated to try to save and repurpose the structure for community uses, but too soon, the house was purchased by a private party. Historians can only hope the buyer will treasure the old house, treat it kindly and preserve its historic integrity.

#### If Walls Could Talk

If those old walls could talk, ears would be ringing with fabulous tales of yore. Washburn and Walk family stories of pioneer journeys across the Great Plains and sailing around the Isthmus of Panama seeking fortunes in California. Moving to Oregon, and then back and forth between Oregon and the Golden State, eventually settling permanently in Windsor. Marriages,

births, and deaths. Successful ventures and failures.

#### Family Roots

Both the Walks and the Washburns were pioneers who headed west in the 1850s, with the Walks reaching California first.

John Franklin Walk, who was born in North Carolina, married Nicena "Sena" (or "Cena") Adair of Illinois in 1846.<sup>1</sup> In September 1847, the couple was living in Pike County, Illinois with Sena's parents when their first two children were born: Amelia "Mila" Martha, in 1847; and Mary Frances "Fannie," in September 1849.<sup>2</sup>

Apparently, about this time thirty-year-old John Walk decided to seek his



**Teacher Mattie Washburn.** The woman for whom Mattie Washburn School and the old family home are named taught in Windsor for 47 years. Mattie lived in the Franklin Street house much of her life.

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### 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



**Happy  
New Year!**

I hope everyone had a great Christmas and is ready for the New Year. As usual, we have been very busy at the museum. It was nice to visit with many of you at the Hop Harvest and at the Holiday Party and at the museum. Recent additions to the museum include three paintings by noted California artist and Windsor resident Lorenzo P. Latimer. The museum is currently displaying two oil paintings and one water color painted by Latimer during the time he was at his Windsor home where his father and stepmother, Lorenzo Dow Latimer and Sarah Rich Latimer, resided on Chalk Hill Road.

We were saddened by the passing of Mary Catherine Frost. Mary Catherine was the great-great granddaughter of Robert and Isabella Cunningham and had recently donated the bedroom set from the McClelland family highlighted in the last edition of the Windsor Walk. Everyone at the Windsor Historical Society will miss Mary Catherine and her husband, Martin. We are grateful to Mike and Nancy Frost and all the family for their continued interest in and support of Windsor history and the Society.

We would like to thank Allen Stoll of

“Top Drawer Refinishing” for his restoration advice and expertise ensuring that the 1870s furniture will be preserved for future generations.

The Sturgeon Mill in Green Valley milled our Cypress logs into planks during one of their last milling operations of the year and we have four large planks air drying for future use. We will use them for outdoor tables or maybe benches. I really like the idea that the trees that were planted in 1872 were milled at a steam-driven sawmill that was built about the same time and will return as furniture on the Cunningham homestead.

We have been transferring our records into new museum software so some things may look different in the future. Membership will see the biggest change. We will now use a twelve-month cycle for membership and this means that whenever you have joined, your membership will expire twelve months later. We will be sending out a reminder that your membership is about to expire accompanied by a handy membership form.

Finally, February 23rd is our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Polenta Dinner and this is our primary fundraising activity. Last year we sold out for the first time and naturally we hope to repeat. We are always in need of raffle prizes and or silent auction items. If you have something you would like to donate, please contact us and we will be more than happy to pick up the item. Any donation is tax deductible.

See you around the museum

*Steve*

**The best is  
yet to come!  
Join WHS today  
and enjoy  
our fun-filled  
activities in 2013.**



**December Celebrating at Hembree House.** Left to right, Steve Lehmann, and Edna and Bob Honsa



# WHS Member News

## Letters to Windsor Historical Society

### *Thanks for 2012 Night-at-the-Museum Dinner*

I want to thank all for the wonderful dinner, tour and information we received on June 9 [2012]. Everyone treated us so special and the food and drinks were divine.

Hope to be able to secure this auction item next year [2013].

Thank you,  
Brian and Candace Bailey

... my heartfelt appreciation for the wonderful experience of last Saturday—from the moment we entered the building, and were handed a beverage, we felt special.

The dining decorations were beautiful, the food delicious (I especially enjoyed hearing from the chefs!), the wine was amazing and the service was superb!

Touring the Cunningham house was a wonderful experience and much appreciated.

Again, my thanks to all for a very special evening.

Fondly,  
Lin Branscomb

**Don't miss out on this year's  
polenta dinner and auction!**

### *Remembering 1959*

Dear Windsorites,

I graduated Healdsburg High School in 1959. We lived south of the Shiloh Cemetery bordering the Sonoma County airport.

