

SONOMA COUNTY TIMELINE,  
Compiled by Lee Torliatt

Earliest Days

Over thousands of years, Pomo, Wappo, Miwok tribes settle in villages in a land of abundance; Pomos known for basket-weaving skills. California Natives of Pomo-speaking groups occupy Kalé near the Healdsburg Plaza at the confluence of the Russian River (Ashokawna) and Dry Creek (Mihilakawna), and many outlying villages along both waterways. Coast Miwok Indians, the Kota'ti, provide name for Cotati.

1543

Bartolome Ferrello assumes command of two-ship Portuguese expedition after the death of Juan Rodriguez de Cabrillo, sails north near Cape Mendocino, then follows California coast south to Navidad, Mexico.

1579

English seadog Sir Francis Drake makes five-week stop at Drake's Bay in present-day Marin County in vessel Golden Hind.

1584

On a return trip from the Philippines, Spaniard Francisco Gali sights land in the vicinity of Cape Mendocino while searching Pacific coastline for a port.

1595

Returning from the Philippines, Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeno, commanding the galleon San Augustin, surveys the Pacific coast, spotting land north of Cape Mendocino and a large bay, present-day Drake's Bay, farther south.

1602-3

Sebastian Viscaino explores Pacific coast with four ships and, in spite of sickness and storms, passes Drake's Bay and spots Cape Mendocino.

1774

Ensign Juan Perez sails past the Sonoma Coast in August on way to Monterey to seek medical help for his scurvy-stricken crew.

1775

Spaniard Juan Francisco Bodega y Quadra discovers Bodega Bay and harbor.

1792

Englishman George Vancouver surveys Bodega Bay.

1808/1812

Russian ship Kadiak, commanded by Ivan Kuskoff, sails into Bodega Bay looking for a trading base; sets up colony at Ft. Ross on Sonoma coast in 1812, hoping to prosper with sea otter trade. Chapel at Fort Ross is first church in county.

1821

Mexico gains independence from Spain.

1823

Mexican mission, San Francisco Solano de Sonoma, established in Sonoma.

1824

Santa Rosa is apparently named following baptisms on the feast day of St. Rose de Lima. Earlier theory told of priest who baptized kidnapped young girl in 1829.

1826

First English-speaking settler John Reed arrives in Cotati.

1833

Mariano Vallejo, "the last of the Conquistadores," arrives, becomes dominant landholder and political leader through most of the 19th century, with up to 50,000 head of cattle; first home built on Petaluma Rancho 1834-36; Vallejo leads assaults, takes control over rebellious Indians in 1830s; creates a pueblo with a large plaza in Sonoma in 1835.

Mexican law requires secularization of the California Missions.

1834

Sonoma Mission becomes major agricultural center--3,000 horned cattle, 700 horses, 4,000 sheep, 3,000 bushels of grain.

Lumber pioneer James Dawson cuts large load of redwoods near Freestone for General Vallejo; Capt. John B.R. Cooper erects sawmill run by water power--destroyed by flood a few years later.

1837

Maria Ignacia Lopez Carrillo builds first permanent residence in Santa Rosa valley, settles near son-in-law Vallejo on Rancho Cabeza de Santa Rosa, the only woman to be directly given a Mexican land grant.

Population of Sotoyome and other bands of Indians depleted by smallpox in 1830s and 1850s. Up to 75,000 may have died.

1838

Smallpox epidemic takes heavy toll, killing thousands of Indians.

1840s

Steamers from San Francisco dock south of Petaluma; stagecoaches carry riders overland as far as the Geysers.

Cyrus Alexander settles on land north of Healdsburg in the valley that bears his name.

In Sonoma, James Cooper operates Blue Wing Hotel, buys land from Mariano Vallejo, builds first large frame house north of San Francisco Bay. Diseases, other factors drop Native-American population from 8,500 in 1840s to 100 in 1916.

1841

Russians return to homeland from Fort Ross colony, selling to Capt. John Sutter.

Henry D. Fitch of San Diego wins claim to Sotoyome Rancho (Healdsburg); at his death in 1849, wife Josefa Carrillo moves family to the rural northern California location.

1842

Capt. Stephen Smith brings first steam-powered sawmill to Bodega by ship, opens first commercial sawmill.

1843

Jasper O'Farrell arrives in San Francisco, eventually acquires Estero Americano and Canada de Jonive, some of best land in Sonoma County; area in west part of county is later known as Analy Township.

1844

Joaquin Carrillo is first settler in Analy township, residing in what is now Sebastopol.

Fitch adobe built by Cyrus Alexander and native laborers.

1845

Frederick Starke is first American settler in Vallejo township (Penngrove.) Mexican Congress grants Bodega Bay Harbor to Capt. Stephen Smith.

1846

Defying Mexican rule, American frontiersmen stage the Bear Flag revolt with an attack on the city of Sonoma.

Mexican War begins, ending in victory for Americans; Sonoma remains a military post, manned by First New York volunteers.

Donner Party wagon train trapped in Sierra snow amid charges of cannibalism. Some survivors settle in Sonoma County.

Ernest Rufus receives land grant from Mexican government, acquires 17,580 acres called Gualala Ranch on German Rancho. In 20th century, much of area turns into Sea Ranch resort development. Logging and shipping become major activities in the 19th century as mill products are sent south by schooners.

1847

Mineral springs become tourist attraction in Sonoma area; explorer William Elliott stumbles on the Geysers while hunting grizzly bears in the Mayacamas Mountains.

A group of U.S. soldiers in Sonoma organize first amateur theater, perform *The Golden Farmer*.

Geysers Canyon, with boiling minerals and steam power, is discovered by trapper W.B. Elliott, turns into resort area served by legendary stagecoach driver Clark Foss.

Mormons build short-lived fort near Skaggs Springs.

1848

James Marshall discovers gold on the South Fork of the American River, triggering rush to California.

Jasper O'Farrell buys Jonive Rancho (Sebastopol.) He names his holdings the Annaly Rancho, eventually turned into Analy. O'Farrell provides for the building of the first Catholic church, with Father Rossi in charge, and lays out a general merchandise store operated by Bodega's McCaughey brothers.

Levi Slusser arrives in Russian River township, builds spacious home. Much of Slusser land is used as military airfield in World War II, and later as Sonoma County Airport north of Santa Rosa.

1849

Hunters set up winter camp on Petaluma Creek, provide game for urban areas; trading post, town develop.

Dr. Thomas Page buys Rancho Cotate land grant.

First Protestant service (Methodist/Episcopal) held in Sonoma. Future plant-breeder Luther Burbank born in Lancaster, Mass. "Dutch Bill" Howard, aka Christopher T. Folkmann, arrives in Occidental area.

1850

California admitted into the union on Sept. 9.

County population 560, mostly in Sonoma.

Ex-miners make up much of population of Petaluma--major names include William Zartman, John Cavanagh, Samuel Kennedy, Henry Weston, and Ezekiel Denman.

Gen. Mariano Vallejo elected Sonoma district's first state senator (district includes Mendocino County until 1859.) Numerous squabbles over land, including cost of court battles, cause major economic losses for Vallejo over a number of years.

Josefa Carrillo de Fitch brings her family to Healdsburg to live; sells land at auction in 1856.

1850s

As California is admitted as 31st state, settlers move into Sonoma County--"land wars" intensify between landowners and squatters. Potatoes are dominant crop. Squatters John Keyes and Mr. Noble credited with planting first crops.

Water access to San Francisco, potato warehouses and grain mills give Petaluma reputation as the county's "market town."

Stagecoaches expand operations, run routes to Gualala and Cloverdale. Clark Foss and Wash Gilham are famous drivers.

Civil War hero Gen. Joseph Hooker lives in Sonoma area for several years, becomes road overseer, but fails in State Assembly election bid. Split over slavery causes construction of two Methodist churches in Healdsburg, "North" and "South."

Dunbar, Los Guilucos and Ash Creek (later Oak Grove) are first public schools in county.

Lawlessness and vigilante justice produce numerous lynchings.

Stephen Smith holds Rancho Bodega land grant.

Jasper O'Farrell builds 32-room home on Analy farm.

Duncan brothers set up mill on Russian River, ship lumber by water to San Francisco from Duncan's Mills.

E. P. Colgan opens Santa Rosa House, first hotel and stage stop in the county seat.

Dr. John Boyes is Santa Rosa's first doctor.

Settlers set up commercial center east of Healdsburg-Santa Rosa road. Train expansion moves more population west, creating East Windsor and West Windsor.

Captain Armstrong organizes Petaluma's first militia or guard. Pomo Indians rounded up, forcibly removed to reservations in Mendocino and Round Valley.

1851

Sonoma selected as county seat (until 1854). County is organized with judicial support for Marin and Mendocino counties.

William McReynolds/James Hudspeth build warehouse in Petaluma, export game, potatoes and hay to San Francisco.

Fruit orchards planted in Green Valley west of Sebastopol.

Bear Flagger Granville Swift settles in Sonoma Valley, builds Temelec Mansion in 1858.

## 1852

Harmon Heald establishes trading post at future site of Healdsburg (1857.)

Berthold "Barney" Hoen and "Ted" Hahman become leading Santa Rosa businessmen, succeed in shifting county seat and courthouse to Santa Rosa in 1854.

Hahman and Korbel Brothers are among leaders of Santa Rosa's socially active German community.

Settler David Wharff arrives in Penngrove, bringing first chickens to county.

Many Missourians populate Santa Rosa area, including Robert and Richard Crane, who raise cattle. Family later becomes known for world-famous Crane melons, grown near Cotati.

Petaluma opens county's first postoffice; Garrett Keller is postmaster. Sonoma Bulletin in Sonoma is believed to be county's first newspaper (some sources date its opening as 1857.)

250 students attend 5 schools in county.

Lebanon Baptist Church members meet in Santa Rosa.

Real estate man Garrett Keller lays out town of Petaluma.

Henry Bell, carpenter, farmer, merchant, dairyman and undertaker, arrives in Windsor.

## 1853

Main party of Hagins-Cockrill wagon train of settlers arrive in county. First commercial fruit orchards are planted in Green Valley, Petaluma and Santa Rosa.

Parson Cox establishes first Windsor place of worship, Shiloh Church (South Methodist.)

Prewett or Shiloh School is built with John Prewett teaching in log structure. New school built in 1863.

Forestville is named after Andrew Jackson Forrister.

## 1854

Santa Rosa becomes county seat.

Cloverdale trading post expands in town and rail terminus; Geysers Resort Hotel constructed.

Potatoes are leading agricultural product but overproduction causes price fluctuations. "Bodega Reds" are the popular spud.

Sons of Temperance operate in Santa Rosa.

First stage line established between Petaluma and Sonoma.

1855

Capt. Stephen Smith of Bodega dies.

There are 1,253 children in 23 Sonoma County schools.

Petaluma Journal, owned by Thomas L. Thompson/H.L. Weston, publishes Aug. 18; Petaluma Argus appears 1859; Samuel Cassidy owner in 1860. Sebastopol, originally called Pine Grove, founded by J.H.P. Morris. First fight credited for naming of town.

Windsor is a small town with a post office, cattle ranching and farms. First "county fair," a one-day event, is held in front of the courthouse in Santa Rosa.

1856

First courthouse constructed in Santa Rosa.

John A. and Clara McNear arrive in Petaluma, operate livery stable and get into river shipping; family becomes major economic force.

Sevier Lewis opens first Windsor hotel; facility destroyed in 1911 fire.

"Freed slave" John Richards comes to Santa Rosa, buys 130-acre area known as South Park, which serves partly as refuge for former slaves. Rawena Granice Steele, state's first woman novelist and frequent visitor to Sonoma, begins literary career.

1857

Hungarian nobleman Count Agoston Haraszthy brings cuttings of European varietal grape vines to Sonoma, creating wine industry. Barney Hoen credited with being Santa Rosa's first winemaker.

Sonoma Democrat prints first issue in Santa Rosa. Thomas L. Thompson/brothers control the newspaper through 1897.

First religious camp meeting takes place at Kelsey Gardens near Sonoma. Santa Rosa boasts horse racing track; covered grandstand added in 1880. Jockey Club formed in 1860.

Harmon Heald lays out Healdsburg Plaza on a town map. Population 300.

Vallejo sells Petaluma adobe and surrounding land.

William Thomas Ross grows fruit and hops on one of the first farms near Forestville.

1858

Green Valley rancher Amasa Bushnell brings first hop vines to county. Healdsburg holds first agricultural fair.

First volunteer fire department forms in Santa Rosa, fails; new hook and ladder brigade forms in 1862.

Petaluma incorporates.

1859

Serious conflict avoided as Sonoma supporters of squatters face off against Bodega group led by landowner Tyler Curtis in so-called "Bodega War." Curtis, married to the widow of Stephen Smith, moves to San Francisco.

Washoe House opens north of Petaluma as a stage stop offering food and lodging.

J.B. and Kate Warfield plant their first grapes in Glen Ellen.

Santa Rosa opens first public school; Court House School opens in 1866. Cornerstone laid for two-story brick schoolhouse at 5th and B Sts. in Petaluma.

First lumber mill opens near Occidental, others added shortly thereafter. James Kleiser recognized as founder of Cloverdale.

1860

County population 11,867 compared to 3,334 in Marin.

Thomas Heald, George Guerne harvest redwoods, begin lumber operations at Guerneville.

Quicksilver mining is sporadically successful in Russian River and Pine Flat areas through much of the 19th century.

51 Chinese in county, mostly in lumber camps.

Excluding Sonoma Mission, St. Teresa's at Bodega is the first Catholic Church built in Sonoma County; first Mass celebrated by Father Rossi. Robert Cunningham acquires large land holdings in west Windsor, builds historic house.

1860s

Large landholders Hollis Hitchcock and Tom Hopper become major county financiers.

County divides on Civil War, Santa Rosa sympathizing with the south and Petaluma with the north. Thomas L. Thompson, pro-south editor of the Santa Rosa newspaper verbally duels pro-Union editor Sam Cassidy of the Petaluma Argus.

Petaluma's Emmett Rifles militia supposedly marches on Santa Rosa but



stops halfway at the Washoe House for “refreshments,” then goes back to Petaluma.

Petaluma Temperance leader Lorenzo Waugh travels to tell of evils of alcoholic beverages.

County population 11,867.

North of Cloverdale lies legendary Indian site known as Squaw Rock; later a memorial to Korean War veterans.

1861

Driver Clark Foss leads first double team horse and buggy over perilous road to the Geysers in northeast county.

Santa Rosa forms first volunteer fire department Feb. 9.

First baseball team plays in Santa Rosa.

M.C. Meeker arrives in Sonoma County, sets up sawmill near Occidental in 1866.

Kate Warfield, Ellen Mary Stuart and Eliza Shaw Hood, living in the Valley of the Moon, are first women to enter winemaking world.

1862

Effort to dispossess squatter Cornelius Rice in Healdsburg leaves one dead; sheriff Campbell killed in separate struggle.

Isaac De Turk establishes Belle Mount Vineyards in Bennett Valley near Santa Rosa; Sonoma becomes one of largest wine-growing counties in state. Sonoma

Bulletin is published June 12, A.J. Cox, founder.

George Miller is first winemaker in the Healdsburg area.

Gould-Shaw House is oldest in Cloverdale, later becomes home of the town's History Society and Museum.

