



Life in Camp Windsor, 1945-1946

Prison Guard Michael T. Berry's Letters to His Sweetheart

Number one in a series

by Steve Lehmann

In February, we had a visit from the daughter (Beth) of a guard at Camp Windsor, a German Prisoner of War facility. Beth found information about the camp on the Internet and sent us an email with a photo attached of her dad on a horse at the camp.

I think every historian's dream is to have history come alive and that is just what happened to us. Her dad was Michael T. Barry, nicknamed "Red's," and the photo of him on the horse was sent to his future wife to show he had become a "cowboy." Red's had never been on a horse before and a lot of what he experienced in Windsor in 1945 & '46 was new and exciting.

We have an almost identical photo given to us by Donald

*Mike Berry signed all his letters "Red's." His daughter is not sure where the "s" came from.

Sullivan almost 20 years ago. Red's shared a tent, Tent #5, with Donald Sullivan and referred to him as "Sully." Don Sullivan visited us with his son and shared a number of photos of the camp. He did not remember too many names but told us some great

tank destroyer company for training. During the training, he had an eardrum broken and that disqualified him from combat. He was assigned to Camp Maxey, Texas, before he was sent to Camp Windsor. Many of the POW camp guards had some physical

disability that prevented them from combat service. Red's was unhappy at being separated from his tank destroyer group, but he adjusted to life at Camp Windsor, and he described his life there in detail through his letters, and boy, did he write!

We were able to review over 75 letters written

between 1945 and 1946. Red's stayed until the camp closed, and his letters give us a look at the routine of a company clerk both on duty and off.

Red's wrote about driving

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A Load of Coal for Windsor's POW Camp, ca. 1945. Heading back to Windsor from San Francisco with a load of coal, Camp Windsor guards take a break on Highway 101 near Corte Madera. (Don Sullivan photo)

stories about life at the camp, including taking a prisoner to the movies in Santa Rosa, and the time a local farmer brought a horse to the camp and let some of the G.I. climb into the saddle.

Red's enlisted in the Army and was sent to Texas with a

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Windsor Museum and 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



**Thanks for Polenta Dinner Success
and Unique Lumber Donation**

Wow, our Annual Polenta Dinner is behind us but what a great night. Fabulous food from Chef Bill Strong (claims it will be his last) incredible raffle prizes and Holy Cow, what a silent auction! Thanks to everyone and if I left anyone out in our thank-you column (page 4), I apologize now. So many people help to make this our major fundraising event. Bill Strong's wife, Cheryl, our WM&HS secretary, continues to recover from the auto/fire debris truck collision and we are all so thankful.

We have had some very interesting visitors to the museum recently. I describe one in an article in this newsletter and will follow up with additional stories in subsequent newsletters. Windsor has a unique history, and we continue to be amazed as more stories come forward.

One of the highlights just before the polenta dinner was a visit from our friends and Windsor Museum and Historical Society members, Chester and Benita Morris from Fresno. I went to school in Fresno and met both Chester and Benita before they were married, and they are old friends of both Jan and me. They had both seen the wagon we had acquired from Don Elsbree and were very interested in the restoration plans.

It turns out that Benita has a sister living in the foothills outside of Fresno where the beetle infestation has killed thousands of pine trees. It is estimated that the drought we have experienced for the last few years has weakened the pines and the bark beetle has killed an estimated one

million trees in the Sierra Mountains.

Chester knew that an effort was underway to remove these dying trees to try and mitigate the fire danger and an idea was hatched. Maybe we could get the correct dimensional lumber custom milled from these trees, and they were on it!

We knew we needed full size 2x12, which is not available unless custom milled, so the Morrisses contracted with a custom miller in the woods outside of Coarsegold, California, for what we needed. The result was twelve pieces of full 2 inch by 12 inches by 16 feet pine delivered on February 17th. After delivering the wood, Chester and Benita turned around two weeks later and attended the polenta dinner!

The wood continues to dry and will be ready for construction by summer. Chester has volunteered to pack up his tools and help put the wagon together. We have a lot of patterns to make and pieces to reassemble but with the help of the Elsbree, DuVander and Morris families we should be well on our way.

This was a terrific donation and it's a good feeling to know that we were able to use some of the trees damaged by the beetles. Once we get the wagon completed it will be displayed at the museum in our planned outdoor display area.

See you around the museum!

Steve

Congratulations, Bill Strong!