Some of the names I can recall from then are Nancy Taylor, Amy Day, Jim DuVander, Phyllis Jackson, and Sally Knecht. The town consisted of Pohley's Market, McCracken's Grocery, the Windsor Inn, one gas station, a bank, one-woman barber shop, a Mexican restaurant,

and the Methodist Church. There was also the Windsor Vintner Winery where Rod Strong got his start.

Our pastimes included riding our horses to Mirabel and swimming in Healdsburg when the dam was in place, also going to the drive-in movies in Santa Rosa.

I hope there are many who remember the "good old days."

Duane Craig "Duke" Faylor  
Canton, Georgia

### **Welcome New Members**

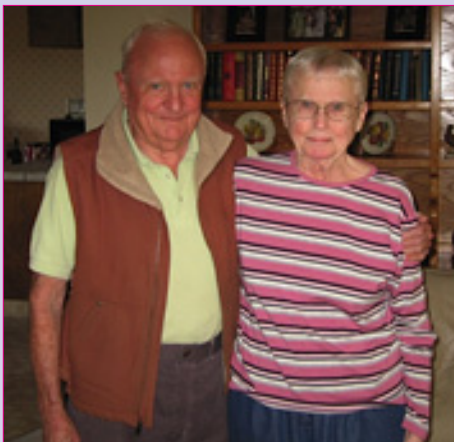
**Holly Hoods  
Peter Leary**

### **and New Life Members**

**Terry Carroll  
Douglas Defors**

## Condolences

### **Mary Catherine (Cameron) Frost 1936-2012**



*Martin and Mary Frost, c. 2004*

It is with deep sadness that we bid farewell to Mary Catherine Cameron Frost, who passed away on September 22, 2012. Mary's ties to Windsor are extensive and significant, and she has been a dedicated and generous member of the Windsor Historical Society. Mary Catherine was the great-great granddaughter of Windsor pioneers Robert and Isabella Cunningham.

Before her passing, Mary Catherine

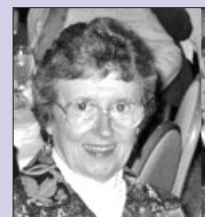
requested that her family let WHS know how much they, and especially Mary Catherine, enjoyed the last newsletter [recognizing the Frost family's donation of McClelland furniture]. Windsor Historical Society is fortunate to have counted Mary Catherine and Martin Frost among our most ardent supporters, and their donations have been among our most significant.

A memorial service for Mary Catherine was held on Saturday, October 20, in the sunken garden at the Hembree House, where Mary Catherine and Martin Frost were wed, and where they celebrated their 65<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.



**Mowing Hay, 1940.** Above, Beverly Greeott, age 3, helps her father, George Greeott, on their Chalk Hill Road ranch.

### **Beverly (Greeott) Carter Sherne 1936-2012**



Windsor Historical Society extends deepest sympathy to the family of Beverly Jean Greeott Carter Sherne, 76, who passed away on December 17, 2012 in Pleasant Hill, California. Bev is survived by her loving husband, Ernie Sherne, her father, George Greeott (now 102), sisters Carol Kiser and Marlene Dew, brother Ray Greeott, daughters Renee Colunga, Linda Kile, and grandchildren Chris and Holly Kile. Born Oct. 13, 1936 in Santa Rosa, Bev grew up on the family's Chalk Hill Rd. ranch, attended Windsor schools, and was a graduate of Healdsburg High and Santa Rosa J.C. She was a devoted mother, dedicated community volunteer, and owned a landscaping business. Bev and Ernie enjoyed dancing and traveling during their 30 wonderful years together.



# Highlights of WHS's Second Annual Hop History, Harvest and Heritage Day Celebration, Sept. 1, 2012



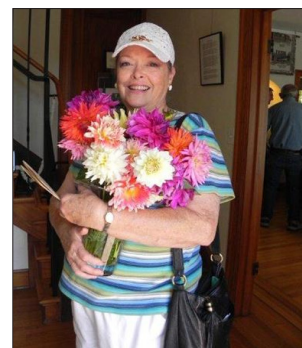
**WHS's Outstanding Volunteers.** Harold and Gene Oxsen proudly display their well-deserved award.



**Welcome!** Edna Honsa, above left, welcomes the Costers, who once lived in the historic McCutchan home on Windsor River Road.



**Windsor Blossoms.** From left, Josephine Rebich and Bonnie Strawn pose with beautiful Dahlias grown by Josephine.



## Service with a smile.

Dishing up lunch are, from left, Lorrie Avery, Benita Morris, and Jerry Avery. Hidden behind, are Barbara Ray and Chester Morris. Chester and Benita Morris came all the way from Fresno for our Heritage Day event.



Newcomer Sam Z.