1863

Johnny Lazarus and Peter Daley hold boxing match on banks of the Petaluma River.

1864

McNears build riverside warehouse in Petaluma, biggest in state; family also has major interest in banking.

Numerous earthquakes shake Sonoma County in 1864-5 and beyond.

Occidental District School built on Harrison Grade Road.

1865

I.G. Wickersham & Co. of Petaluma operates as “private bank.” Biggest

lower Russian River mill started in Guerneville by J.W. Bagley, George Guerne, Tom Heald and W.H. Willets. Mill closes in 1901. Rosenberg & Bush Department Store founded in Healdsburg by Wolfe Rosenberg.

1866

Bank of Sonoma County opens in Petaluma.

Mark Twain lectures in Petaluma; Mr. and Mrs. Tom Thumb draw large crowds in 1869 visit.

McCaughey Brothers open general store in Bodega; doors close 119 years later in 1985.

1867

Santa Rosa and Healdsburg incorporate; state confirmation comes in 1868.

Edward S. Lippett opens private high school on D St. in Petaluma.

1868

Squatters build shanties on Courthouse Square land in Santa Rosa (2nd effort follows in 1870.)

Stagecoach robberies occur regularly for 20 years, including four or more in Sonoma County by legendary poet-robber Black Bart.

Jerome Smith opens Smith Bank, first such facility in Healdsburg.

1869

Dr. R. Press Smith becomes first county physician.

A one-mile horse course is built on the Bailache Ranch near Healdsburg.

William J. Hunt introduces Gravenstein apples in Sebastopol area.

1870

Peter Donahue builds rail line from Petaluma to Santa Rosa, expands to Windsor, Fulton and Cloverdale by 1872. Santa Rosa business climate expands. Sonoma 6th most populous county in California, larger than Los Angeles. Santa Rosa population reaches 900. Irish are main immigrants in 1870/1880. Italians come to Occidental, other areas, work in lumber mills, tanneries and quarries.

Petaluma boasts 7 hotels, 2 banks, 2 breweries, 27 saloons, 10 doctors, 18 school teachers, 8 lawyers and 7 clergymen. Saloon total rises to 42 by 1886.

E.T. Farmer opens Santa Rosa Bank, city's first.

Pacific Methodist College opens in Santa Rosa.

H.A. and Althea Richardson arrive at Stewart's Point, establish family business tradition. operating the general store.

The Guerneville post office is established and gives town its name.

## 1870s

Dairy industry on Bodega Coast expands butter/milk markets. Grain crop production hits peak; supply of tan oak trees triggers growth of leather glove industry.

Refrigerated rail cars, drying machines spur fruit production.

Census shows only 85 Indians living in county.

Silas Ingrams open resort for hunters in Cazadero area. Trospen family and others take part.

Utopian communities spring up--Fountaingrove near Santa Rosa, Icaria Speranza and Madame Preston's group near Cloverdale and Altruria on Mark West Creek.

Continental Hotel, originally built in Chile, reassembled in downtown Petaluma; destroyed by fire in 1968.

Population in Sonoma includes several hundred Chinese, typically paid \$1 for 11-hour work day.

Railroads replace wagons in moving lumber.

Occidental's first school district called "Narrow Gauge School District," later changed to Meeker District.

Santa Rosa Olympics baseball team edges Petaluma 57-46.

## 1871

First roller rink opens in Santa Rosa.

First public school built on Tucker St. in Healdsburg.

Arrival of railroad expands market for Healdsburg area redwood lumber.

## 1872

The Korbel brothers, Francis, Anton and Joseph, make money in lumbering/shipping in San Francisco, move to Russian River area in 1872, build wine cellars in 1880s, produce champagne by a special French method in 1890s.

Cloverdale incorporates. S.F. and NWP railroad reaches town.

Train tracks laid through Windsor.

## 1873

Dec. 4, first Grange forms at Strawberry schoolhouse in Bennett Valley (near Santa Rosa.)

Grand Hotel, with 40 rooms, opens in Santa Rosa.

First Baptist Church is built from one tree, a redwood donated by a Guerneville lumberman.

Petaluma D St. School of Prof. E.S. Lippitt bought for use as public high

school. A separate school is set up for colored children.

Bodega's Potter School opens, operates until 1961, serving as setting for Alfred Hitchcock movie thriller *The Birds*, released in 1963.

George W. Call buys much land around Ft. Ross for ranching purposes. So called Dog-hole schooners take lumber, other products to San Francisco.

1874

Settlement of Mercuryville founded as miners seek finds in area northwest of Healdsburg.

Phylloxera infects grapevines, but vineyardists recover by 1880.

Three-fourths of Santa Rosa residents label themselves farmers. First high school opens in Petaluma.

1875

Innovative horticulturalist Luther Burbank arrives, sets up experimental gardens in Santa Rosa. Major finds include spineless cactus, Santa Rosa plums, Shasta daisy and Burbank potato.

Thomas Lake Harris brings his Brotherhood of New Life to Fountaingrove in Santa Rosa with Kanaye Nagasawa second in command. Major winery operation set up at Fountaingrove.

Businessman Mark McDonald comes to Santa Rosa, buys water company, invests in real estate. In 1877, he builds horse-drawn Santa Rosa Street Railway. His elegant Mableton Mansion is completed in 1879.

Davis Burris founds Sonoma Valley Bank.

Charles Juilliard plants first commercial orchard of prunes.

1876

Narrow gauge railway extends from Marin County to Valley Ford, Freestone, Occidental, Monte Rio, Duncan's Mills, terminating in Cazadero. Brown's Canyon Bridge, later a trestle, is tallest west of Mississippi. Rail expansion opens up Russian River area to Bay Area tourism.

George P. McNear, 19, joins father John in grain and feed business; expands into growing egg industry.

Edward Neblett is Santa Rosa's first mayor.

C.F. Juilliard plants orchards in Santa Rosa.

Occidental Hotel reopens in Santa Rosa, serves area for 100 years.

125-foot bridge over Santa Rosa Creek completed.

Construction begins on Lake Ralphine.

M.C. "Boss" Meeker founds Occidental.

Conflict of neighbors near Windsor leads to shotgun killing of James Rowland

by Charles Henley May 9; 50-75 men participate in lynching of Henley June 10.

1877

County boasts between 43 and 60 churches, more than any other county except San Francisco.

Duncan's Mills established by A. Duncan.

Robert A. Thompson publishes first county history, Historical Atlas of Sonoma County.

David Hetzel plants tobacco in west county, mainly for cigars. Occidental population hits 50, rises to 97 in 1880, including 10 Chinese. Forestville boasts first manufacturing plant in county, the chair factory of Isaac Sullivan. Later, the durable chairs produced by Stewart Faudre became a major success.

1878

Lyman Byce and Isaac Dias invent artificial egg incubator, lay groundwork for poultry industry in southern Sonoma County.

Isaac Shaw and John Bowman open Cloverdale mercantile store. Trial phone connection between Santa Rosa/Petaluma succeeds; regular phone service begins in 1884.

1879

Great Register shows 5,774 county voters; 1,500 are naturalized foreigners.

Major flooding occurs on Lower Russian River, cresting at record 41 feet, 11 inches. (Other major flood years include 1914, 1937, 1940, 1955, 1964, 1986.)

Town of Howards created by "Dutch Bill" Howard; survives to late 1890s. Petaluma forms Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) to fight alcohol abuse.

Sonoma Index-Tribune newspaper founded; taken over by Granice/Murphy/Lynch family in 1884.

W.J. Bowman founds Cloverdale Reveille newspaper.

There are at least 17 cigarmakers in county.

1880

Fear of Chinese immigrants grow, although numbers are small (125 in Santa Rosa in 1880.)

Italian immigrants move into Occidental area, doing timber and railroad work.

Wheelmen organize Santa Rosa's first cycling club.

Santa Rosa Medical Assn. established.

25 young ladies from the Albanian Literary and Military Society meet weekly to discuss authors and musicians.

General Sherman and ex-President Rutherford B. Hayes, former colleagues of E.S. Lippitt, visit Petaluma.

Hallberg family arrives in county, plays role in apple processing for many years, including canning of applesauce in 1930s.

### 1880s

With influx of Italian workers, stones from Annadel and other quarries are used in street paving and construction projects, including St. Rose Catholic Church, Western and LaRose Hotels, Carnegie Library, Jack London's Wolfhouse and wineries. Quarries become third largest industry after wine and dairying. Solomon Schocker and Agostino Pinelli are pioneers.

Santa Rosa becomes major shipping center, moving livestock, fruit, hops and paving rocks from local quarries. Prunes become a major crop; canneries and food packing plants around Healdsburg provide many jobs, especially for women.

Anti-immigrant pressure ends in departure of most Chinese from county. Madame Preston dispenses physical and spiritual remedies, maintains colony near Cloverdale until her death in 1909.

Luther Burbank helps build Gravenstein apple industry.

Bohemian Club holds picnic at Duncan's Mills/becomes known as "world's most exclusive men's club," purchases west county campsite in 1898. Newspaper reports claim Petaluma has one bar for every 15 voters; WCTU, other groups criticize easy access to "tangle-leg" and "red-eye." Max Rosenberg goes into business in Healdsburg, opens Red Front Store (later Rosenberg's Department Store) in Santa Rosa in 1896. Chain gangs do road work in Sonoma County.

Kroncke's Park and its beer garden become major Santa Rosa recreation areas.

Prunes grown on Dutton Ranch.

A.P. (Boss) Overton is dominant politician, serves as Santa Rosa mayor, district attorney, judge and bank president.

Giuseppe and Pietro Simi of Healdsburg produce large quantities of wine for the San Francisco market.

Some telephones operating in county early in decade.

Train depot built in late 1880s turns El Verano into temporary boom town.

Santa Rosa fields football team at Pacific Methodist College early in the decade.

Harrison Mecham believed to have planted more than 90,000 eucalyptus trees on his property near Petaluma.

First of several “Chinatowns” operates on North Main St. in Sebastopol.  
William Hill founds small town of Trenton, plants vineyards.

1881

Andrea Sbarbora founds Italian Swiss Colony at Asti.

Icaria Speranza colony, limited to French speakers, lasts 6 years. Luther Burbank establishes reputation as “wizard” by furnishing 20,000 fruit trees in a matter of months, as ordered by banker/grower Warren Dutton of Tomales.

Pacific Methodist College fields football team.

1882

Stagecoach driver “Wash” Gilham dies in the saddle.

Influential Seventh Day Adventist Church activist Ellen G. White helps create Healdsburg Adventist college.

Natale Bacigalupi arrives in Santa Rosa, becomes unofficial mayor of “Little Italy.” He runs a grocery store and makes “seed money” loans to immigrants.

Traverso and Arrigoni families start as clerks in his store.

Korbel begins winemaking in west county, with output of 20,000 to 30,000 gallons a year.

1883

Steamer Gold carries freight, passengers between San Francisco and Petaluma until it burns in 1920.

First D St. bridge built in Petaluma to provide access to train depot on east side of river. New steel bridge opens in 1933.

G.P. McNear loses wife Jennie when steamer boiler explodes; 8 others die. McNear marries Ida Belle Denman in 1887.

Ellen Colton’s \$4 million lawsuit against California’s Big Four reveals corrupt tactics of Southern Pacific Railways.

Anteeo, a trotting stallion owned by breeder Isaac DeTurk, wins race, becomes valuable stud.

Sonoma reincorporates as a city.

Cloverdale gets first phone, located in a bakery.

Charles Bolen, also known as stagecoach robber Black Bart, captured, serves 4 years in San Quentin.

1884

Cornerstone for new courthouse and city hall laid in Santa Rosa. Harry Granice, son of author Rawena Granice, serves as publisher of Sonoma

Index-Tribune to his death in 1915.

1885

Santa Rosa's Atheneum Theater is "largest and most magnificent" theater building outside San Francisco, seating 2,000 at 4th and D Sts.; building falls in 1906 quake.

Luther Burbank buys 18 acres in Sebastopol to expand botanical experiments at Gold Ridge Farm.

1886

Anti-Chinese League seeks removal of Chinese from Santa Rosa; "white laundries" set up, opium dens raided.

Shooting deaths of Jesse Wickersham and wife at home west of Healdsburg blamed on missing Chinese cook, inflaming anti-Oriental sentiment. A.P. (Boss) Overton, formerly Petaluma constable, county district attorney and judge, becomes Santa Rosa mayor.

Santa Rosa constructs sewer system.

Frances McCaughey Martin becomes first female school superintendent in county; Minnie Coulter is second in 1898.

Santa Rosa buys powerful steam engine for fire volunteers.

Healdsburg's first city hall costs \$12,500; demolished in 1960. Healdsburg public high school opens, graduates eight girls and one boy in 1891.

John Hallberg and his son Oscar use innovative techniques to build an apple-growing empire in west Sonoma County.

1887

Stately Petaluma City Hall built for \$16,000, demolished in 1955. Sonoma Valley produces \$1.5 million gallons of wine, quantity larger than all U.S. wine produced in 1850s.

Railroad reaches Guerneville.

Estimated 136 million paving blocks headed to San Francisco and elsewhere, valued at \$5,712,000, are produced at quarries in Sonoma, Marin, Napa and Solano counties.

1888

Truitt's Theater in Healdsburg offers dances, dramas, musical concerts and lectures.

In spite of ineffective water system, Sonoma forms volunteer fire department.



1889

Boyes Hot Springs in Sonoma area becomes popular resort.

Samuel Cassidy's "Pen Pictures of the Garden of the World" (Sonoma County) published.

Anabel McCaughey Stuart is Santa Rosa's first woman doctor.

Pioneer Julio Carrillo dies; once a man of great wealth and large land holdings, but gambling and excess generosity left him poor at death; his funeral procession was "largest ever seen in Santa Rosa."

1890

General Mariano Vallejo dies Jan. 18.

Manville and Frank Doyle, Hollis Hitchcock, William Hill and Henry E. Lawrence set up Exchange Bank of Santa Rosa.

When Donahue dies, new owners extend rail branch to west county lumber areas. Russian River emerges as tourist area.

Ornate jail/office building built at corner of 3rd and Hinton in Santa Rosa. Rainfall totals in Sonoma Valley hit 54 to 70 inches; winds destroy new Los Guilicos hotel.

Nathaniel A. Griffith plants first commercial Gravenstein apple orchard in Vine Hill area near Sebastopol.

1890s

Despite lawsuits and suggestions of corruption, Santa Rosa sets up city water system to compete with Mark McDonald's water company. Santa Rosa holds first agricultural fair.

Page family lays out town of Cotati with plaza and lots for homes and small farms north of Petaluma.

Chris Nisson of Petaluma's Pioneer Hatchery builds brooder house; hatchery one of largest in world.

Numerous adventurers join late-decade rush to Klondike goldfields. Clement Bruner runs art store, acts as agent for famed Ukiah painter Grace Hudson.

W.J. (Joe) Hotchkiss and James Miller develop winery & prune packing operations. Hotchkiss, a major supporter of the building of the Golden Gate Bridge, is father of tennis star Hazel Hotchkiss Wightman. Windsor-Trenton Winery is largest of seven they own.

With Windsor population shift west, 2nd Methodist Episcopal Church is built. Sonoma High School opens, graduates 5 in 1899.

Richard Lewis operates Great Eastern Quicksilver Mine near Guerneville, spurs growth of nearby town of Mercury.