WM&HS member inducted into SRJC's Bear Cub Athletic Trust Hall of Fame



Bill Strong, a popular longtime member of WM&HS, was recently inducted into the 20th class of the Santa Rosa Junior College Bear Cub Athletic Trust Hall of Fame. On April 7, 2018, Bill and other select SRJC athletes were honored at a banquet at the Hyatt Vineyard Creek Hotel in

Santa Rosa.

Bill graduated from Ukiah High School, where he was an outstanding athlete and lettered varsity all four years. As a freshman at SRJC, his athletic career was temporarily stymied by injuries, which sidelined him for most of the football season, but during his sophomore year he was a power player. He won numerous awards, led the Bear Cubs to a 10-2 record, and competed with the team at the Junior College Bowl game in Bakersfield. Bill was named Camino Norte Conference defensive lineman of the year and received All-Bay Area Defensive first-team honors.

In addition to football, Bill excelled in wrestling at SRJC. He was a two-time Camino Norte heavyweight wrestling champion, with a career record of 38-12. Following his SRJC career, Bill played two seasons on the defensive line at the University of Pacific in Stockton.

Bill is well known to WM&HS members as "Chef Bill," who for many years has prepared outstanding polenta dinners for our annual fundraiser.

Update on Cheryl Strong

We are happy to report that WM&HS board member Cheryl Strong, who was seriously injured in a multi-vehicle crash in Santa Rosa on February 5, 2018, is now home and gradually recovering from major injuries she sustained in the collision.

Cheryl was able to attend a banquet on April 7th honoring her husband, Bill Strong, who, along with other athletes, was inducted into the 20th class of the Santa Rosa Junior College Bear Cub Athletic Trust Hall of Fame.

Congratulations, Kylee Faloni!

WM&HS student intern will attend Biola University in fall



Congratulations to Kylee Faloni, WM&HS's 2017-2018 student intern, on having been accepted by Biola University into its Cinema Department. Biola is Kylee's school of choice from among several universities that sent her acceptance letters.

In addition to the study of cinema, Kylee also plans to take business classes at Biola. With an eye toward her post-college future, Kylee says, "Studying business will allow me to have more experience in the area that I hope to work in — the management side of Disney."

Kylee, a talented musician and dancer managed by a theatrical agent in southern California, has been a background actor for "13 Reasons Why," "Alexa & Katie," and "Crazy Ex-Girlfriend." She plans to continue performing professionally while at Biola.

Biola University, located in La Mirada, California, is recognized as a leader in Christian higher education and has an enrollment of more than 6,000 students.

Welcome New Members

Life Members: Mark and Ann Thomas Mispagel
Jolene A. Rich

Family Membership: Mary and Dana Gioia

New! Antique Benches at Museum

When you drop by the museum you will notice a new little patio, a weeping cherry tree, and two stone benches in front. The benches were donated to WM&HS by Tim Cambra and he got them from his grandfather, who saved them during the 1966-69 demolition of the old courthouse in Santa Rosa. The courthouse was built in 1910 and replaced the one destroyed in the 1906 earthquake.

We have the rough side up so you can see the work of the stone masons. The rock was quarried locally but we are not sure which quarry. The bricks for the patio were saved when the furnace chimney of the Hembree House was removed during its renovation in 2010. So the benches are about 110 years old and the bricks are about 85.

2018 Polenta Dinner Auction Donation Participants

Many thanks to each individual and business who contributed auction items for the Annual Polenta Dinner and Fundraiser on March 3, and we encourage WM&HS's members to support contributing businesses with your patronage.

Members & Friends

Mike & Debby Bailey
Wynn & Heide Bailey
Jed Boothby
Lin Branscomb
Clara Brock & Arlene Rusche
Frances Brooks
Tim Cambra
Steve & Glenda Castelli
Ken & Marilou Del Greco
Diana Elsbree
Debora Fudge
Edna Honsa
Cathy Janus
Donna Legge
Steve & Jan Lehmann
Mark & Ann Thomas Mispagel
Ann Pitts
Rebich Family
Jack & Stacey Orme
Clair Oudermeulen
Bill & Cheryl Strong
Betty Stubbs
Dave & Millie Turnes
Kathy Woodville

Wineries

Amapola Creek Vineyards & Winery
Balletto Vineyards
Campana Ranch Winery
Clos du Bois Winery
Duckhorn Wine Company
Jackson Family Wines
Korbel Champagne Cellars
Notre Vue Estate Winery
Paoletti Estates Winery
Pedroncelli Winery
Peterson Winery
Rodney Strong Wine Estates