**Lunchtime.** Everyone enjoyed visiting with friends while eating a tasty ham meal.



**Model Biplane.** On loan from the Petaluma Historical Society, a model of Fred Wiseman's historic biplane fascinates onlookers.



**Reminiscing.** Steve Lehmann gives siblings Walter "Bud" and Clara Brock a tour of the to-be-restored Cunningham House. Bud and Clara's family lived here during the 1940s.



**Harvesting WHS's Tall Hops**



Above, Marian Jones teaches a teen how to pick hops..

Right, in background, Ken Del Greco and Jim DuVander work with Windsor High teens.



**Smiles Everywhere**





# Memories of Windsor in the 1950s

## Treasured Trucks

By Jim DuVander

One of the things ever present in my early life on our Windsor ranch was the truck. We had several of them, each with a specific purpose or job. Three of them were modified Model T Ford trucks. One was a '38 Chevrolet flatbed. A Model A Ford truck was used for hauling tree props. These trucks were old and worn, even then. They all had one thing in common. They were simple and did not require a lot of special tools or skills to repair them when they needed it ... and they usually needed it.

Most of us kids, including our Elsbree and Johnson cousins, learned to drive the old trucks and to fix them at an early age. I was eight the summer I began driving our Willys Jeep pickup out onto Brooks Road. This country road was our main access to our prune orchard. I was tall for my age, but still had to stretch to see over the steering wheel and to reach the control pedals. I did fine, though I did worry some about being caught by a policeman. I needn't have. They were such a rarity in Windsor then. I wonder now how my dad would have explained my driving to a policeman if I had been caught. We did not, however, drive on the main highway. We could access my grandmother's Pleasant Avenue ranch by going on Jensen Lane to Pleasant Avenue via the Winset Ranch, now known as the Provence housing tract.

Running the trucks from ranch to ranch was one of the few joys in the hard workday of summer. The Model Ts and the Model A were open-air with no top or windshield. So the air in our faces felt cooling and good. We all got a few minutes of relaxation on the short trip. We would have moments of levity along the way, crack jokes, tease each other or sing silly songs. Jack rabbits would spring out from their hiding places and jog off, easily outpacing the slow truck. Dove, pheasant, and every kind of songbird were abundant along these thickly weeded country lanes. All too soon we would arrive to our task and soon be hot and sweaty again. These were long, hard workdays.

With all these young, inexperienced drivers, one would expect a rash of accidents. But only one comes to my memory. It was the last day of prune harvest, a long 30-day marathon of dawn-to-dusk work. It's hard to describe how eager we were to be free of work after so many endless days of toil. We teens were in high spirits to at last be free! We were looking forward to the harvest party. "But first," Dad said, "you boys unload the last load of tree props." To make it quick, all of us boys, five or six of us, piled onto the Model T and went to the prop house to unload. As we returned, we could barely contain our thrill that the last of the work was done. Horseplay ensued as we started back through the half mile of orchard. I was driving when one of the boys reached over and jerked the steering wheel out of my hand. BAM!!! The T hit a prune tree dead center and jerked to an instant stop. None of us was hurt, but the front of the Model T was crushed in. We all piled off and pulled the T back away from the tree. The radiator was pushed against the engine and the firewall lay over the transmission. The hand crank curled under the front axle. Rusty coolant water covered everything. All kinds of expletives colored the air blue as we figured we'd miss the party AND be in a lot of trouble. We were frantic. Our adrenaline kicked in and within five minutes we had straightened out the twisted T, as

best we could with our bare hands. The only thing we could not fix was a busted radiator hose. No worries. We started the T and headed for the shop and the party.

When we arrived home, Dad took one look at the T and said, "What in Sam Hell happened to the truck?" I gave some lame excuse about my foot slipping off the clutch as I pulled up to the fence near the prop house. Dad shook his head in disbelief at the likelihood of that probability, then turned to discover us all joining in the party. Dad never mentioned it again and we never ever told him what really happened.

The engines in these trucks were small four cylinder flatheads, with the exception of the Chevy six. The older Windsor boys who hung out at Bing's Union 76 Garage across from Pohley's Market, all had Ford V-8s in their "hot rod" cars. These engines sounded so powerful and cool. Our truck's four bangers had such a plain and anemic sound. They were not very exciting to me. I longer for the sound of that Ford flathead V-8. Nothing else sounded quite like it.