Tanbark and charcoal industries thrive around Occidental.

Hot springs attract vacationers to Geysers.

1891

Healdsburg graduates first high school class.

Gustav Adolph Weske, wealthy San Franciscan, builds octagonal round barn north of Santa Rosa, lays out track to watch horses train. Sonoma Developmental Center at Eldridge opens.

Occidental's Union Hotel opens as Italian Boarding House and Restaurant, run by the John Gobettis.

1892

Congressman Thomas J. Geary of Santa Rosa authors extension of Chinese Exclusion Act.

Thomas Lake Harris leaves Fountaingrove, is succeeded by Japanese Wine Baron Kanaye Nagasawa, who runs operation until his death in 1934. Petaluma/Santa Rosa High Schools play a series of football games. Carlson-Currier establishes only silk mill in western U.S.; business survives more than 100 years.

Penngrove's first postoffice opens in Ronsheimer building.

Thomas Barlow Ranch near Sebastopol leads in planting of numerous berries, including blackberries.

1893

Dairyman's Bank opens in Valley Ford.

Petaluma High School football team beats Santa Rosa 24-0.

Borba family settles in Sebastopol; children of Manuel and Jennie become prominent in local businesses.

Citrus Fair becomes annual event in Cloverdale.

1894

One of numerous early blazes, fire destroys much of Guerneville. Female community leaders form Saturday Afternoon Women's Club in Santa Rosa; by 1919, it has 300 members and a paid mortgage. Altruria colony opens on Mark West Creek, closes 2 years later. Santa Rosa forms paid fire department.

Santa Rosa holds first Rose Carnival and Parade.

1895

Santa Rosa's first high school building completed on Humboldt St.; older

students earlier shared facilities with younger students.

Sebastopol Grammar School opens with enrollment of more than 100.  
Capt. H.E. Boyes strikes well of hot water, later known as Boyes Hot Springs near Sonoma.

1896

Dr. W.P. Burke moves his sanitorium with wealthy Bay Area patients from Oakland to the Santa Rosa area.

R. A. Thompson, credited as county's first historian, writes story of departure of Russians from Fort Ross.

Sonoma Valley holds first Vintage Festival.

Santa Rosa Tennis Club organizes.

Women form basketball teams in county.

1897

Santa Rosa newspaper editor E.L. Finley merges Democrat and Evening Press into a single paper, publishes first Press Democrat Oct. 9. Santa Rosa's Grace Brothers buy Metzger Brewery, operate into the 1960s.

Samuele Sebastiani arrives in Sonoma; over the years, builds valley's leading winery and numerous structures in community. Son August continues family's vineyard tradition.

Healdsburg Plaza develops with bandstand, plantings.

Ermenegildo and Dionisio Gonnella of Occidental turn redwood Christmas wreaths into major seasonal business.

Major high school track meet held in Santa Rosa in June.

Winemaker Hans Frederick Albertz generates first electric streetlights in Cloverdale.

1898

Windsor grows much of county hay on fields covering 39,850 acres.

Sonoma's first electric light plant opens.

Numerous prospectors from county seek fortunes in Klondike Gold Rush; author Jack London gathers material for books and stories.

M.C. Meeker lays out Camp Meeker in west county for summer homes.

1899

Bicyclist Ben Noonan races train from Santa Rosa to Sebastopol, wins in 16 minutes.

Dr. James Jesse owns first auto in Santa Rosa, a Schelling built in a bicycle

shop by George and Alex Schelling. George becomes Santa Rosa's first auto dealer in 1901.

"Dutch Bill" Howard of Occidental dies.

Elsie Allen born, lives in Sonoma and Mendocino Counties, known as legendary Pomo basket weaver; Elsie Allen High School in Santa Rosa named in her honor.

### 1900

Sonoma County, with 69 wineries, leads state in wine production. Sonoma County population 38,480--Santa Rosa 6,673; Petaluma 3,871; Healdsburg 1,869; Sonoma 652.

School enrollment 9,800, including 7,500 in public facilities. Petaluma and Santa Rosa have separate high school buildings; There are 73 districts, compared to 5 in 1851.

Walter Nagle, later a major leaguer, helps organize Central California Baseball League.

Pastor John Cassin (1847-1932) oversees building of historic St. Rose Catholic Church. The facility, using stone from local quarries, withstands the 1906 earthquake.

Cost of 24-hour stay in Sonoma County Hospital: 34 cents.

Frank J. Pool operates store, helps establish first Exchange Bank Branch in Windsor in 1925.

Wohler Ranch and other hop kilns process crops grown at 10 or more hop ranches.

1900 Oldsmobile appears in Windsor, operated by Jack Arata. Petaluma Creek noted as third busiest waterway in the state. January report in Petaluma Argus newspaper indicates Sonoma County man develops airship 3 years before Wright Brothers' famed 1903 flight. Dance hall built at Mirabel Park; arena hosts Benny Goodman, other big bands in 1930s-40s.

### 1900s

Petaluma's Hill Opera House competes with Atheneum as culture center. Pressure on Chinese eases; Tom Wing becomes unofficial "mayor" and community spokesman until his death in 1918; family also operates popular restaurant; daughter Song Wong Bourbeau (1909-96) plays active role in community.

Trains dominate county travel; Petaluma and Santa Rosa Electric Railway, the "juice line," ships local farm goods.

Era of hot springs and resorts (Boyes, Fetters, Aqua Caliente) begins in Sonoma Valley, with heavy use of railroad promotions. Prohibition curbs boom in 1920s.

Healdsburg's Spanish Kitty, aka Kate Lombard, leaves San Francisco, sets up

brothel in El Verano in 1913, remains dominant figure for 30 years. Boaters, anglers, other vacationers trek to Russian River retreats in Healdsburg area, including Fitch Mountain.

Healdsburg's main money crops are grapes, hops and prunes. Gravel mining develops in Russian River with John P. Grant as pioneer operator. Demand grows during building of Golden Gate Bridge in 1930s and during post-World War II construction boom.

Budget-minded campers set up tent campgrounds each summer for Russian River vacations.

Olmsted family takes over Petaluma Argus newspaper.

Petaluman Brainerd Jones becomes a leading county architect for more than 40 years, blending styles of late 19th and early 20th century. He builds Carnegie libraries and prestige homes in Petaluma and Santa Rosa.

Constable named Shane provides protection of law in Windsor. Mill work draws residents to Jenner.

Louvre Saloon becomes favorite Guerneville watering hole.

All-male San Francisco Bohemian Club acquires property on south side of Russian River to hold two-week summer camps for members. Group, originally for artists and writers, later adds power brokers.

"Boss" Meeker uses 7 tall redwood trees to build 7-story "Living Tower" with view of 5 counties from west Sonoma County. Tower destroyed by fire in 1947.

Hop picking builds at sites such as Wolher Ranch northwest of Santa Rosa, continues into 1940s.

## 1901

Congregational Church forms in Cotati with 13 members.

Santa Rosa Junior College teacher/botanist Milo Baker comes to county, lists north coast plants, including endangered wildflowers.

Monte Rio Hotel, ultimately 7 stories, is built; boasts first elevator in county; torn down in 1935.

## 1902

Grace Bros. brewery workers unionize; Santa Rosa Labor Council organizes.

Basket weaver Essie Parrish born, becomes spiritual leader of Pomo Indians, preserving language and culture.

Nickelodeon opens as first motion picture theater in Santa Rosa.

Locomobile makes appearance in Healdsburg, features tiller steering.

Middleweight boxer Jimmy Britt has impressive boxing career, later becomes host at cocktail lounge in Guerneville.

Sebastopol incorporates to solve sewer problems, contaminates Laguna area in the process.

### 1903

Trotter Lou Dillon sets records in 1903-4, brings worldwide attention to horsebreeding activities in Santa Rosa.

Petaluma & Santa Rosa Railroad incorporates June 20, 1903.

### 1904

Electric rail line from Petaluma to Sebastopol, Forestville and Santa Rosa opens way for transport of Gravenstein apples/expansion of poultry industry. First spike driven in Petaluma Apr. 5. Sebastopol train depot built, now home of West County Museum.

John P. Overton, son of mayor elected in 1886, elected Santa Rosa mayor in 1904 and 1906.

Santa Rosa dedicates Carnegie Library; stone structure collapses in 1906 quake; Petaluma's Carnegie Library opens, survives quake, later becomes Petaluma Museum.

Ralph Rose of Healdsburg wins 3 Olympic medals in St. Louis; wins total of 6 medals in three different Olympics (1904, 1908, 1912.)

Salvation Army opens orphanage at Lytton Springs; by 1937, it houses 220 young people with a staff of 33. Operation includes 800-acre farm in the 1930s. Facility closes in 1958.

Samuele Sebastiani founds Sebastiani Winery in Sonoma.

Mail service expands to coastal town of Jenner.

### 1905

"Battle of Sebastopol Avenue" in Santa Rosa pits steam train supporters against backers of new electric train. Hundreds of backers of both sides seek to dominate in Mar. 1 showdown as thousands of spectators watch. After court intervention, the electric line is allowed over the crossing on Mar. 2. Santa Rosa street railways convert to electricity.

Banker John P. Overton, son of "Boss" Overton, is mayor during the 1906 quake.

World-famous author Jack London moves to Glen Ellen, buys "Beauty Ranch," experiments with innovative farming methods.

Santa Rosa pitcher Walter Nagle signs with Los Angeles Angels baseball team, stars for several years, goes on to career as Sonoma County Clerk and Chamber of Commerce Manager.

Healdsburg holds first water carnival.

Rural Free Delivery established in Windsor, covering six square miles. W.C. Lindsay is postmaster.

Docia Murphy runs Murphy's Resort through much of the 20th century; renamed Fife's, it becomes a major gay resort in 2nd half of century. The "big mill" in Guerneville, later the site of a Safeway grocery store, closes.

#### 1906

Giant San Francisco quake causes heavy damage in Sonoma County, especially in Santa Rosa area where more than 100 die; three miners die in Russian River area; courthouse, Press Democrat Building, Antheneum and many other buildings destroyed; only 2 chimneys remain in Occidental area; Sebastopol buildings suffer severe damage but there are no major injuries.

Max Rosenberg's Red Front Store destroyed in quake, reopens as Rosenberg's Department Store at 4th and B Sts.

First called Gray's town, name is shortened to Graton; postoffice opens. Ft. Ross becomes State Historic Park.

#### 1907

Northwestern Pacific Railroad created as partnership between Southern Pacific and Santa Fe, excels in handling freight traffic; SP becomes sole owner in 1929.

84 cars enter endurance race from San Francisco to Lakeport; 27 actually take part and 23 finish.

Sonoma passes anti-liquor ordinance despite protests from liquor-related businesses.

Norm Maroni born, becomes Mr. Baseball of Santa Rosa as player and manager of Santa Rosa Rosebuds semi-pro team.

Tiny, colorful El Carmelo church serves Italian-Swiss communities near Cloverdale.

#### 1908

Teacher Frances Louise O'Meara (self-appointed Funny Little Old Maid) inspires young Robert Ripley at Santa Rosa High School; Ripley goes on to international fame with his "Believe It Or Not" cartoons.

Elva Beeson stars as Healdsburg's girl's basketball team wins Academic Athletic League title; five teams, mostly from Sonoma County, form basketball league.

Analy Union High School opens in Sebastopol; new school built on same site in 1935.

Sonoma city hall opens.

1909

14 entrants compete in May 9 Grand Prize auto race, 52-mile endurance test through Sonoma County. Ben Noonan wins, one of six cars to finish. Farmers and Mechanics Bank opens in Healdsburg, first bank in county to use a time lock on its safe.

Helen Hotchkiss Wightman wins 4 national women's singles tennis titles, numerous other honors; pole vaulter Fred Young leads Healdsburg track team, wins championship at UC, Berkeley.

Northwestern Pacific's standard gauge railroad reaches Monte Rio, bringing upsurge in tourist traffic; up to 15,000 crowd area in summer.

1910

Sonoma County population 48,000.

Press Democrat columnist Herbert Slater serves 37 years after election to State Assembly.

"Worst accident" train collision in August, involving many Sonoma County travelers, kills 12 at Nicasio in Marin County.

Occidental and Overton Hotels survive as many smaller hotels disappear. Sebastopol holds first Gravenstein apple show.

Fire at the Del Mar Mill (Sea Ranch) devastates area's economy.

1910s

Group of Jewish migrants, refugees from eastern Europe and urban labor struggles in the eastern U.S., start a new life as chicken ranchers in and around Petaluma. South county becomes major Yiddish cultural center.

Herbert Slater becomes State Assemblyman, moves up to State Senate in 1914, serves until his death in 1947; Slater writes for the Santa Rosa newspaper while in the legislature and is known as "the blind senator" because of eyesight problems; his legislative interests include fish and game and education.

Joseph Grace, Frank Doyle and E.L. Finley are called Santa Rosa's "power trio." Grace opens Grace Bros. Brewery in 1890s, revives county fair in 1930s, expands company holdings in various agricultural products and real estate and brings in ice hockey team before World War II. Brewery is sold in 1966.

Seasonal bridges and dams spur tourism on lower Russian River each summer. Name of Rio Nido replaces Eaglesnest.

1911



Fred Wiseman makes first air mail flight, a two-day jaunt from Petaluma to Santa Rosa.

John Lopus builds Cotati Hotel.

“Uptown” hotels in Santa Rosa, the Overton (later Santa Rosa Hotel) and Occidental, are operated by the Bane Brothers on opposite corners of 4th and B Sts.

Thomas Gregory (1911), Honoria Tuomey (1926) and Ernest L. Finley (1937) write major histories of Sonoma County.

Healdsburg opens Carnegie Library.

Silent films play at McNear-owned Majestic Theater in commercial building off Main St. in Petaluma.

Winemaker Agostino Pinelli uses 1,000 gallon tank of wine to douse major downtown Sonoma fire in September.

Champagne from Italian Swiss Colony at Asti wins the Grand Prix award at international exposition in Turin, Italy.

## 1912

Santa Rosa builds new city hall on Hinton Ave. near the county courthouse.

Pilot Weldon Cooke makes successful flight over Santa Rosa, soars to 2,500 feet.

Sonoma opens Carnegie Library with major support from Sonoma Women’s Club.

Jennie Colvin becomes first woman to register to vote in county; women vote in Santa Rosa city election in April; Atty. Francis McCaughey Martin and Sarah Latimer Finley, mother of editor Ernest Finley, lead the suffrage fight.

Explosion from automobile fire on Main St. kills James Mott, Petaluma’s first paid fireman.

Immigrant Russian Baptists, known as the Noshkin family, arrive in San Francisco. buy land from Walter Frick and create a 500-person settlement on the Del Mar Ranch (Sea Ranch). Group is unable to make land payments, and foreclosure forces them to leave the area.

First Russian River water carnival held.

## 1913

Cooperative Creamery begins operation in Petaluma.

By emergency ordinance, Petaluma City Council unanimously outlaws dancing the Rag, Tango, Turkey Trot, Texas Tommy, Grizzly Bear, Bunny Hug or Walkback in public.

Healdsburg/Olympic track star Ralph Rose dies at age 29.

Pilot Grover Bell is first county air fatality, dying in Petaluma plane crash.