Businesses

Bear Republic Brewing Company
Café Noto
Clover Sonoma
Cold Stone Creamery
Costco
Costeaux French Bakery & Café
Charlie's at the Windsor Golf Course
Children's Museum of Sonoma County
Disneyland Resort
Exchange Bank
Extreme Pizza
Garrett's Ace Hardware
Home Depot
James Selby Scrap Metal Design
Jeneanne Ericsson Photography
Lagunitas Brewing Company
Lupe's Diner
Mary's Pizza Shack
Melissa Morelli Photography
See's Candy
Sierra Nevada Brewing Company
Sonoma Raceway
Oliver's Market
Omelette Express
The Press Democrat
Raley's
Safeway Food & Drug
St. Florian's Brewery
Starbuck's Coffee House on Aviation Blvd.
Tisza Restaurant
Walmart on Hembree
Walt Disney Family Museum
Windsor Golf Club

Morrisse Donate Lumber for Dozier-Pressley Wagon Restoration



Lumber Delivery. Chester and Benita Morris pose beside a trailer being loaded with lumber. The couple delivered the lumber to Windsor on February 17.

Chester and Benita Morris of Fresno, California, have long been generous WM&HS volunteers and donors, but they outdid themselves with their latest contribution — specially milled lumber for restoration of the Dozier-Pressley wagon, a unique antique donated by Don Elsbree a few years ago.

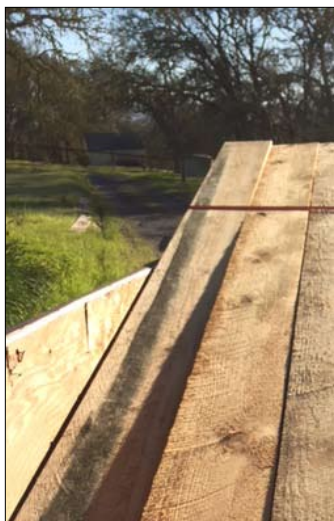
The Morrisse's project began when they learned that dying trees were to be felled in the Sierra Mountains. Chester located the source and contracted with a custom miller to process lumber cut to the exact full-size 2x12s needed for the Dozier-Pressley wagon. Then, Chester and Benita delivered the lumber to Windsor.

Wagon construction is planned for this summer, and Chester has volunteered to help put the wagon together.

(For more details, see President's Message, page 2, and photos, page 5.)



Specially milled lumber for restoration of the Dozier-Pressley wagon is ready for pick up and delivery to Windsor.



Recycling dying trees in the Sierra into quality lumber was Chester Morris's brilliant idea, and it was a great gift to WM&HS.



A few of the pieces of lumber are laid out on the wagon to see what the finished product might look like. It will be beautiful!



Horsing Around. At Windsor's POW camp, Michael T. Barry, nicknamed "Red's," sits astride a horse for the first time in his life.

to San Francisco to pick up coal, and Don Sullivan provided us with a photo of them on highway 101 near Corte Madera on the return trip.

Red's also wrote about driving up to Cloverdale to the dance held in conjunction with the Citrus Festival. He loved to dance, and when "the Grove" opened along the Russian River, he could hardly wait to attend. His letter of March 1945 described the summer resort. "It's really the berries. A 14-piece band, who are plenty good, a smooth floor, two bars & a restaurant bordering the dance floor so you can see it's quite a

Continued on page 6, Camp Windsor



Windsor POW Camp Guard Donald "Sully" Sullivan. Some years ago, Sully and his son visited with Steve Lehmann at Windsor's museum and shared a number of camp photos, including this one.



Isolation Cabin, 1938. Windsor Migratory Labor Camp residents who were ill and potentially contagious were required to stay in this small dwelling, the “isolation cabin,” until they were healthy. This young person looks pretty lonesome. In the background is the camp water tower. (National Archives photo, Migratory Labor Camp, 1938)

joint. Plenty of people come up from Frisco & the surrounding countryside to let their hair down.”

He wrote to his girlfriend that he climbed up to the top of the camp water tower, nearly 80 feet, and tossed a homemade glider into the air.