Fast forward to 2011. I am sitting at the Downtown Bakery in Healdsburg with a few acquaintances when one of them mentions that he knows of a '32 Ford truck chassis for sale with its original V-8 in it. Need I tell you that my ears perked up! I bought it that day and then it sat

*Continued on page 6, DuVander*



**Jim's 1932 Ford Truck**



near my shop for almost a year. One day another acquaintance offered to help me fix it up. It was missing all kinds of things: a cab, fenders, lights, electrical system, seats, gauges, dash, bumper, braces, horn, running boards, doors, windshield, windows, etc. I found all of these items either on eBay or at Fred Stoke's Ranch in Mosswood (the old name for the settlement just north of the intersection of Fulton Road and Old Redwood Highway). At first we were going to restore it to like-new condition, but I really felt we would be erasing the character of this old truck if we did that. We stopped fixing dents and rusty spots and decided to leave these so that it would still look like the old ranch truck that it still was. We even sanded off some of the painting we'd done so that it didn't look so new. The result has been a running '32 Ford flatbed truck that looks like we just pulled it out of the barn, cleaned up and fixed just enough to run.

Driving this truck is a kick! It stirs old memories of what it was like to drive then: the whine of the gears, the shudder of the clutch, squeaking, lurching, the smell of raw gas and burned oil, the grinding of the gears, double clutching and loose steering. It's also a reminder of how comfortable our modern vehicles are to drive and why we don't drive these old things around much any more. It's work to drive them, and the ride not too smooth either. Small bumps in the road that you would barely notice in your car can be bone-jarring events in this stiff-sprunged oldtimer. Driving at night is particularly challenging. The headlights are not very bright and don't illuminate the road very far ahead. If a car is following, their lights reflect off the flat windshield into my eyes. The only time I feel secure going over 20 mph is when there are no cars either oncoming or following. Then I can see fine and speed up to around 40 mph. That's about the top safe speed for this truck. I don't go on the freeway but use Old Redwood Highway instead. Until I started driving this truck, I didn't know how many folks are in such a hurry. Many drivers do not like my pokey speed. To me, however, with all the rattles, bumps, and swervy steering, it seems like I'm going a lot faster than I really am. Any faster would be dangerous! So, I pull over when too many

cars are jammed in behind me.

There were no blinker signal lights until the early '50s. Hand signals were used before then. Most of us know about hand signals and they are still used occasionally. But many folks have never seen a vintage truck's mechanical signal arm that was used to signal a turn. Hand signals were not used by trucks because truck cargo sticks out beyond the visibility of a hand, but a longer mechanical signal arm swings out far enough to be seen. It is actuated by a lever behind the driver's head. Part of the relearning process of driving my '32 truck has been getting my coordination down to use this signal. Then, I have to remember to put it down again after making a turn. All of this is done while double clutching, shifting, turning a resistant steering wheel and watching out for traffic. Whew! I was in a nervous sweat the first few times I drove in traffic.

The first time I took the truck onto Windsor's city streets, the engine was not idling very well and it had a tendency to die at stop signs. It did not restart too well either. So, for a few panicked moments, I was stalled in an intersection trying to get it restarted. When it started, I revved the engine to insure no dying. This spins the transmission gears to the point that in order to get it back into first gear, I had to wait till the gears slowed their spin enough to engage. Meanwhile, traffic piled up behind me. No one honked, but I think they wanted to. I was so relieved to move on out of their way. I solved this engine idle problem later with a rebuilt carburetor.

On the positive side, the windshield is hinged and will tilt forward, allowing a cool breeze to wash over me on hot summer days. It feels good, just like in the old days of traveling ranch to ranch. And now, I don't have to work in the fields when I arrive. Wow, such luxury! Then there is the unique throaty rumble of that flathead V-8. It kind of give me chills it sounds so good. There is nothing quite like an old longing fulfilled at last.

I am often asked, When are you going to fix your truck?" I reply, "This is it. It's fixed." I think this is a perplexing response for some. This is how the trucks looked back then. They were not brand new and shiny when we got them. None of the farmers I knew could afford new ones.

It's not that I don't appreciate restorations that are perfect, shiny and colorful. They are beautiful and have their place. However, my truck is an example to show folks how they really were here in Windsor in the 1950s.

Young folks barely notice my truck when I drive by. Some older folks stop, stare and give me a thumbs up when they see it. It bring back memories for them. They may remember the days in their town in the 1950s.

Some changes in life are so gradual we don't see them. It's like that with old cars. They disappear one at a time, replaced by new cars without folks noticing, till finally almost none of the oldtimers remain. We are so used to what we see every day that when we look at a picture from years ago, we suddenly realize that it's completely different now. Most of the old vehicles are gone. On occasion, some of us get a bit nostalgic and want one more walk down memory lane. I get that way sometimes. Now I can get into my '32 Ford truck and drive somewhere. Maybe I'll take my wife out to a nice dinner and remember . . .