1914

Sonoma County Good Roads Club forms to promote better rural roads. Santa Rosa-Healdsburg road paving completed; Petaluma-Santa Rosa link done in 1918.

H.N. Blakely flies at 6,500 feet from San Francisco to Cloverdale at "almost a mile a minute" for the Citrus Fair.

Ed Beeson of Healdsburg sets world high jump record at UC, Berkeley.

1915

Luther Burbank hosts visit by Thomas Edison, Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone. This visit put Santa Rosa, a little town that most of the nation had never heard of, on the map. Chamber of Commerce Secretary Walter Nagle wrote, "It had been a year fraught with success beyond dreams and brought scientists, statesmen and philanthropists, preeminent in every walk of life, to pay homage to our beloved fellow townsman, the matchless Burbank."

Main auto highway through Cotati Boulevard connects Petaluma and Santa Rosa, boosts economy.

Petaluma firehorse Black Bart, put out of business by mechanization, retires to Penngrove ranch.

M.C. Meeker, major figure in west Sonoma County, dies.

Three die in major Cloverdale fire Oct. 15.

1916

Author Jack London dies at his Kenwood ranch, age 40.

Clarence Lea of Santa Rosa, former District Attorney, elected to U.S. House of Representatives, serves more than 30 years with bipartisan support. He builds strong conservation record, supports aviation-related bills.

Santa Rosa unit of state militia sent to Arizona June 25, 1916, to fight Mexico's Pancho Villa; later called to service in World War I.

Frank Doyle replaces his deceased father, Exchange Bank founder Manville Doyle.

1917

Santa Rosa Co. E, led by Capt. Hilliard Comstock, and Petaluma's Co. K are called to duty in World War I.

Santa Rosa General Hospital opens, becomes main "for pay" facility until Memorial opens in 1950.

Farm Bureau formed.

During World War I, government buys large quantities of prunes for dried fruit, big boon to industry.

1918

Santa Rosa Jr. College opens its doors on Santa Rosa High School campus, offers 2-year AA degree, attracts 32 students.

Spanish flu epidemic hits, leaves 175 dead by early 1919; 160 children ill at Lytton home north of Healdsburg (Oct., 1918); residents urged to wear masks; schools and theaters closed; heavy death toll at Sonoma State Hosp.

James Armstrong's heirs sell family property to county; in 1934, state creates Armstrong Woods State Park.

Quicksilver from Culver-Baer Mining Co. used in manufacture of ammunition in World War I.

1919

Petaluma seeks to secede and set up own county; effort foiled by state legislature in 1921.

Lt. Fred Young, a World War I pilot, makes first landing of plane in Healdsburg July 5, crashes on takeoff July 7, survives.

Pilot Sam Purcell flies biplane from Santa Rosa to Petaluma in 11 minutes.

1920

Sonoma County population 52,000, Petaluma population 6,266. Vigilantes, apparently from Healdsburg, hang 3 men involved in killing of sheriff Jim Petray at the Santa Rosa Rural Cemetery on Franklin Ave.

Expanding farm exports to Europe, Sonoma County ranks 8th in nation in farm production. Crops include wine, eggs, prunes, hops, apples, dairying, livestock.

Grape acreage climbs from 21,000 to 42,000 between 1900 and 1920, with 250 wineries; Prohibition undermines the boom. Major wineries include DeTurk, Fountain Grove, Korbelt and Italian Swiss Colony. Smaller wineries produce "Dago Red." Sea Ranch area becomes a favorite hideaway for contraband liquor.

Crane family gains attention with sweet, distinctive Crane melons. Ernie Nevers leads Santa Rosa High School football team to championship, puts American-style football on the North Bay map. He also stars in basketball before returning to finish high school in the midwest.

Santa Rosa hires motorcycle policeman to chase speeding motorists.

Sonoma County Teachers Assn. organizes.

Santa Rosa High School's agricultural education program gains national recognition.

## 1920s

Bootleggers, rumrunners become part of the scene as Prohibition era arrives across U.S. Speakeasies abound, with much smuggling activity allegedly going through the coastal town of Tomales. Federal agents seize dozens of barrels of wine in trucks between Santa Rosa and Petaluma, confiscate more liquid in the Dry Creek area.

During Prohibition hot claret wine gargle becomes popular “cure” for sore throats.

Banker Frank Doyle calls meeting to study building of Golden Gate Bridge to link San Francisco and Marin County.

John Grant forms company to generate electric power at the Big Geysers in northeast part of county. Technical problems complicate the process; giant McCrays Resort hosts tourists.

Rosenberg family constructs tallest building between San Francisco and Portland at the corner of 4th St. and Mendocino Ave.

H.W. (Bert) Kerrigan promotes Petaluma as World’s Egg Basket. Aerial shows become popular. Pilot Leon Ferguson killed at Sonoma County Fair doing “daredevil tricks” as his father watches.

Sebastopol opens Cnopius Field airport; facility becomes home to numerous barnstormer pilots.

Paving block industry diminishes as auto owners demand more comfortable surfaces.

Grace Brothers Frank and Joe close brewery during Prohibition, turn to other operations such as butter and ice cream.

Partly because of legal loopholes, demand for wine grapes remains strong until 1925.

Paris-born Alphonse Sondag paints scenes of California missions, Sonoma County sites.

Healdsburg Prunepackers form strong semi-pro baseball team, disband late in the decade, reappear in 1950s.

Radio listeners get San Francisco programs, including one featuring a singing Boston Terrier from a Petaluma kennel.

Mario (Moch) Lucchesi stars as player, coach, motivator for Petaluma semi-pro baseball.

Jenner-Gualala coastal road link opens.

Reed & Bell Root Beer Stand opens in Cloverdale.

## 1921

Santa Rosa High School, on Humboldt St., burns down Nov. 15, sending

students to temporary classrooms around the city. New school opens on Mendocino Ave. in 1924.

Floyd Bailey becomes SRJC dean, serves 36 years, mostly as president, retiring in 1957. Clarence (Red) Tauzer volunteers as football/basketball coach in 1923.

Promoter Jack Prince opens Cotati Speedway auto race track to crowd of 20,000; Speedway closes in 1922.

Cotati School, built in 1913, destroyed by fire. New school opens 1922. Radio emerges as Press Democrat editor Ernest L. Finley arranges for Armand Saare to set up antenna and bring in first radio-communicated opera to a crowd on streets of Santa Rosa.

Egg Day wedding, brainchild of Petaluma promoter H. W. (Bert) Kerrigan, unites Murray Gow and Lena Spaich.

Officer Ernie Roberts makes "do or die" shot to save Petaluma Police Chief Mike Flohr during chase with wounded burglar.

Film The Moneymaker made near the Russian River.

Max and son Fred combine to construct Rosenberg Building at northeast corner of 4th and Mendocino Aves. Tallest building between San Francisco and Portland, five stories tall, is completed in 1922.

First woman appointed to Santa Rosa police force; budget problems limit her stay to less than a year.

Petaluma successfully lobbies the federal government for tariffs to keep cheaper Chinese eggs from undermining prices.

The Bauer and Baugh Co. pipes in orchestra music by wireless telephone from the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco.

Windy winter storm puts ship Klamath on the rocks in Sea Ranch area, jeopardizing more than 50 people. Passengers and crew, including a baby, escape without harm.

Women's Improvement Club builds Cloverdale's first library.

## 1922

Klu Klux Klan holds meetings, demonstrations and initiations in Sonoma County, mainly near Santa Rosa and Petaluma into 1925.

2,000 gallons of seized wine poured into Petaluma sewer system, blocking a vent, "overflowing" city hall and creating an unmistakable odor all over town.

Santa Rosa voters approve city manager form of government. Angelo Rossi opens motorcycle shop in Santa Rosa, becomes sales pioneer. Edson Merritt becomes manager of Sebastopol Apple Growers Union, establishes nationwide market for Gravensteins.

Newspapers report October "race riot" between Japanese and Caucasian cannery workers in Graton.

Women included for first time on Superior Court jury.

Golden Gate Ferry Co. begins popular service to San Francisco May 28.

### 1923

J.E. Keyes opens Chicken Pharmacy in Petaluma; operates into 1950s.

Speaking to WCTU in Healdsburg, a state legislator calls Sonoma and Napa Counties the greatest bootlegging counties in the state. Grappa, also known as jackass brandy, becomes a popular commodity.

Ku Klux Klan activity picks up with meetings at Lake Ralphine in Santa Rosa and on Petaluma Hill Rd; white robes and burning crosses included; activity diminishes by 1925.

Kawaoka family of Penngrove challenges 1913 California Alien Land Law, designed to discourage Orientals from passing land to children. Judge rules against Kawaokas but T. Fujita gets favorable ruling circa 1928.

Judge Ross Campbell rules apartment house owners can refuse to rent to blacks, a first-of-its-kind ruling in California.

Doyle family donates money, land for Doyle Park in Santa Rosa. Cline Theater in Santa Rosa offers many live performances, including violinist Efrem Zimbalist.

Healdsburg Prune Packers baseball team begins play at Matheson Field.

Sonoma opens new high school as city marks Mission centennial.

San Francisco Seals baseball team trains at Boyes Hot Springs most years into the 1940s. Oakland Oaks also train in the area.

Giant fire wipes out much of Boyes Springs, nearby areas.

California Theater, with its mighty Wurlitzer organ, opens on B St. in Santa Rosa.

### 1924

New north-south highway opens; Redwood Empire Assn. promotes area attractions.

20 gas stations in operation in Santa Rosa.

Carithers family operates White House Department store before and after the '06 quake; incorporation creates Carithers & Sons in 1924. Strike by carpenters working on Santa Rosa Schools lasts three months, includes attack on non-union workers with steel pipes.

Charles Dunbar elected to Santa Rosa City Council, becomes mayor and political power, including 7 years as city manager.

Builder Walter Proctor offers "upper class" Proctor Terrace residential subdivision homes on/near Bryden Lane.

Fishermen hook 40 cases of liquor dumped by rum-runners in Tomales Bay

in July. Many hangovers reported.

#### 1925

Sonoma County has 141 grammar schools, 7 high schools and 8,132 enrollees: Analy 375; Cloverdale 66; Geyserville 56; Healdsburg 282; Petaluma 575, Santa Rosa 697 and Sonoma Valley 156.

Santa Rosa paves 18 plus miles of street.

Sebastopol insurance man, Republican Herbert Scudder, holds state assembly seat until 1940.

To lure tourists, investors pledge money and build new Hotel Petaluma; Jewish Community Center opens in Petaluma.

In the middle of Prohibition, Silvio Volpi takes over operation of historic Volpi's Italian Market on Washington St. in Petaluma; restaurant/bar are still operated by Volpi family.

Sonoma's Joe Ryan, "terror of bootleggers," becomes sheriff but dies of heart attack in 1926.

Panizzera family takes over Union Hotel in Occidental; hotel closes in 1930 but restaurant/saloon remain; Gonnella family takes over operation.

#### 1926

Luther Burbank's comments on "life in the hereafter" draw international criticism; he dies Apr. 10 of heart attack.

In perhaps the closest major race ever, Douglas Bills beats Petaluma Police Chief Mike Flohr by less than 20 votes in election for sheriff. Flohr wins rematch in 1930.

McNear family gifts include land for McNear Park in Petaluma, a fire station and Petaluma Golf Club.

Petaluma population at 7,000; 2,000 chicken farms operate in or near the Egg city.

Al Hermann, noted for ability to do variety of chicken calls, builds Penngrove School.

Cries of outrage come from farmers as U.S. Army plane flies low over Sebastopol and Petaluma, "buzzing" frightened chickens.

Highway 101 reaches Cloverdale.

#### 1927

Giacondo Benedetti family moves from Italy to Sonoma, Santa Rosa and Cotati. Son Gene becomes major figure in sports and dairy business after World War II.

Promoter Charles Pyle organizes 480-mile "Indian Marathon" running event from San Francisco to Grants Pass, Ore., on Hwy. 101 in 1927-28. Mad Bull, aka John Southard,

wins 1927 race in 7 days, 12 hours, 34 minutes; Flying Cloud wins in 1928, covering the distance in 7 days and winning by 17 miles.

Auto dealers hold 120-mile Sonoma County run in a White Ford. Three drivers log 2,813 miles, average 43.5 miles per gallon at speed of 25 mph. 24,000 vehicles operate in Sonoma County, including 19,000 autos. Cotati organizes volunteer fire department.

P&SR railway opens mission-style depot at 4th and Wilson Sts. in Santa Rosa.

Six women including poet Eugenia T. Finn and Nell Griffith Wilson form Sonoma County branch of American Pen Women.

### 1928

Gravenstein apple boom sees 1,800 carloads of fruit go to eastern and southern markets.

Star running back Ernie Nevers helps semi-pro Santa Rosa Bonecrushers football team win three straight state titles (1928-30.)

John Greeott buys large ranch on Chalk Hill Rd. Son George buys ranch, grows grapes, becomes folk artist and invents horseshoe known as the Greeott Grabber.

Conductor George Trombley arrives, forms Santa Rosa Symphony; 1st concert is held April, 1928, at Elks Club. He conducts for 30 years, building group into 60-piece professional orchestra.

Sonoma Mission Inn Golf and Country Club course opens, takes heavy losses in Depression but survives when purchased by Alma Spreckels. Penngrove organizes volunteer fire department.

### 1929

Santa Rosa Municipal Airport is dedicated north of city May 18. Richfield Oil Co. adds 125-foot steel tower.

Hilliard Comstock, president of Santa Rosa school board, is appointed to Sonoma County Superior Court, serves for record 34 years, later joined by Donald Geary, son of Congressman Thomas Geary.

First of many annual rodeos take place at the Millerick Ranch in Schellville.

### 1930

Sonoma County population 62,000. Farms total 5,700 in 1920, increase to 6,500 in 1930; number of chickens: 3 million in 1920 up to 4.3 million in 1930.

Annual total of hops grown rises to 3 million pounds; main hop years 1880-1950.

Eleven Santa Rosa doctors and a druggist are arrested on charges of writing fraudulent prescriptions for "hot claret wine gargle."



Wesley Jamison leads agricultural education program at Santa Rosa High School until 1968, producing leaders of agricultural programs throughout the U.S. Direct phone calls begin to London, Australia and elsewhere at a high cost.

### 1930s

Noted winemaker Julio Gallo begins buying grapes in county; company eventually becomes 2nd largest vineyard owner in county, behind Kendall Jackson. Son Bob Gallo produces high-end wines at Gallo Sonoma in Healdsburg.

Press Democrat publisher E.L. Finley rallies support for building of the Golden Gate Bridge, opens radio station KSRO in 1937 and writes major history of Sonoma County. Facing boycott for supporting the bridge, he is alleged to have said, "Damn the circulation! The bridge must be built."

Numerous railroad lines discontinue service.

Tin Lizzie Derby at Sonoma County Fairgrounds in late 1930s ends up with 22 of 50 cars in a huge pileup. Only injury: a broken arm.

Marguerite Hahn moves to Cotati, becomes town librarian and newspaper correspondent.

As Depression deepens, growth is reported in number of "hoboes," soup kitchen activity and assistance efforts for the poor. Number of retail stores in county drops from 1,948 to 1,298 by 1935. California Conservation Corps and WPA hospital, school and other projects help county survive.