The photo of the water tower, above, is from the National Archives collection, taken in 1938 when

Camp Windsor was the Migratory Labor Camp. The small cabin in the foreground was the “isolation cabin” where individual camp

residents had to stay if they were sick with a potentially contagious disease. The young person in front of the cabin looks pretty lonesome.

Below is a photo from the top of the water tower, taken by Red’s, who had a pretty good view. The line down the center is a crease in the photo, but I am pretty sure the two white dots are his fellow soldiers there to witness the flight of his airplane. That may be the corner of the isolation cabin seen on the far right of the photo.

In April 1945, Red’s wrote about a recreational opportunity in Windsor for servicemen, “. . . a hospitality house’ near the camp which holds dances on every second Friday and they (the local women) wouldn’t trade the 12 or so PWs guard’s who go there for the whole air corps and quite a few of them (airmen) go, coming from the nearby air base.”

[Parentheses added for clarity.]

These are amazing letters to read. I had not heard about the “hospitality house” before and guess it may have been in Windsor’s IOOF Hall or maybe the Masonic Temple. The “Grove”



View from on High. Red’s snapped this photo from the top of the camp’s water tower. (The line center right is a crease.) The two small “white dots” in the center of the picture are actually fellow soldiers, ready to witness the flight of Red’s airplane. On the far right may be the corner of the isolation cabin.

really sounds like a jumping spot

I will add a little more about Camp Windsor in subsequent newsletters and will probably jump back and forth between the Migrant Labor Camp and the POW Camp. We have developed a good archive of information thanks to folks like Michael Barry's daughter, Beth.



Army Tents in Windsor's Prisoner of War Camp, ca. 1944. Among the German POW farm labor camps in California, Windsor's was the first to open (August 1944) and the last to close (June 1946).

Camp Windsor Timeline

Located on the north side of Windsor River Road just before the intersection of Eastside Road

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1936- | Sonoma County hears that a migrant labor camp may be built here. There is major opposition from local agricultural employers. |
| 1939- | Camp Windsor opens December 7, 1938, to house 210 families |
| 1940- | Camp Windsor closes. WWII reduces the number of migrant workers. |
| 1942- | Camp Windsor is requested for use as a temporary holding facility for Japanese persons in process of being removed to internment camps. Request denied – location deemed “unsuitable.” |
| 1944- | Camp Windsor opens as a branch facility of Camp Beale near Marysville for housing German Prisoners of War. |
| 1944- | In September, two German escapees from Camp Windsor are re-captured. |
| 1946- | The last German POWs leave Camp Windsor and the Camp is closed. |
| 1946-49 | Camp Windsor operates on and off as a camp for temporary agricultural workers. |
| 1949- | Camp Windsor property is sold as government surplus and closed permanently. |

Polenta Dinner Snapshots, March 3, 2018



Ahhh!
Polenta



Full House, Full Tummies, Fully Entertained

Marilou DelGreco photos



Windsor Newsmakers from the Past

May 1875 Union Picnic

The union picnic of the Windsor and Sotoyome public schools took place on Saturday last [May 8], in the black oak grove on the Healdsburg road, about two miles from Windsor. Miss Carrie Northcutt, Principal of Windsor School, and Miss Lizzie Yates, Assistant, were present, and E. W. Davis, of the Sotoyome School. About 500 persons were on the ground, and a good lunch was served. After lunch Mr. W. W. Davis and Angus M. Boggs were called out and addressed the assemblage. The crowd dispersed at sundown after a very pleasant and agreeable day.

Sonoma Democrat, May 15, 1875

May 1898 A Barn Burned

A barn on the place of B. [Benito] Arata, one and a half miles north of Windsor, was destroyed by fire Wednesday evening of last week [May 11], says the *Press-Democrat*. The barn was completely destroyed together with the contents, consisting of a \$200 wagon, three sets of harness and a lot of hay. Several outbuildings caught fire, but were saved by the neighbors. There was insurance of \$300 on the place.

Healdsburg Tribune, Enterprise and Scimitar, May 19, 1898

May 1904 Blacksmith Is Badly Burned

Victor Newman, who is employed in a blacksmith shop at Windsor, was the victim of a peculiar accident to-day. While engaged at work a spark from the forge fell on his back and set fire to his clothing. He was severely burned before assistance reached him.