### **Vintage Chuckle City Slickers and Watermelon**

Two farmers were having a great day at the local farmers' market. Farm trucks were loaded down with fresh, local produce and customers were in a buying mood.

But the mood changed when a farmer named Smith turned to his neighboring vendor, farmer Jones, with a disgusted look on his face. Smith said "I just don't know what I'm gonna do about them city slickers."

"What's wrong with city slickers?" asked Jones. "They're some of our best customers. Heck, that last feller bought two watermelons from you didn't he?"

"Yeah, he did," replied Smith. "But it just galls me every time I sell a watermelon to a city slicker, and then he asks me how to peel it."





**The Washburn Family.** From left to right, Mattie Washburn, a cousin, Ina Ashby, unidentified, Vernie, Ross Pool (Bertha's son) and Bertha. A humorous notation in a Washburn photo album reads: "The Sonomans are rapidly becoming civilized. In this group . . . two are able to play the piano, one is a student in the native school at Berkely [sic], one a teacher in the village school, and one the wife of a rich merchant."

fortune in California, for by the end of January 1850, he was mining in the Pilot Hill vicinity of El Dorado County, living with two other young miners, John Beard, 21, and Ephreim Ashton, 20.<sup>3</sup> By the following year, John had returned to Illinois, where his and Sena's third daughter, Ella, was born on December 23, 1851.<sup>4</sup>

Apparently, John longed to return to the Sierra Nevada gold country in California, for around 1852 he loaded his little family in a covered wagon and traveled from Illinois to California, settling in El Dorado County. There, in 1853, son William M. Walk arrived, the only Walk child born in the California.<sup>5</sup>

It boggles the modern mind to contemplate the frequency of long-distance trips embarked upon by numerous pioneers. The west was wild country in the 1800s, with life-threatening challenges along every trail. Wagons, horses, and walking were uncomfortable and exhausting. There were no highways, grocery stores, hotels, or restaurants, and no emergency services. And yet, those robust folk

traveled hundreds, and thousands, of miles undaunted by the unknown. So it was with the Walks and the Washburns.

#### **Bounty Land in Oregon**

It is believed that John Walk was a Methodist chaplain in the Army and received bounty land in Oregon as a result of his military service during the Mexican War,<sup>6</sup> which might explain the family being in Clackamas County, Oregon when the younger Walk children were born: Charles Leroy, 1856; Jasper Jerome, 1857; Sarah, called "Nettie," 1859; Harding Lincoln, 1860; and Edward Gant, 1864.<sup>7</sup>

For unknown reasons, between 1864 and 1870 the Walk family returned to El Dorado County, where they were living in 1870.<sup>8</sup> Ella Walk, age 18, was working as a hotel housekeeper in Placer County.<sup>9</sup>

#### **When Faye Met Fannie**

Now, one of the Walk daughters, Mary Frances "Fannie," was destined to marry Lafayette "Faye" Washburn, who was born on July 1, 1829 in Rodman, Jefferson County, New York,<sup>10</sup> which is long way from Fannie's birthplace

in Illinois and her childhood homes in California and Oregon. How in the world did they meet and marry?

It happened this way: In 1852, the same year the Walk family crossed the plains to El Dorado County, Faye Washburn, then 23, sailed to California via the Isthmus of Panama, also settling in El Dorado County.<sup>11</sup> Without a doubt, that's where Faye and Fannie met. However, there was no romance between them at the time, because Fannie was only three.

But as the years passed, the little girl blossomed into womanhood, and although the age difference was great, Fannie Walk and Faye Washburn were married on January 3, 1869.<sup>12</sup> The bride was 20; the groom, 39. Faye and Fannie had six children. The first two daughters were born in El Dorado County: Bertha Luella, April 17, 1869, and Mattie, February 12, 1871.<sup>13</sup>

#### **The Puzzle of 1872-1873**

Sometimes family histories are complicated—muddled, even. Consider the following: According to Walk family history and Lafayette Washburn's 1900 obituary, both the Lafayette Washburn and the John F. Walk families moved from Oregon to Healdsburg, California in 1872 and settled in Windsor in 1873. However, I have found no record of either family being in this area during that time period. If they were here, they didn't stay long, which, of course, might be exactly what happened.

What we do know is that at some point after Mattie's birth in El Dorado County in 1871, the Washburns moved to Oregon where three more children were born: La Verne "Vernie" M., January 8, 1877; Ernest Levi, September 2, 1878; and Faye, Jr., December 1880. In 1880 they were living in Turner, Marion County, Oregon.<sup>14</sup>

The John F. Walk family was also living in Marion Oregon in 1880 with three of their children: Jasper, Harding and Edward.<sup>15</sup>

*Continued on page 8, Washburn*



### **In Windsor at Last**

Between 1880-1882, the Washburn and Walk families returned to California and settled permanently in Windsor. Historian William Beedie, who knew the families, cited this time period, and the arrival time is further confirmed by death certificates for both Mary Frances Washburn and Ella Walk.