Dance palaces such as the Grove and Rio Nido Lodge attract vacationers to the Russian River. Well-known bands appear, including Horace Heidt, Harry Owens and His Royal Hawaiians, Harry James, Phil Harris and Glenn Miller. Harry Harris family sells Rio Nido resort in 1953.

Industrialist Leonard Howarth leaves funds for parks, including Howarth Park and Lake Ralphine, heavily used since the 1950s.

Lawyer/judge/school board president Hilliard Comstock becomes a major figure in county politics into the 1960s. Many political hopefuls seek his blessing before running for office. In 1930s during the Depression, he slows efforts to foreclose on delinquent farmers.

Guerneville realtor E.J. (Nin) Guidotti spends 23 years on the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, modernizing the board and winning friends and enemies before retiring in 1964.

Incidents pit Caucasians against Filipino workers in west county apple orchards.

Improved fruit drying methods spur apple industry.

With help from market owners and butchers, Santa Rosa's "Dad" Burchell sets up soup kitchen on empty lot in depths of the Depression. Softball becomes a popular community sport in county.

Petaluma's George Duke becomes prominent boxer, makes Bay Area Sports Hall of Fame.

Redwood Players become popular theater group in Cloverdale. Mirabel Park draws San Francisco vacationers for dancing, fun at the beach and skating; includes parking lot for 2,000 cars.

1931

First SRJC campus building opens on new site near SRHS.

Juilliard Park on Santa Rosa Ave. develops during the Depression.

Beautification projects begin to upgrade Sonoma Plaza, end in 1935.

1932

Public agencies in county cut budgets and pay; hobo jungles appear on the Petaluma River and elsewhere; conflicts between banks and farmers in debt raise tensions.

Petaluma voters approve funds for new D St. bridge, hoping to put more people to work. Catholic priest Charlie Phillips of Sebastopol works to mediate tensions.

Cotati Inn built near Plaza, considered the ultimate in elegance for its time.

NWP buys Petaluma&Santa Rosa Electric Railway; passenger service ends. Traverso and Arrigoni Market opens. Arrigonis set up their own market in 1937, introducing area to Italian food specialities.

Cartoonist Robert Ripley returns to Santa Rosa, visits with favorite teacher Frances O'Meara.

Future baseball star Joe DiMaggio plays semi-pro baseball in Sonoma County through 1933.

Communist Party seek inclusion on ballot, present disputed signatures on petition. Most signatures declared invalid.

1933

As Prohibition ends in December. Italian Swiss Colony holds huge party to celebrate end of era and opens a tasting room on its premises at Asti. Number of wineries in county drops to 70; decline carries into the 1960s.

Forestville minister James Case is threatened with foreclosure on his apple orchard. More than 2,000 show up to support him. Judge Hilliard Comstock temporarily halts bank action. Case wins a reprieve but other farmers face foreclosure action.

Petaluma postoffice built at 4th and D Sts.

When his father dies shortly before the game Oct. 27, Santa Rosa High School football center Joe Kelly pledges to "win one for my dad." Santa Rosa beats Analy 12-7.

Enmanji Buddhist Temple, building brought from Chicago World's Fair, is

reconstructed without nails in Sebastopol. Dedication Apr. 15, 1934.

1934

As tensions between business, farmers and laborers intensifies, Harry Patteson becomes sheriff.

A Cotati poultry rancher and his wife register as Communists, a county first.

Socialist Upton Sinclair appears in Santa Rosa in July to promote his controversial End Poverty in California (EPIC) program.

Government sets up programs to provide projects, jobs; state labor camp opens at Armstrong Grove.

Sonoma County club formed to support Townsend old-age pension plan; Petaluma event draws 3,500 in 1935.

Gentleman rancher John Rosseter raises greyhounds and horses, holds grand party to honor sire stallion Disguise. Disguise's colts become major winner for the Rosseter stable.

Sebastiani Theater opens on First St. East in Sonoma.

Goat Rock Beach on Pacific Coast becomes state park.

Petaluma Spartans organize first full-fledged marathon run west of the Mississippi; event continues into 1950s.

Entrepreneur Joseph Coney buys Annadel properties east of Santa Rosa. Amelia Mihan operates Hillside Hospital, first facility of its type in Sebastopol, until 1942.

Forestville School, built in 1899, destroyed by fire; classes held in church. Floyd Bailey appointed first SRJC president.

1935

Crop and livestock value rises from \$17.5 million in 1934 to \$22 million. Poultry, dairying lead the way.

Sheriff Harry Patteson sets up "Army of Peace" to confront Depression era protestors. Patteson punches one striker in the face in his office. Vigilantes, including well-known county personages, tar and feather protestors Jack Green and Sol Nitzberg as tensions rise throughout the summer. Farmer-dominated jury quickly acquits the accused. Eccentric cowboy Al Chamberlain fatally wounds Santa Rosa Police Chief Charlie O'Neal July 15. He is convicted and dies in San Quentin Prison. Lena Bonfigli opens town's only nightclub on west side of town; Lena's becomes favored stop for WWII servicemen.

Last NWP train leaves Duncans Mills Depot.

Petaluma holds first marathon run west of the Mississippi.

1936

Fire destroys Rosenbergs Store May 8; rebuilt store opens at 4th and D Sts.  
Guerneville realtor and justice of the peace E.J. (Nin) Guidotti serves 22 years on the county board of supervisors between 1936 and 1964, becomes board power.  
Santa Rosa Fair Assn. forms, features horse racing, agricultural events.  
Purses of \$7,400 in 1936 swell to \$54,200 in 1950.  
San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge opens in November.

#### 1937

Golden Gate Bridge opens in spring, much credit going to Exchange Bank's Frank Doyle. Project expected to expand county economy.  
Italian Swiss Colony recognized as world's largest winery.  
E.L. Finley puts radio station KSRO, Santa Rosa, on the air.  
Sonoma County Hospital opens with daily cost of \$2 for each bed patient, only half of bay area tab.  
Major flood hits Russian River in December; idea for Warm Springs Dam northwest of Healdsburg is suggested.  
Sonoma Valley Historical Society being formed.  
Glen Guymon becomes Santa Rosa High School drama teacher, builds on Hollywood connections and widespread community support to develop acclaimed program.  
Pasture of Paul Rued's ranch near Healdsburg becomes Alexander Valley Airport.

#### 1938

Sonoma population 1,050.  
Santa Rosa Jr. College Bear Cubs win first conference football title; stars include Gene Benedetti, Bob Acorne and Ken Battaglia.  
John Frankfurter's Pioneer Motel south of Cotati serves as swim center for more than 30 years.

#### 1939

Santa Rosan Florian Dauenhauer invents hop-picking machine, minimizing the need for hop pickers.  
Warehouse filled with dried prunes collapses in Santa Rosa, killing 11 men.  
"Imported" Santa Rosa Jr. College ice hockey team draws large crowd, beats college teams, playing at Grace Bros. Brewery site in 1939-40. County sets up major tubercular hospital near Community Hospital in Santa Rosa.  
Sonoma County residents rush to attend World's Fair at Treasure Island through 1940.

“Ultra-modern” Tower Theater opens in October on Fourth St. in Santa Rosa.

1940

Sonoma County population 69,052; Santa Rosa 12,605.

On Oct. 16, 10,000 are expected to take part in county military draft signup.

In spite of Depression, almost 30 million dozen eggs are shipped from Petaluma area; peak comes in 1945 at 51 million dozen.

Cotati’s St. Joseph Church holds barbecue, which becomes annual community event.

Less than 10,000 acres of vineyards planted compared to 42,000 before World War I.

Santa Rosa gets first ambulance service.

1940s

Elegant Topaz Room restaurant opens during WWII, “for officers only.” Polio takes heavy toll in county.

Sunset Line & Twine takes over Carlson-Currier silk mill.

D-Day war hero Gene Benedetti comes home to coach Petaluma Leghorns semi-pro football team and develop the Clover-Stornetta Farms dairy operation. In 1948, Benedetti’s Leghorn team scores 398 points in 12 games. Clover Stornetta introduces “Clo the Cow” billboard advertising.

Joe Vercelli, a 30-year employee, builds Italian Swiss Colony Winery at Asti with his publicity campaigns, also chronicles on paper and tape the history of the \$2 billion (1999 figure) wine industry in the county.

Louis J. Foppiano of Healdsburg’s Foppiano Winery leads formation of Sonoma County Wine Growers Assn., promoting county wines with a wine map and other innovations. Winery more than 100 years old.

Cloverdale lumber industry flourishes.

9,000-plus acres of Gravenstein apples planted around Sebastopol. Melvin (Dutch) Flohr becomes a legend as Santa Rosa police chief, retiring in 1974.

Clarence Ruonavaara emerges as pitching star at Healdsburg High School, Santa Rosa Jr. College, UC Berkeley and with semi-pro Healdsburg Prunepackers. Dick Gray of Petaluma and Don Higgins of Sebastopol are dominant softball pitchers.

1941

Sonoma County has 75,000 population.

Navy man Bill Montgomery dies Dec. 7 at Pearl Harbor, first Santa Rosa casualty. High school and shopping center named in his honor. Japanese in county

number 758, 209 aliens and 549 citizens. As war starts, 2 airfields and military camps open in Sonoma County; Army airfield is north of Santa Rosa, navy facilities west of town and in Cotati. Civilians commute to Mare Island, Marinship and Hamilton Air Base to work and support war effort.

Government bonds, including popular \$18.75 (\$25 maturity) E Bonds, go on sale on May Day.

Blackouts begin in December, including one that lasts 3 hours five days after the start of World War II.

Football coach Bill Abbey comes to Petaluma High School, introduces the T-formation, and rolls up 5 titles by 1959. His 1952 team is undefeated and untied.

Edward G. Robinson and John Garfield arrive in Sonoma Valley Mar. 22 to mark opening of movie *The Sea Wolf*, based on a Jack London story. Ohlson family buys Del Mar Ranch, sets up sheep operation until 1965.

#### 1942

County Japanese-Americans and non-citizens are rounded up, sent to relocation camps during World War II. Japanese-American volunteers join famed 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Members include Analy High School graduates Leo Kikuchi and Peter Masuoka, both killed in combat in Europe.

School delayed, Bay Area youth brought in to do agriculture picking during war year.

Students at Santa Rosa High School rally in behalf of young teacher fired for being married to a serviceman. Dismissal deferred, but she resigns at the end of the school year.

Ernest L. Finley dies; in 1948, Bill Townes is hired to modernize paper, increase circulation.

U.S. Army leases Petaluma fairgrounds for duration of the war. Lim Eng, head of the only Asian family in Cloverdale, creates distinctive wine bottles for Italian Swiss Colony Tipo Chianti.

#### 1943

New Santa Rosa Army air field north of Santa Rosa opens in January as training base for P-38 and other pilots; naval base opens in June in southwest Santa Rosa.

U.S. Navy sets up auxiliary air station in Cotati for aircraft carrier landing practice. Other troops assigned around city, county.

Moviemaker Alfred Hitchcock shoots "Shadow of a Doubt" in Santa Rosa, featuring local girl Edna May Wonacott as the "kid sister." Other movies made in

Sonoma County include Happy Land (first movie for young Natalie Wood), The Fighting Sullivans, the Farmer's Daughter and All My Sons.

More than 30 polio cases are reported in county.

California Youth Authority acquires property, builds Los Guilicos, a school for delinquent girls that operates for almost 30 years. Four-day riot put down in March, 1953.

Petaluma fire trucks are called out to break up post-football game riot after Santa Rosa-Petaluma football game in the fall.

First braceros come from Mexico as part of temporary farm labor force. U.S. government builds German Prisoner of War camp at closed migrant labor camp in Windsor. Local farmers hire POWs to work in the fields, helping solve wartime labor shortage.

Luisa Vallejo Empan, last of Mariano Vallejo's 16 children, dies July 30 at 87.

Buyers of war bonds in Santa Rosa and Petaluma earmark funds to buy military aircraft.

#### 1944

Although not revealed until war ends, Japan launches balloon bombs, at least six of which land in county from Dec., 1944 until mid-1945. There is no damage.

Port Chicago munitions explosion shakes Sonoma County.

E.A. (Colonel) Little establishes weekly newspaper The Cotatian; later owners are Ed/Helen Runyon and Lloyd/Pru Draper.

"Miracle drug" penicillin is used for first time in county in March for woman suffering from pneumonia.

When winemaker Samuele Sebastiani dies, son August and wife Sylvia take over winery and expand operation hundredfold.

Sun-O-Ma nudist colony flourishes near Sonoma until road access problems trigger legal problems.

#### 1945

Evert Person, son-in-law of E.L. Finley, joins Press Democrat staff. As publisher he sells paper to New York Times in 1985, does major philanthropic work in community, focusing on music, art and education, including Finley Center, Luther Burbank Center for the Arts and Sonoma State University. Parking meters come to Santa Rosa.

George Justman opens east Petaluma airport in December.

#### 1946

Petaluma Leghorns semi-pro football team plays first game against USF Frosh on Armistice Day. Team continues with full seasons through 1958.

Benny Friedman opens hardware store in Petaluma, moves to large facility in Santa Rosa in 1970; Friedman is major contributor to saving of Christian Life Center building and builds Friedman Center for the Jewish community in 1990.

Santa Rosa City Council, works on traffic, sewer, water issues; labels Santa Rosa "The City Designed for Living."

Army air base north of Santa Rosa to become Sonoma County Airport. Until 1972, Guerneville Stumptown Daze hails arrival of tourist season. With long history of major fires, Occidental organizes volunteer fire department.

1947

Chicago gangster Nick DeJohn, using the name Vincent Rossi and living in Santa Rosa, is found dead in the trunk of his car in San Francisco. The death halts work on Villa Chanticleer resort near Healdsburg, allegedly a center of gangster influence.

C.J. (Red) Tauzer, early coach of Santa Rosa Jr. College sports teams, and major supporter of the school, replaces Herbert Slater as state senator. Developer Hugh Coddling constructs Quinley's Drive-In restaurant at College Ave. and 4th Sts. Al Quinley also operates Petaluma Drive-In. Loretta Young and Joseph Cotton make movie *The Farmer's Daughter* near Petaluma.

Miniature chest X-rays used to screen people with tuberculosis, related problems.

Sonoma holds first modern Vintage Festival.

1948

Banker Frank Doyle dies, sets up extensive Doyle Scholarship program at Santa Rosa Jr. College. By end of 20th century, \$30 million is donated, affecting 55,000 recipients.

Pittsburgh Pirates set up Santa Rosa baseball farm team featuring young star pitcher Vernon Law. Team folds in 1950.

Switching chickens to wire cages and various automatic processes in late 1940s undercuts Petaluma's "family-farm" industry.

Art Volkerts joins Press Democrat staff, becomes editor and ardent advocate for growing county, including Warm Springs Dam, earning enmity of environmental community that fears excessive growth. Volkerts editorially backs pro-dam votes in 1974 and 1979.

Hubert Scudder of Sebastopol is elected to U.S. House of Representatives, serves 5 terms.

Max Kortum holds "revolt" to protest construction of freeway through Petaluma.

County population rises to 98,100.



Petaluma's crime rate lowest per capita in nation.

Joe Negri Sr. opens Negri's Restaurant, offering family-style dinners. Gladys Barnes and husband Ben do first of county's "biggest Halloween parties" as "Mother Witch" and "Father Witch." Annual parties continue until 1975.

Analy Theater opens in Sebastopol, operates until 1974.