San Francisco Call, May 15, 1904

May 1913 Form Big Tennis Club at Windsor

A meeting was held Friday evening at the residence of Dr. F. E. Pagett, to organize a lawn tennis club in Windsor. The committee in charge has about completed the leveling of the grounds which will have a double tennis court and a croquet ground. Electric lights will be provided, thus enabling the players to enjoy games in the evening. Quite a number of Windsorites have already signed up for membership and expect to enjoy many pleasant outings in future.

Press Democrat, Oct. 28, 1913

June 1927 Officers Raid Big Booze Plant, Still Later is Destroyed

Less than 24 hours after federal officers had descended on the Paul Coulter ranch on Porter creek east of Windsor, where they seized a large still and quantities of mash and moonshine liquor, the barn housing the plant was mysteriously destroyed by fire. The raid was conducted by twelve officers, who found the largest still yet located in Sonoma county, 565 gallons of jackass* and 6000 gallons of mash, and arrested Clarence Merick, 26, L. F. Baker, 38, and Peter Larsen, 30. After leaving the ranch with their prisoners, the fire, believed to be incendiary, was started.

Healdsburg Tribune, June 10, 1927

***Jackass.** Enforcement of the Volstead Act — Prohibition — began on Jan. 16, 1920, outlawing the sale of alcoholic beverages and the manufacture and transportation of alcohol. Before long, illegal stills and bootleggers began popping up throughout Sonoma County, a number of them in the Windsor area. Popular names of the illegal alcohol products were “jackass brandy,” “bathtub gin” and “rotgut.”

June 1930 Politics Makes Road Progress

The road leading to Windsor from the Palos Verdes (Larner) service station is being improved by the application of a coat of gravel and oil. It is understood that the road just south of East Windsor leading from the Redwood highway to the Shiloh cemetery is to have the same improvement before the August campaign closes. Politics may make strange bed-fellows, as the old saying goes, but why worry, since we get a few miles of really good roads.

Sotoyome Scimitar, June 26, 1930

April 1959 Clara Brock Visits Parents

Clara Mae Brock, who teaches at Heald's Engineering College in San Francisco, spent the weekend with her folks, Mr. and Mrs. Jasper Brock.

Healdsburg Tribune, Enterprise and Scimitar, April 16, 1959

April 1966 Clean-Up Day Held at Park

The Windsor Community Improvement Association held a clean up day at the park last Saturday [April 30].

Wayne Hammack, president of the WCIA, Charles Grove, Ferris Pfaffenberger and Donna Bertozzi took turns mowing the lawn. Louie Kaiser swept off the black top, tennis and basketball courts.

Ethel Kerr Brooks and her sister Mrs. Alice Pinkerton of Santa Rosa served the working group with hot dogs, coffee, cold drinks and cookies. Dorothy Hammack helped wherever she was needed.

Healdsburg Tribune, Enterprise and Scimitar, May 5, 1966

Note: Grammar, punctuation and spelling errors in vintage news articles appear as originally printed. Exceptions are shown in brackets, e.g., correct surname spelling.

Windsor Museum & Historical Society Announcements

Don't Miss This Event!

Windsor Museum & Historical Society's Annual Meeting & Potluck Dinner

**Wednesday, June 20, 2018
6:00 to 8:00 P.M.**

Our annual meeting will be combined with a potluck dinner.
WM&HS will provide the main course and drinks (and plates & utensils).
Everyone else can bring a side dish or salad or dessert.

This event will be held in Clara's Garden at the Hembree House,
where tables and chairs will be set up.

Please let us know if you plan to attend by responding to
Windsor.History@yahoo.com,
or call us at 707-838-4563

Museum Hours

The 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 Museum
9225 Foxwood Dr.
Windsor, California
707-838-4563**

P. S. Museum Receptionists Are Needed. To volunteer, call Jan Lehmann, 838-4563. It's fun, easy and rewarding!



What Do You Collect?

Most people have interesting collections of one thing or another, which other people would like to see. If you are interested in having your collection displayed for a time at the museum, call Steve Lehmann, 838-4563.

Need More Copies of WM&HS's Newsletter?

Additional copies of the *Windsor Walk* are available for \$2 each, plus postage for addresses outside of Windsor. To place an order, contact Steve Lehmann, 838-4563

We Invite You to Join Us

**Windsor Museum & 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 |



Hembree House Museum

Area of Interest

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



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Hembree House Museum

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

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www.windsorhistory.org — and
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Please join us . . .

Windsor Museum & Historical Society's

Annual Meeting & Potluck

Wednesday, June 20, 2018

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

(See pg. 11 for details)