In 1884 Lafayette and Fannie Washburn had one more child, an infant who died on October 14 and was buried in Shiloh Cemetery.<sup>16</sup>

Both the Walks and the Washburns eventually lived on Franklin Street in East Windsor. In December 1884 brothers Jasper Jerome Walk, 27, and Harding Lincoln Walk, 24, sealed a deal with Benjamin Clark for property on the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Franklin Streets, which they bought for their sister Ella, 33. The brothers paid \$225 in gold coins for the real estate.<sup>17</sup>

In 1891 J. J. Lindsay sold the lot on the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Franklin Streets (8660 Franklin) to Mary Washburn, the widow of Lafayette Washburn.<sup>18</sup> The Franklin Street area was part of Windsor's original town plat and the Walk and Washburn families moved into

small vintage houses on their lots.

Around 1912, a new, spacious two-story home—what we now know as the Mattie Washburn House—replaced the old house on the Washburn property. Members of the Walk family remained in their small house for many years.<sup>19</sup>

### **Solid Citizens**

Both the Walks and the Washburns participated actively in the Windsor community. On June 8, 1882, John F. Walk, Bertha Washburn Pool and Vernie Washburn joined the Methodist Episcopal Church,<sup>20</sup> and farmer Lafayette Washburn and woodchopper John Franklin Walk registered to vote.<sup>21</sup>

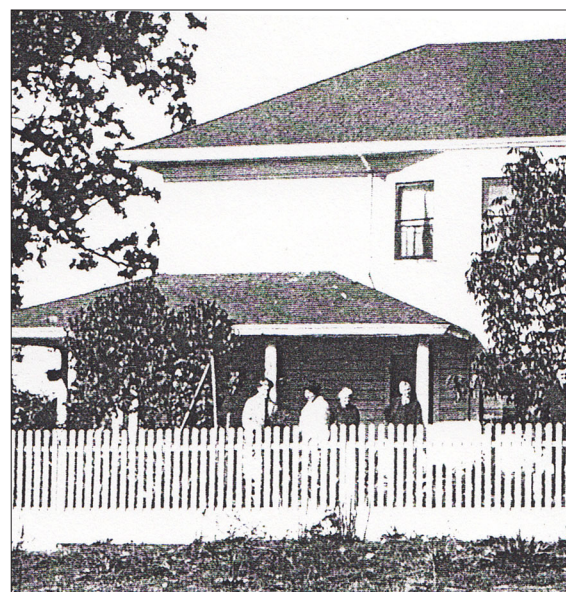
Mattie Washburn was a grammar school teacher for 47 years, eventually teaching the grandchildren of previous students.

Her brother Ernest also taught school in Windsor for a short time, before moving on to a job in San Francisco, and Bertha was a teacher until her marriage. Bertha was the only Washburn daughter to marry, and she and husband, Frank Pool, had only one child, son Ross.

For her entire adult life, Vernie Washburn worked as a bookkeeper for her brother-in-law, Frank Pool. Vernie was also fascinated with photography and was skilled at taking pictures, developing film, and printing photos.<sup>22</sup>

### **Social Butterflies**

The Washburns and Walks enjoyed Windsor's social activities, especially parties and picnics. In 1895, Mattie Washburn, then 24, her aunt Ella Walk, 44, and Ella's brother Edward G. Walk, 31, were honored to be among guests at what was



**The New Washburn Home, 1912.** Today, the house still appears as it did then.

probably the most exciting local event of the year, the wedding of Atlas and Clara McClelland Hembree at the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Greatest Family Trials**

Some of the greatest family trials came soon after the families settled in Windsor. In 1884 Nicena Walk, wife of John Franklin Walk, died. Afterwards, daughter Ella, only 32 when Nicena died, lived with and cared for her father in their small home on Franklin Street until his death in 1904.<sup>24</sup>

On December 27, 1899, Lafayette Washburn suffered a paralyzing stroke, another a week later, and he died on January 5, 1900.<sup>25</sup> At the time, Mattie, 28, and Vernie, 22, were pretty and popular, but like their Aunt Ella, they also remained single. Some 12 years after Lafayette's death, the large home on the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Franklin Streets was built, where Mary, Mattie and Vernie lived for the remainder of their lives.