Oscar Ludoff is first chief of new Forestville Fire Department.

#### 1949

In spite of heavy criticism, new 4-lane highway built through Santa Rosa opens in May; critics point up number of deaths and injuries.

Sears-Roebuck opens largest retail store in Redwood Empire Sept. 15. Petaluma ships 48 million dozen eggs before downhill slide of poultry industry begins.

Under community pressure, Santa Rosa Jr. College board cancels speech by Washington State teacher fired as alleged Communist.

Tuberculosis specialist Dr. Robert Quinn hails drop in TB deaths to 12 as major improvement.

Catholic Hanna Center for neglected boys opens near Sonoma. Sonoma Mountain area near Penngrove gets electricity; phone service comes 5 years later.

Two Santa Rosa Junior College football teams of Coach Bill Neel excel, winning 1949-1950 titles and Gold Dust Bowl game.

#### 1950

Sonoma County population 103,405; Santa Rosa 17,900; Petaluma 10,300.

Santa Rosa Memorial (Catholic) Hospital opens Jan. 1 with 90 beds, 93 staff. Fees are \$10.50 a day for ward bed, \$15 for private room/bath. Orchards in the area become available for development.

Sam Hood becomes city manager, guides growth of Santa Rosa as city nearly doubles in size as assessed valuation triples.

Press Democrat publishes morning, noon, afternoon editions for first time Feb. 6.

Rolf Illsley brings Optical Coating Lab (OCLI) to Santa Rosa, the first major high-tech firm in the county. In 1998, company has 1,500 employees and revenues of \$250 million. Major products are thin-film coatings and pigments that make ink counterfeit-proof.

Last steamboat, Petaluma, makes final run.

Lumber/housing boom raises Cloverdale population to 1,300.

## 1950s

Bill Kortum opens veterinary practice, leads drive to locate Sonoma State College in Cotati/Rohnert Park area, becomes county supervisor and leader in statewide conservation movements, especially on the Sonoma coast.

As Soviet-U.S. Cold War heats up, residents build backyard bomb shelters. Developer Hugh Coddling turns orchards into suburbs, building Town and Country, his first shopping center, and Montgomery Village. As promotion, he builds one home in Montgomery Village area in less than 4 hours. Coddling Enterprises becomes largest real estate firm north of San Francisco. In new era of “bankers and developers,” major names include Coddling, Henry Trione, Charles Reinking, J. Ralph Stone and Elie Destruel. Mortgage banker and financier Trione invests in timber and wine and contributes to community causes, including creation of Annadel State Park and Burbank Center for the Arts. He operates Geyser Peak Winery until 1998.

Banker James B. Keegan serves as Santa Rosa School Board member, fund-raiser for many causes.

Drive-ins open--drive-in restaurants and drive-in movie theaters. Hardtop racers, led by Rod Zanoline, compete at tracks in Santa Rosa, Petaluma, and other bay area sites.

Petaluma egg industry begins downturn.

W. C. (Bob) Trowbridge builds canoe rental fleet on the Russian River and reigns as “Mr. Democrat,” building influence of party in second half of the 20th century. War hero general Henry “Hap” Arnold dies in mid-January.

## 1951

## 1952

First atomic-era civil defense drill Feb. 20 tests students’ ability to “duck and cover.”

Presbyterian Church of the Roses in new Montgomery Village area is built by 200 workers in 5 hours, 16 minutes.

First wrist-wrestling competition held at Gilardi’s Bar in Petaluma, turns into major TV event.

Arnold Sports Field, named after war hero General “Hap” Arnold, dedicated.

Teacher Joan McGrath becomes Sonoma’s first woman mayor. Petaluma High School football team beats Santa Rosa High 19-0 in showdown of undefeated teams in Petaluma mud at Durst Field. With ex-major league star Dolph Camilli as coach, Santa Rosa Jr. College wins state baseball championship.

1953

Inmates at Los Guilicos School for Girls east of Santa Rosa riot Mar. 23 after young women from southern California get transferred to the facility. Karen Valentine, later to become a major television star, is Sebastopol Apple Princess.

Coney family builds Lake Ilsanjo, stocks it with fish.

1954

Black activist Gilbert Gray helps form Sonoma County NAACP, with wife Alice sets up Gray Foundation to help minority youth.

Adolph Heck and family take over Korbel Winery.

Healdsburg opens new high school.

Adventurer Devere Baker builds 4 rafts, floats successfully to Hawaii with a small crew in 1958 on Lehi IV; trip takes 69 days.

George Smith and wife Joyce create Georgetown, a movie and family memorabilia center, on 30 acres west of Santa Rosa.

1955

Montgomery Village annexed to Santa Rosa, causing jump in city population from 18,000 to 30,000.

Developers close deal with Fred Rohnert and his sister July 12 for land near Cotati. First phase of new Rohnert Park community starts in 1956. New 101 Highway goes west of Cotati.

Actress Bette Davis plays librarian in movie "Storm Center," shot in Santa Rosa.

Writer Gaye LeBaron joins staff of Santa Rosa Press Democrat, with collaborators writes two definitive histories of Santa Rosa and establishes herself as main historic voice in the county.

1956

First free Salk polio vaccine shots given July 20 to 500 plus children. PG&E makes plans to build power plant at Bodega Head.

1957

Merchant and "hometown boy" Corrick Brown builds small-town orchestra into professional symphony during 38 years as conductor after replacing George Trombley. Brown brings in talented young artists for local audience.

1958

Democrat Joseph Rattigan becomes youngest Sonoma County State Senator,

works for creation of Sonoma State University, senior health care and fair housing. In 1966, he becomes appeals court judge, noted for opinions on Bill of Rights issues.

Petaluma's first hatchery, The Pioneer, closes.

Peanuts cartoonist Charles Schulz and family live 10 years in Sebastopol before moving to Santa Rosa.

#### 1959

Coyote Dam at Lake Mendocino near Ukiah is built/dedicated in June. Historian/reporter Gaye LeBaron's column appears for first time in Press Democrat Nov. 25.

The Santa Rosa Junior Symphony is formed under the direction of Eugene Shepherd.

Sonoma Valley Unified School District formed.

Mary Fazio opens tiny pizza shack, expands Mary's Pizza Shacks from Sonoma area to other parts of the county and beyond.

#### 1960

County population is 147,000; building of several mobile home parks spurs growth in Sonoma Valley; Sonoma City population 3,000, Sonoma Valley 20,000.

Joe Belluzzo founds first soccer league in Sonoma County.

Willard Libby grows up in Sebastopol, graduates from Analy High School, wins 1960 Nobel Prize for chemistry for discovery of Carbon 14 dating process, is strong advocate for use of nuclear power.

Jack London Park opens near Glen Ellen; 700 acres added in 1979. Pacific Gas and Electric Co. opens the first commercial geothermal energy plant in the U.S. on Big Sulphur Creek near the Geysers.

#### 1960s

Environmentalists battle Pacific Gas and Electric Company over plan to build atomic power plant at Bodega Head on the Sonoma coast. Cartoonist Charles M. Schulz, creator of Peanuts strip, moves to Sebastopol and later Santa Rosa, builds Redwood Empire Ice Arena, holds annual senior ice hockey tournament. Strip is read by estimated 350 million people. Petaluma initiates housing growth limits; city wins challenge to law in U.S. Supreme Court.

Coddingtown Mall opens, one of the first modern facilities on the west coast.

Breeder George Nicholas creates heftier turkey and major new industry. George Ortiz founds California Human Development Corp. as pioneering social services organization in 32 California counties and 3 western states. Main goal is jobs and other types of training for the poor.

Many Russian River summer cottages converted for year-around use; counter-culture people with arts and crafts interests move into Russian River area.

Financier Henry Trione and Santa Rosa City Manager Ken Blackman engineer creation of Annadel area hillside as a state park.

1961

Sonoma State University College (later University) opens in Rohnert Park in temporary quarters with 272 students. Ambrose Nichols serves as president until 1970. Students from SSC create demand for living space in converted Cotati chicken houses.

Sonoma Plaza is declared national historic landmark.

1962

Sonoma County Historical Society organizes with 8 members. "Hippie" revolution centers in west Sonoma County. Musician Lou Gottlieb opens Morningstar Ranch west of Sebastopol; others flock to Wheeler Ranch and turn summer cabins into year-around residences. Gay groups also move into west county.

Forestville builds its first park.

Incorporation of Waldo Rohnert Seed Farm into Rohnert Park, the brainchild of developer Paul Golis, takes place. By 2000, population reaches 40,000.

Civil rights becomes a public issue with sit-in at Silver Dollar Saloon May 20.

Phyllis Cantrell of Santa Rosa flies in four Powder Puff Derbies in 1960s. Cotati's new, expanded hillside St. Joseph's Catholic Church looks out on Hwy. 101.

1963

Cotati incorporates July 2, 1963.

State Farm Insurance moves its regional offices from Berkeley to Santa Rosa.

1964

Major fire threatens Santa Rosa, east county from Sept. 22-27; 30 Sonoma Valley homes destroyed; huge floods occur around Christmas. Poultry Producers Cooperative, active since 1916, files for bankruptcy. Sonoma County Planning Commission approves rezoning for upscale Sea Ranch development on northwest Sonoma County coast June 18. Plans call for 5,000-acre planned community. Environmentalists battle Sea Ranch developers over beach access. Coastal Commission created and access compromise is worked out early in the 1980s.

PG&E withdraws application to build nuclear power plant at Bodega Head on Oct. 30.

Hwy. 101 freeway opens through Healdsburg.

Ignacio (Ig) Vella, of Sonoma's cheese-making company, becomes "larger than life" member of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors until 1975. Fairfield Homes begins construction of Oakmont senior housing development between Santa Rosa and Sonoma. The project is annexed to the city of Santa Rosa.

#### 1965

Helen Putnam becomes Petaluma mayor, serves for 13 years, is key figure in taking Petaluma's slow growth ordinance to U.S. Supreme Court victory. She becomes county supervisor in 1978, dies in 1984.

Cotati's Tradewinds Tavern becomes major gathering spot for SSC students, some of whom plot drive to remove three veteran city councilmen. Two young councilmen later hatch plot to steal marijuana from the city's evidence locker, which ends in their resignations.

El Molino High School opens in west Sonoma County, with 300 students, compared to 1,550 enrolled at Analy High School.

Oceanic Properties buys Del Mar Ranch from Ohlson family, makes plans to build upscale resort development.

#### 1966

Sonoma County's much-loved courthouse in downtown Santa Rosa is demolished; major party marks its demise.

Kenwood holds World Champion Pillow Fights, turns it into July 4 event. Run ends 40 years later in 2006.

Fireman John Hurt dies June 29 fighting building blaze; first fatality in department.

#### 1967

Musician/philosopher Lou Gottlieb opens Morningstar Ranch in west county, attracts many counter-culture visitors/residents in his "back to the land" movement. Nudity, free love and drug use are images conjured up by friends and foes.

#### 1968

Inn of the Beginning, located in the old Cotati Inn building, draws the Grateful Dead and other modern musical groups.

Press Democrat circulation jumps from 22,400 in 1950 to 48,000 in 1968.

Sears Point Investment Co. constructs a multi-purpose auto raceway at Sears Point in southeastern part of county. NASCAR events draw large crowds to facility,

later known as Infineon.

Cardinal Newman High School football coach Ed Lloyd leads team to a record 47 straight wins starting in 1968.

Petaluma's historic Continental Hotel, a downtown fixture on Western Ave., is destroyed by fire in May, 1968.

Sonoma High School officials send controversial letter to some parents saying their children were rumored to be using drugs, triggering public debate on use of marijuana and lifestyle issues.

#### 1969

Major quakes rip downtown Santa Rosa Oct. 1.

Lou Gottlieb deeds Morningstar Ranch commune to God May 6, in effort to avoid fines imposed by local agencies.

Counter-culture becomes main part of the Cotati scene, led by artist and performer Vito Paulekas, who creates a 9-foot tall statue of Indian Chief Cotate in the Cotati Plaza; Cotati Free Store performs as street theater group; Cotati Co-Op opens as health food store; student protests are common.

Fire destroys Boyes Hot Springs bathhouse in April. Resort dates back to 1880s.

Sis-Q Flying Service sets up aerial tanker fire-fighting operation in Santa Rosa.

#### 1970

County population 205,000; Santa Rosa population 48,000

Ken Blackman, known for strong leadership, becomes City Manager of Santa Rosa, guides building of Santa Rosa Plaza.

In county's "worst air disaster," Air Force transport crashes on ranch near Sears Point on May 5, killing 13.

First public employee strike in Santa Rosa lasts one and a half days. Don Striepeke wins sheriff's race, holds office for 8 years.

Ann Neel teaches first women's studies class at Santa Rosa Jr. College.

#### 1970s

Voters approve severe state tax-limit measure known as Prop. 13. State Coastal Commission approved to control planning in areas near the Pacific Ocean.

Voters twice approve long-delayed Warm Springs Dam project north of Healdsburg.

Spring Lake/Annadel Parks east of Santa Rosa expand recreation activities in Santa Rosa.

Hewlett-Packard agrees to buy 200 acres of Fountaingrove area for plant site,

opens large high-tech operation in Santa Rosa.

Guerneville called county's "gay boom town."

Wine country prosperity grows.

Iva Warner becomes major environmental voice in 1970s and '80s. Tom McGrath becomes Sonoma State College president.

Farm Trails Assn. forms to promote county agricultural products.

1971

75 lawmen raid Wheeler Ranch, a "hippie commune" west of Occidental. 25 arrested but courts rule warrant is too broad to be legal. Roy Mikalson becomes Santa Rosa Jr. College president.

Sonoma State University offers its first women's studies course. Gangland informer Joseph Barboza pleads guilty to murder charge in December.

1972

Prop. 20 creates California Coastal Commission, impacts upscale Sea Ranch development on northwest Sonoma County coast. In the end, Sea Ranch construction is ruled exempt from control of the commission, but the public is allowed five access trails to the beach.

Petaluma Bill Kortum leads organization of COAAST (Californians Organized to Acquire Access to State Tidelands.) Fellow environmentalist Chuck Hinkle elected to Board of Supervisors.

Petaluma develops plan to control growth by limiting number of housing units to be built each year. City wins case in U.S. Supreme Court. Press Democrat acquires rights to print Charles Schulz's Peanuts comic strip.

"The Candidate," a movie with a political theme, starring Robert Redford, is shot in Santa Rosa.

Women flyers form Sonoma Chapter of Ninety Nines.

1973

Classic teen movie American Graffiti is made in Petaluma.

Jean Schulz marries Peanuts cartoonist Charles Schulz, donates to Canine Companions, Sonoma State University and other major funds. Oil shortages bring odd-even gas rationing. Price per gallon jumps from 39 to 63 cents for a time.

Distaff, a campus women's newspaper, is published at Sonoma State University.

1974

Environmentalist Bill Kortum wins seat on county Board of Supervisors, is recalled in 1976, but continues as voice for preservation.



Christo Javacheff seeks county approval to build an 18-foot high curtain from Petaluma area to the Pacific Ocean--cost \$500,000. Fence is up for 2 weeks in 1976.

Guanella Bros. softball team wins its first national title.