Mattie and Vernie cared for their mother until her passing in 1937. The attending physician during Mary Washburn's final illness was Dr. Atlas Hembree.<sup>26</sup> Then, the sisters welcomed Aunt Ella Walk into their home and cared for her until her death in 1941.<sup>27</sup>

The house at 8660 Franklin was occupied by the Washburns for more than



**Winsome Waders, early 1900s.** Fun-loving Vernie Washburn, right, and a friend wade in the Russian River.



60 years. Mattie died on February 22, 1954, age 87<sup>28</sup>; Vernie, on January 29, 1973, age 96<sup>29</sup>. Vernie, who inherited the combined life savings of Mattie and Vernie, left bequests to her church, some friends, Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa Heart Association, and the National Cancer Foundation.<sup>30</sup> Vernie's passing was the end of an era for their family.

The house was once simply called the Washburn House, or, by some, the Lafayette Washburn House, but today it reflects the legacy of an educator, Faye and Fannie Washburn's daughter Mattie, the teacher for whom Mattie Washburn Elementary School is named.



### Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup>Illinois Marriages 1790-1869, record for John F. Walk and Nicena Adair
- <sup>2</sup>1850 Federal Census, Pike Co., Ill., p. 96
- <sup>3</sup>1850 Federal Census, El Dorado County, Calif.
- <sup>4</sup>1920 Federal Census, Russian River Township, Calif.
- <sup>5</sup>1900 Federal Census, Russian River Township, Calif; 1920 Federal Census, Russian River Township
- <sup>6</sup>John Franklin Walk, Ancestry.com; Florence Walk, "In Memory of Jasper Jerome Walk, Jr.
- <sup>7</sup>Federal Census, Clackamas County., Oregon, p. 60; Walk Family Tree, Ancestry.com
- <sup>8</sup>1870 Federal Census, El Dorado County, Calif.
- <sup>9</sup>1870 Federal Census, Placer County, Calif.
- <sup>10</sup>LaFayette Washburn obituary, *Windsor Herald*, Jan. 13, 1900
- <sup>11</sup>LaFayette Washburn obituary, *Windsor Herald*, Jan. 13, 1900
- <sup>12</sup>*Sacramento Daily Union*, January 12, 1869
- <sup>13</sup>LaFayette Washburn obituary, *Windsor Herald*, Jan. 13, 1900; 1880 Census, Marion, Turner, Oregon; 1900 Federal Census, Russian River Township
- <sup>14</sup>1900 Federal Census, Russian River Township; 1880 Census, Turner Precinct, Marion, Oregon, p. 133; Walk Family History, RootWeb World Connect
- <sup>15</sup>1880 Federal Census, Turner Precinct, Marion County, Oregon
- <sup>16</sup>Beedie, William L., *Windsor History and*



**Ella Walk's Small Windsor Home, April 1922.** Standing are, left to right, Annie Walk (wife of Ella's brother Jasper Jerome Walk, Sr.), Ella Walk, Mary Frances Walk Washburn (Ella's sister), and nephew McMelvin Walk (son of Ella's brother Charles Walk). The man seated on the grass is probably Jasper Walk, Sr., and the boy is Jasper Walk, Jr., 11.

*Happenings*, 1978, p. 47; 1880 Federal Census, Russian River Township, Sonoma County, Calif.

<sup>17</sup>Book 91 of Deeds, p. 461, Sonoma County Records; Florence Walk, "In Memory of Jasper Jerome Walk, Jr.

<sup>18</sup>Book 132 of Deeds, p. 610, Sonoma County Records

<sup>19</sup>Beedie, William L., *Windsor History and Happenings*, 1978, p. 47

<sup>20</sup>Methodist Episcopal Church membership record, 8 June 1882, Windsor, California

<sup>21</sup>California, Voter Registers, 1866-1898, p. 301, Lafayette Washburn, 1884; California, Voter Registers, 1866-1898, p. 346, John Franklin Walk, 1888

<sup>22</sup>Beedie, William L., *Windsor History and Happenings*, p. 47-48; 1900 Federal Census, Russian River Township

<sup>23</sup>Clara and Atlas's wedding album, 1895, property of Lurella Friis

<sup>24</sup>1900 Federal Census, Russian River Township; Shiloh Cemetery Record, John Franklin Walk

<sup>25</sup>LaFayette Washburn obituary, *Windsor Herald*, Jan. 13, 1900; Shiloh Cemetery Record, Lafayette Washburn

<sup>26</sup>1930 Federal Census, East Windsor, Calif.; Shiloh Cemetery Record, Mary Washburn; Death Certificate, Mary Washburn, June 3, 1937;

<sup>27</sup>Shiloh Cemetery Record, Ella Walk, 1941

<sup>28</sup>Shiloh Cemetery Record, Mattie Washburn, 1954

<sup>29</sup>Shiloh Cemetery Record, Laverne Washburn, 1973

<sup>30</sup>Beedie, William L., *Windsor History and Happenings*, p. 47-48



**Washburn Water Tower, 2013.** Long ago before municipal water systems, Windsor folk stored water from the family well in water towers, often using a windmill to draw water from the well. The water tower above was probably built around 1912, now missing its windmill.