Russian River Wine Road publicizes wineries, attracts tourists. U.S. District Court rules Petaluma slow growth plan unconstitutional. Melvin (Dutch) Flohr retires after 34 years as Santa Rosa police chief; replaced by Sal Rosano, 35.

Spring Lake county park opens in Santa Rosa.

Santa Rosan Nancy Ling Perry, member of radical Symbionese Liberation Army, dies in Los Angeles shootout.

Sonoma County voters approve Warm Springs Dam plan 51 to 49%. Codding Enterprises files lawsuit to stop downtown urban renewal project. Marjory Downing Wagner becomes president of Sonoma State University, first female president in California State University system.

YWCA is founded in Sonoma County along with Battered Women's Shelter.

#### 1975

Sonoma County jobless rate soars from 10.6% to 13.5%.

County Taxpayers Assn. files for recall of Supervisors Bill Kortum, Chuck Hinkle and Ignacio Vella.

Petaluma slow-growth plan wins ruling in U.S. Supreme Court. State Farm Insurance Co., with 800 employees, plans move from Santa Rosa to Rohnert Park.

Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women founded by county Board of Supervisors.

Athena House founded--reentry program for women offenders. Michael Ritchie makes movie "Smile" in Santa Rosa, satire of a small-town "Miss Teenage America" contest. Many locals snag roles in the film. Cloverdale holds first Old-Time Fiddle Contest.

Petaluma historic area converted into shopping mall called Great Petaluma Mill.

Fetters Hot Springs, occupied partly by Juanita Musson's restaurant, burns in March. One killed.

#### 1976

Drought hits county through 1977, raising fears of water shortages. Helen Rudee, first female chairperson of the Santa Rosa Board of Education during 10-year stay, is first woman elected to Sonoma County Board of Supervisors.

Supervisors Chuck Hinkle and Bill Kortum recalled.

Healdsburg Museum, under the leadership of former city clerk Edwin Langhart, is founded.

Karen Peterson and J.J. Wilson publish Women Artists.

1977

Fire damages McDonald Mansion in Santa Rosa in March.

State Parks Dept. acquires Olompali property south of Petaluma, owned by James Black, the Burdell family, Jesuit priests and a communal group. Funds for Warm Springs Dam approved.

1978

Sonoma State becomes university.

Petaluma Carnegie Library reopens as historical museum.

City of Sonoma raises money to rebuild Sonoma Depot as a history museum; dedication takes place in 1979.

Donna Born becomes Santa Rosa's first woman mayor; Helen Putnam of Petaluma joins Board of Supervisors.

SoNoMoreAtomics group forms in North Bay area to protest expansion of various nuclear power projects.

Santa Rosa's "most violent rally" occurs Sept. 30 when 9 American Nazis seeking to stage a rally at Old Courthouse Square clash with 150 angry onlookers. Several police go on permanent disability as a result of injuries incurred during the event.

Sonoma County celebrates first Women's History Week.

1979

Voters give Warm Springs Dam big vote of support Nov. 6, opening way for building of dam north of Healdsburg.

Kaiser Hospital plans to build \$22.8 million facility in Santa Rosa. Old Santa Rosa postoffice moves, and with 1985 opening, becomes Sonoma County Museum.

Teachers Management and Investment Corp. makes \$15.4 million deal to buy part of Fountaingrove Ranch, largest real estate transaction in county history.

American Nazis return March 25, hold 47-minute rally at Santa Rosa's Franklin Park.

First "Take Back the Night" rally to protest violence against women held in Sonoma County.

Women's Music Festival held in Penngrove.

1980

County population 299,000. Over 10 years, Santa Rosa jumps from 50,000 to 83,000; Petaluma 33,000, Sonoma Valley hits 40,000, double 1960. Santa Rosa teachers strike district from Nov. 14 to Dec. 19. Hewlett-Packard employs 2,700 workers

in county.

Winemaker August Sebastiani, son of pioneer Samuele, dies at age 66, leaving wife Sylvia as matriarch of prominent wine family.

Latino social activist Maria Rifo comes to Santa Rosa to continue work for social change after serving 12 years as secretary for farm labor leader Cesar Chavez. Rifo dies in 2006, age 98.

Eddie Mae Sloan gets Humanitarian Award from Commission on the Status of Women for her work with blacks and poor people.

Burbank's Gold Ridge Farm in Sebastopol restored.

1980s

Kaiser Permanente opens first Santa Rosa medical office. Hospital opens in 1990, with 900 health care workers at the facility.

Bane bill in state legislature paves way for six public access trails at Sea Ranch development on north Sonoma County coast.

Brass Ass Saloon opens in Cotati, inspires Ass to Ass distance run from Santa Rosa Brass Ass to Cotati Brass Ass from 1982-86.

New York Times buys Santa Rosa Press Democrat newspaper. Windsor begins period of growth with major housing development. Population in 1950, totaling 1,000, rises to 13,000 in early 1990s and to 27,500 by 2007. Unique town center spurs growth.

Marshall Kubota becomes medical expert on AIDS, advocate toward working for a cure. From 1982-1999, there are 985 AIDS deaths in Sonoma County.

Lawyer/vintner Jess Jackson builds Kendall-Jackson label into huge wine empire. With holdings in the U.S. and overseas, K-J annual revenues hit \$300 million by the year 2000. Thirty new wineries operate in county.

A modest Guerneville firm, Centennial Savings, becomes center of national financial scandal of the decade. Well remembered is the Centennial Christmas Party in which company officials Erv Hansen and Bev Haines invite 600 people to a lavish party at the Santa Rosa Veterans Auditorium. There are 480 live trees, 30,000 Christmas lights, 14 bartenders and a large orchestra at a cost of more than \$130,000. Money manipulation, shootings and prison sentences spice up the deal.

Lawyer/activist Alicia Sanchez organizes workers' immigrant labor force in county.

Nancy Dobbs is driving force in creating public TV station KRCB. A decade later, public radio station is added.

With activists Mary Moore and others in the lead, Bohemian Club protestors hold summer actions at meeting site along Russian River. With U.S. facing an energy crisis, geothermal development leads to building of 26 Geysers power plants, enough to supply about two million households.

1981

Christian Life Church, facing financial crisis, becomes Luther Burbank Center for the Arts. With funding help from 24 leading citizens; arts center opens Nov. 6.

1982

The Santa Rosa Symphony draws a crowd of 1,500 as it moves into its new venue at Burbank Center for the Arts.

After years of lawsuits and other delays, controversial Santa Rosa downtown shopping mall opens.

1983

First Gay and Lesbian Parade/Picnic held in Santa Rosa.

Warm Springs Dam, flood deterrent and water storage facility, is completed after decades of conflict.

1984

Janet Nicholas of the Nicholas turkey breeding family upsets Bob Adams to win seat on the county Board of Supervisors.

Nancy Burton, a Santa Rosan since age 2, is second woman to win seat on Santa Rosa City Council. In spite of breast cancer diagnosis, she serves 8 years on Council, including 2 terms as mayor.

1985

“The Spill” Feb. 19-22 sends 750 million gallons of Santa Rosa wastewater down the Russian River, triggers demand for city wastewater disposal plan.

Federal government takes over insolvent Centennial Savings and Loan Aug. 20 as part of nationwide S&L scandal; Windsor-based Golden Pacific S&L taken over weeks later.

New York Times buys Press Democrat, circulation 73,000.

Brenda Adelman leads campaign to keep Santa Rosa from dumping excessive sewage into the Russian River.

1986

Don Green becomes founder of “Telecom Valley,” establishing Optilink Corp. in 1986 and Advanced Fibre Communications in 1992. Eventually, some 15 telecom equipment manufacturing companies come to the county. Green makes \$10 million donation for concert complex at Sonoma State University.

Russian River flood hits height of 48 feet, 9 inches at Guerneville Bridge.

Family differences end with call for Sam Sebastiani to step down as president of Sebastiani Winery. Brother Don, a State Assemblyman, takes over. Glen Ellen rancher David Bouverie puts scenic farmland into Bouverie Audubon Preserve.

Valentine Day storm causes severe damage.

Movie Peggy Sue Got Married shot in Petaluma/Santa Rosa.

Folk singer Kate Wolf dies of leukemia at age 44; famous for "Sonoma County" folksong style.

#### 1987

50th anniversary of Golden Gate Bridge draws 800,000 for span celebration.

Sonoma County reports more than 100 AIDS cases for year, behind only San Francisco in the state.

Wine grapes are leading farm commodity, worth \$68 million, replacing milk production, 2nd at \$64 million. Milk led from 1950, replacing eggs. Molly McGregor co-founds organization that becomes the National Women's History Project, helps organize Women's History Month.

#### 1988

Santa Rosa population, 108,700.

Rosenberg's Department Store closes Apr. 2 after 90-year run. Barnes and Noble bookstore saves building from destruction in 1994. County farm income is \$246 million, including \$84 million from wine grapes and \$62 million from dairying.

#### 1989

Winery worker Ramon Salcido of Boyes Springs kills 7 people, including his wife and two daughters, in mass murder rampage. He is sentenced to death. Fatal 7.0 earthquake Oct. 17 rattles Sonoma County, postpones World Series baseball games in San Francisco.

7,000 students register at Sonoma State University, up from 274 in 1961.

NASCAR holds its first Cup Series race at Sears Point (later Infineon) near Sonoma; Ricky Rudd wins before a crowd of 53,000.

Sam Sebastiani opens Viansa Winery overlooking Sonoma Valley.

#### 1990

Spotted owl declared a threatened species June 22, raising fear of restrictions on lumber industry.

Pacific Coast Air Museum created, presents first air show in county.

#### 1990s

High-tech companies continue move into Sonoma County, create telecom boom.

Congestion grows on Hwy. 101; bypass eases congestion in Cloverdale. Grape boom continues, spills into Lake and other counties. Richard and Saralee Kunde build county's image as a prestige growing area in the Sonoma Valley.

Geysers production falls sharply as overproduction depletes the Geysers' steam supply.

1991

Arterial Vascular Engineering, later to become Medtronic, is founded; Its development of heart stents reflects growth of high-tech industries in Sonoma County.

Accordionist Jim Boggio and friends create the annual Cotati Accordion Festival.

Local historian Ed Mannion, "Mayor of the Petaluma River," dies at 73.

1992

Lynn Woolsey, the first former welfare mother elected to the U.S. Congress, wins seat in U.S. House of Representatives.

Food writer M.F.K. Fisher, living at Bouverie Ranch for 23 years, dies at 83.

1993

Body of kidnapped Petaluma girl Polly Klaas, age 12, found near Cloverdale Dec. 4 after two-month search. Richard Allen Davis arrested; Polly's father Marc Klaas becomes advocate for better protection of children.

A founder of the Sonoma County Historical Society and Petaluma Historical Society/banker/Petaluma Spartans runner Ed Fratini dies at 91.

1994

Randy Shilts, who reported on life in the gay community, dies of Aids complications in Guerneville Feb. 17. His book: And the Band Played On: People, Politics and the Aids Experience."

Richard Allen Davis admits to murder of Polly Klaas.

Republican Frank Riggs reclaims seat in House of Representatives as GOP takes control of both houses of Congress for the first time in 40 years. San Francisco developer Tom Robertson restores historic Rosenberg's Department Store building, reopens it as a bookstore.

Two young men allege they are victims of molestation, accuse Catholic priest Gary Timmons. Other suits follow.

"Guns for groceries" swap brings in large number of weapons.

Elsie Allen High School, named after famed Pomo Indian basket weaver,

opens in southwest Santa Rosa, .

Santa Rosa Fire Department boasts 8 stations, staff of more than 100. Ann Conner, author and first president of the Sonoma County Historical Society, dies in March.

1995

Deceased lawyer/ex-mayor Charles DeMeo leaves \$16 million to aid youth and homeless mothers.

Hewlett-Packard becomes county's first \$1 billion manufacturing company; company plans new plant in Rohnert Park.

Months-long storms soak county early in the year, ending years of low rain totals; county twice declared a disaster area.

Pianist/conductor Jeffrey Kahane replaces Corrick Brown, who retires from Sonoma County Symphony.

Former San Francisco 49er football star Joe Montana buys Sonoma County ranch.

Santa Rosa Catholic Diocese pays \$1.3 million to settle civil claims involving two priests.

Sonoma County Crushers bring minor league baseball to county. Wine industry expands, sets records as investment money pours in. Sutter Hospital gets approval to buy Community Hospital.

New businesses move in as county takes part in "internet explosion." Optical Coating (OCLI) expands thin-film coating operations, sets records. "Dream Team" of investigators determine 1913 Jack London Wolfhouse fire was caused by accident, probably oily rags. Earlier theories included possibility of arson.

1996

Peanuts cartoonist Charles Schulz and wife Jean donate \$5 million toward library and computer center at Sonoma State University; telecom guru Don Green follows up with \$10 million for music center on campus.

Richard Allen Davis convicted in death of Polly Klaas in June. Michael Rosen, prominent Republican and financial leader, is accused of swindling 60 investors of \$6 million, sentenced to prison in 1997. Housing market bounces back, ending six-year slide.

Catholic Priest Gary Timmons pleads guilty in cases involving numerous sex acts with children.

Sonomans take sides over controversial opera The Dreamers, based on the life of pioneer Mariano Vallejo.

Petaluman Karl Kortum, leader in preservation of historic ships and head of

the Maritime Museum in San Francisco, dies at 79.  
New downtown Cloverdale Plaza dedicated.

### 1997

Sonoma Index-Tribune publisher Robert Lynch writes story of Sonoma Valley, drawing on more than 50 years of newspaper work.

Environmental activist Judi Bari dies of cancer at age 47.

Major storms again hit Russian River area.

County economy, in "golden age," grows 4th straight year. Jobless rate only 3.2%. Real estate sales up, with median price of \$205,000 for existing homes.

Telecom equipment industry, mostly in Petaluma, booms. In 1995, there are 7 companies, 550 employees, \$320 million in revenue; in 1997, 11 companies, 1,800 employees and \$600 million in sales. Coronary stints make big money for Arterial Vascular.

Big crush ends shortage of county grapes.

Santa Rosa Railroad Depot, built of stone quarried near Annadel, reopens in 1997 as visitor's center in Railroad Square.

### 1998

In fourth year of major disruption, El Nino storm hits Bodega Bay seaside homes; Rio Nido rains bring down mountainside, threaten homes. Jobless rate drops to 2.6%; median housing price up to \$220,000. Medtronic of Minneapolis buys Arterial Vascular; Hewlett-Packard loses sales, cuts temporary workers.

With its first county pact in 26 years, United Farm Workers sign contract with Balletto Farms.

Jeff Gordon wins his first NASCAR title at Infineon before a crowd of 110,000.

### 1999

Cartoonist Charles Schulz announces plans to retire famed Peanuts comic strip.

Julia (Butterfly) Hill agrees to pact to save redwoods, comes down from Humboldt County tree where she has been living for two years. Catholic Bishop G. Patrick Ziemann resigns after facing sexual assault charges from another priest. Diocese is \$16 million in debt.

Sonoma County-connected threesome killed near Yosemite; handyman Cary Stayner accused after a fourth murder.

Agilent Technologies spins off from Hewlett-Packard, OCLI sells to JDS Uniphase and Cisco buys Cerent Corp. of Petaluma for \$7.3 million. Speculation fever



increases in housing market as buyers camp out to make bids of homes. High-pay high tech money fuels the upswing. Median price hits \$249,000.