**Frank J. Pool**  
**Windsor Merchant**

**July 1911**  
**CRACKSMEN ESCAPE IN**  
**RUNNING FIGHT**

**Blow Two Safes and Get Away After Shooting at Police and Citizens**

WINDSOR. July 4.—Blowing in quick succession the safes of the postoffice and the merchandise store of Frank J. Pool early today, a gang of cracksmen made what is believed to have been heavy hauls. The men escaped after an exchange of shots with a policeman and several citizens.

Both safes were completely wrecked, the door of the Pool store safe being hurled through the street door. Stamps from the postoffice safe formed a considerable part of the robbers' loot, the exact amount of which has not been learned.

Constable Robert Shane, aroused by the explosions, proceeded with others to the Pool store. They found a lookout on guard. He was joined by another of the gang and the two opened fire on the approaching men, covering up the retreat through a rear window of the store of a third member of the gang with the loot. All three finally got away. The exchange of shots aroused the entire town.

Sheriff Jack Smith of Santa Rosa was notified by telephone and came here in an automobile at 2:30 o'clock in the morning. Poses were formed and are searching the surrounding country for the thieves. San Francisco Call, July 5, 1911

# Snapshots of WHS's Holiday Party, Dec. 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012

**An evening of delicious food and lively conversations**

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**One of several tables laden with good things to eat and drink**



**Dave & Millie Turnes**



**Marilou DelGreco and Jan Lehmann**



**Mildred and Jesse Shannon**



**Left to right, Lorrie Avery and Cheryl Strong**



**Left, Toni Faxon and Sally Dysart, in red, share holiday pleasantries.**

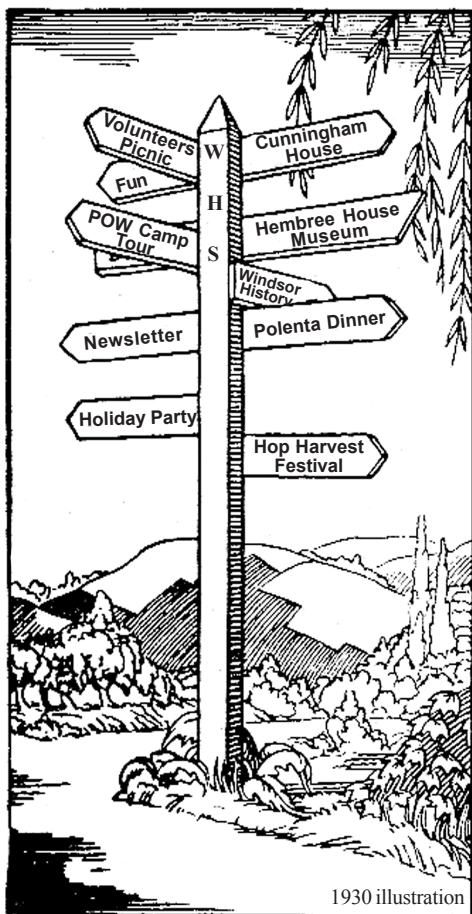


**Josephine Rebich and Ken DelGreco**



**Left to right, Norm Ray, Bob Honsa, Barbara Ray, and Jo Rebich**

# Windsor Historical Society Announcements



1930 illustration

We invite you to join Windsor Historical Society and join us on the exciting path to historic discoveries and fun events.



## Happy New Year!



## Volunteer!

Get 2013 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 your help!

## Donations Needed for Polenta Dinner Raffle & Auction

February 23rd is our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Polenta Dinner, which is our primary fundraising activity. We are always in need of raffle prizes and or silent auction items. If you have something you would like to donate, please contact us as soon as possible at 838-6152 and we will be more than happy to pick up the item. By the way, donated items are tax deductible.

## 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.

**Hembree House**  
9225 Foxwood Dr.  
Windsor, California



## Need more copies of the WHS newsletter?

Additional copies of the *Windsor Walk* are available for \$2 each, plus postage for addresses outside of Windsor. If you wish to order copies, contact Barbara Ray, 838-6152 or [ldray61@aol.com](mailto:ldray61@aol.com).

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 \_\_\_\_\_
- Newsletter Articles \_\_\_\_\_
- Fundraising \_\_\_\_\_
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