Closing of Vacu-Dry plant in Sebastopol speeds downswing of apple industry, a 20-year trend.

The Santa Rosa Symphony joins Sonoma State University in planning a world-class music hall on the SSU campus.

#### 2000

Healdsburg population 10,722.

Peanuts creator Charles Schulz dies, age 77.

Native-American group plans casino north of Healdsburg.

Construction begins on Santa Rosa wastewater pipeline to the Geysers northeast of Healdsburg.

Home prices jump 26% to a median of \$342,500.

Jeff Gordon claims victory for third year in a row at Infineon Raceway, adding fourth and fifth victories in 2004 and 2006.

#### 2001

Dot-com boom ends as layoffs hit county. Agilent announces major cutbacks and several companies shut Sonoma County offices. County blames drop in tourism on 9/11 terrorist attack in New York City. Long-time environmental leader Richard (Dick) Day dies. He worked to curb coastal development, stop the building of Warm Springs Dam and put more “environmental candidates” in public office.

Burbank’s Shasta Daisy named Sebastopol city flower on city’s 100th birthday.

After expanding company, Don Sebastiani leaves family winery to set up own business. His sister Mary Ann takes over the operation with husband Richard Cuneo.

#### 2002

Health Plan of the Redwoods, local health insurance provider with 75,000 subscribers, goes out of business.

More than 20-year Catholic priest sex abuse scandal surfaces again with charges of coverup.

River Rock Indian Casino, county’s first, opens.

Two freeway lanes added between Santa Rosa and Rohnert Park, easing congestion.

#### 2003

Graton Rancheria Indians seek to build “world-class” casino in Rohnert Park.

Santa Rosa completes \$200 million Geysers wastewater project. Open Space Agency acquires large chunk of land for parks, taking over ranch near Jack London Park in Sonoma Valley for \$9.1 million. County economy sputters as Agilent announces large new layoffs. Kaiser Permanente, provider of health care for 1/3 of county's population, opens new medical complexes in Petaluma, Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa.

Median home price nears \$440,000

#### 2004

Major development of downtown Petaluma includes 12-screen theater complex.

Mounting casualties bring Iraq war home to county.

Petaluma homeless shelter, named after longtime activist Mary Isaak, opens.

Tax measure passes to widen Highway 101.

Median home price is \$525,000, a 20% increase over 2003; gasoline hits \$2.41 a gallon; Agilent plans to close Rohnert Park plant; more than 2,000 manufacturing jobs move to other counties.

#### 2005

New housing construction highest in six years; median price of homes in Sonoma County hits \$619,000 but slumps to \$466,000 by the end of 2007. Former FBI official Mark Felt of Santa Rosa revealed to be the Nixon Era "Deep Throat," a key figure in the famous 1970s Watergate political scandal. Sam Sebastiani sells Viansa Winery to investors.

#### 2006

Santa Rosa and Sonoma County become part of Tour of California bicycle races. Santa Rosan Levi Leipheimer wins event in 2007.

Median home price hits peak of \$619,000 in January.

Leading revenue producer in county is State Farm Insurance Co. of Rohnert Park.

Leading employers in county are two health care systems, St. Joseph (Memorial Hospital) at 2,800 and Kaiser Permanente at 2,300. Santa Rosa City Council honors Sonoma County Historical Society's Harry Lapham for his lifetime of work in researching and promoting the area's history. Laguna Foundation forms to plan preservation of area between Santa Rosa and Sebastopol.

Bruno Ferrandis succeeds Jeffrey Kahane as director of Santa Rosa Symphony.

## 2007

Lowering home prices, foreclosures hit county economy hard as median price drops to \$500,000.

Five largest companies in Sonoma County are State Farm Insurance, Medtronic Vascular (medical technology), Jackson Family Wines, Kaiser Permanente medical facility and Pacific Gas and Electric Co.

Health care struggles leave Kaiser and Santa Rosa Memorial as dominant facilities.

Fears of agricultural labor shortage rise as nation deadlocks on how to deal with illegal immigrants. However, total agricultural output value in Sonoma County hits record \$639 million; wine grapes, valued at \$417 million, remain the leading crop.

Marijuana cultivation continues in spite of increased eradication efforts in Sonoma, Mendocino, Lake and Humboldt counties. Sources claim marijuana, although illegal, is California's largest revenue-producing crop.

Gang fears grow after fatal shooting of youth at a park near Sonoma in September and growing concerns about home invasions involving drugs. Horizon Air resumes commercial air service from county.

Container ship spills oil after hitting San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, fouling San Francisco Bay and the Pacific shoreline.

Fatal shootings by law enforcement officials create growing community concerns.

## 2008

"Subprime" housing crisis brings median price in county down to \$325,000, almost 50 percent off its peak of \$619,000 in 2005. Exchange Bank suffers its first losing year in a half century, mainly due to home construction loans and real estate activities.

Gasoline prices skyrocket and fall, soaring toward \$4 a gallon early in the year but dropping well below \$2 a gallon by December.

Dairy industry, once the leader in Sonoma County agriculture, suffers from cost problems--number of dairies in county drops to about 70. More than a decade after first charges, at least 17 Catholic priests have faced allegations and nearly \$25 million has gone to dozens of sex abuse victims.

Cloverdale population rises to 8,500 as wine grapes become dominant crop. 37,000 students a semester enroll at Santa Rosa Jr. College. Foley Wine Group of Santa Barbara buys historic Sebastiani Winery. Petaluma marks 150th year; Analy High School has 100th birthday. More than 93 percent of Sonoma County voters cast ballot, highest

percentage in the state; area goes overwhelmingly for new President Barack Obama.

European Union officials destroy 3,200 bottles of Gallo sparkling wine, claiming the company has no right to call itself champagne.

Business Week magazine names Bodega Bay one of the most expensive and exclusive small towns in the U.S.

## 2009

Sonoma County remains in recession that began in October, 2007; at midyear, unemployment rises to 10.3%, up from 6 percent a year earlier. As year nears end, county unemployment is 10.1%.

Economic crisis is pinpointed with August revelation that major real estate developer Clem Carinalli owes creditors some \$150 million. Sonoma State University wrestles with problems caused by millions of dollars in loans made by the university's Foundation to local land owners, including Carinalli.

For the first time in the history of local tax records, the assessed value of property in Sonoma County drops a total of 1.3 percent.

49ers Hall of Fame football star Joe Montana puts his estate in Knights Valley up for sale for \$49 million.

Sonoma County gains 4,753 residents over the year, bringing the area's population to 490,231.

The H1N1 Swine Flue epidemic hits Sonoma County, causing 10 deaths and leaving 150 hospitalized.

Median home price drops to \$305,000 in February, rises to \$356,000 in November. Housing foreclosures remain high.

Finished 9 months ahead of schedule, lanes are added on Hwy. 101 from Rohnert Park to north of Santa Rosa.

Public employees (cities, schools and county of Sonoma) are laid off as government officials make sharp budget cuts.

Carmina Salcido, now in her 20s, returns to Sonoma County, where her father Ramon killed most of his family in a murder rampage in 1989. Her book is titled Not Lost Forever.

## 2010

The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index ranks Sonoma County first in California and fifth nationwide for 2009 on factors such as mental and physical health, job satisfaction and healthy behavior.

Showing that in spite of the Recession the wine business is still functioning, a total of 25,000 people attend the Wine Road Barrel Tasting during two weekends in

March. People from 47 states generate more than \$2.5 million in sales, a record.

As the Recession lingers, statistics show Sonoma County bankruptcies soar from 461 in 2006 to 2,264 in 2009.

Hugh Coddington, a builder who changed the face of post-World War II Santa Rosa, dies in April at age 92. Coddington and his mother Ruby Jewell Coddington gave critical moral and financial support to the founders of the Sonoma County Historical Society.

Rev. James E. Coffee, 76, a longtime civil rights leader and pastor of the Community Baptist Church, dies in April at 76.

David Sabsay, the youngest library director in California when he came to Sonoma County in the 1950s, and credited with creating an innovative, countywide library system, dies in March at 78.

A research study from UCLA indicates that Sonoma County has the second largest "gay" community in the U.S., behind San Francisco. San Francisco has an estimated 12.4 same-sex couples per 1,000 residents while the Santa Rosa Metropolitan area has 7.63 such households.

First student concert is held at the Green Music Center on the Sonoma State University campus; price tag for the controversial building grows from \$15 million in 1997 to \$120 million in 2010.

In its 50th year, the Geysers in northeast Sonoma County is the world's largest geothermal energy complex. Its 18 power plants produce 850 megawatts of electricity, almost 25 percent of California's green energy supply.

State Farm Insurance Co., a major employer in Sonoma County since 1963, announces it is moving its regional offices to Bakersfield by mid-2011. The move will affect some 450 employees. State Compensation Insurance Fund plans a 2012 move to Pleasanton, which could cost 180 jobs.

Opening of a Whole Foods in Coddingtontown and Forever 21 upgrade to Santa Rosa Plaza provides positive economic news.

A \$194 million plan to repay creditors of bankrupt financier Clem Caranalli is approved by the court.

Spurred by smart phone manufacturing, Agilent Technologies posts the best ever results for its electronic measurement unit based in Santa Rosa. State officials estimate Sonoma County's population for July 1 at just under 495,000, up 4,365 from the previous year.

County's grape harvest appears about 15 percent below average at year's end.

Federal regulators close Sonoma Valley Bank, marking the first collapse of a bank in the county during the economic downturn. The bank's three branches reopen as part of San Rafael-based Westamerica Bank.

Loyal Sonoma County fans cheer the first-ever victory of the "misfit" San

Francisco Giants in the baseball World Series.

Sutter Health gets approval for its new hospital north of Santa Rosa, scheduled to open in 2014.

City, county and school jobs and programs are cut throughout the county to balance budgets in recessionary times. With a \$155 million shortfall, the Sonoma-Marín (SMART) system makes major cutbacks in its commuter rail system.

Increasing tensions in the “marijuana wars” north of San Francisco take an increasing toll, including killings of several suspected pot growers. Sonoma County votes for a state marijuana legalization measure, but the vote fails at the state level.

### 2010s

Census figures from April, 2010, show an aging of the population in Sonoma County. The number of residents 60 and older in 2010 are 99,563 compared to 78,000 in 2000. Census also shows one-fourth of Sonoma County’s 483,879 residents are Latino, a sharp increase over 2000. County growth during the decade is a relatively mild 5.5 percent.

### 2011

Legendary “rowdy and raucous” restaurateur Juanita Musson dies in February in the Sonoma Valley she loved at the age of 87.

Hotelier/restaurateur Claus Neumann, who brought a “sense of sophistication” to the generally rural world of Sonoma County when he opened Santa Rosa’s Los Robles Lodge in 1962, dies Mar. 4 at age 81.

Evert Person, former Press Democrat publisher and philanthropist who gave an estimated \$40 million to the Sonoma County Museum and other causes, dies Mar. 8 at age 96.

Figures show major increases in Sonoma County bankruptcy: 1,182 in 2007, 1,550 in 2008, 2,264 in 2009 and 2,574 in 2010. By the end of the year, the county unemployment rate is 9.9 percent. As of September, there were more than 1,500 foreclosures registered.

Billionaire winery founder Jess Jackson of Kendall-Jackson dies in April at age 81. He was also a racehorse owner and breeder.

Ignacio (Ig) Vella, who grew up in the Sonoma cheese trade and became a colorful county supervisor, dies at 83.

Elsie Rich, a woman who fled Vienna in 1938 ahead of the Holocaust, dies in Santa Rosa in December at age 110.

Philanthropists Joan and Sandy Weill pledge \$12 million to Sonoma State University to complete the \$120 million Green Music Center. Opening program at the center is scheduled for September, 2012.

Occupy Wall Street protests take place in Santa Rosa, Petaluma, Sebastopol, Healdsburg and in nearby counties . Occupy supporters focus on the “wealth gap” between rich and poor.

Critics demand public disclosure of pension records of Sonoma County government employees as retirement costs continue to rise. County leaders pledge to overhaul the system.

Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to take a toll of American servicemen. The toll of North Coast soldiers killed in combat since 2002 rises to 15.

Grape growers suffer for the second year in a row at harvest time, with a 20 percent drop in yields in Sonoma and Mendocino counties because of weather-related problems.

Roseland School District makes plans to take over the historic Ursuline High School facility in north Santa Rosa. Funding problems force closure of the 130-year-old Catholic facility.

## 2012

In late 2012, the median home sale price reaches \$366,000, still well below the 2005 peak of \$595,000. Unemployment rate drops to 7.7 percent.

Sonoma County population rises slightly in 2011 to an estimated 487,011. Windsor is the fastest growing area in the county, ahead of Santa Rosa.

In July, MasterCard Worldwide agrees to a \$15 million deal to sponsor an outdoor pavilion at the Green Music Center on the Sonoma State University campus. The pavilion is planned as a permanent, all-weather tent structure on the east side of the concert hall.

The \$145 million Green Center opens in September with an inaugural performance by Chinese pianist Lang Lang. The coming of the complex was 15 years in the making. Some 3,400 attend the first performance.

A University of Toronto think tank lists Sonoma County as the 3rd most tolerant community in the United States, behind only San Diego and Napa County.

School boards in and around Santa Rosa face issues of “white flight.” Parents are reportedly taking children out of central Santa Rosa grade schools and sending them to more affluent surrounding districts.

In October, Santa Rosa bicycling star Levi Leipheimer apologizes as he admits to many years of doping while competing in international races. In October, he receives a six-month suspension from professional racing and is required to forfeit most of his results from 1999 to 2007, including a third place finish in the Tour de France in 2007. Leipheimer founded the popular GranFondo fundraiser ride which attracted 7,000 cyclists to Sonoma County in 2012.

The Press Democrat, the Petaluma Argus-Courier and North Bay Business Journal are sold to a local four-man partnership that includes former Congressman

Doug Bosco and Darius Anderson, a developer from Sonoma and Sacramento lobbyist. Halifax Media Group had bought the local newspapers from the New York Times in January, 2012. The Times maintained ownership of the Press Democrat for 26 years after buying it from the Finley family in 1985.

Petaluma's 12 and 13-year-old All-Stars go to the Little League World Series, win the hearts of fans and come home with a third place finish. Some 20,000 join in a welcome-home parade in September.

After many years of bruising political battles the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria break ground in June for a Las Vegas-style casino-resort in Rohnert Park.

After 20 years, former welfare mother and anti-war Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey retires. San Rafael Democrat Jared Huffman is voted into office to replace her.

Construction begins in January on the SMART commuter rail system through Sonoma and Marin counties.

The rise in payouts for public employee pensions causes local governments to seek ways to control growing costs.

Safety issues involving cars, bicyclists and pedestrians lead to a "vulnerable users" ordinance in Sebastopol.

Exchange Bank announces it will resume its popular Doyle Scholarship program for incoming students, a program that was dropped because of financial difficulties in the past five years.

Wine prices increase as Sonoma County celebrates its best grape harvest in five years.

## 2013

Sonoma County attracts some 7.5 million tourists in 2012, a 6.2 percent jump from the previous year.

The North Coast wine harvest for 2012 is "the largest and most valuable" ever. Sonoma County wineries crush more than 265 tons of grapes, a 60 percent increase from 2011. Figures released in June place the value of county agriculture at \$821 million, a 41 percent increase over 2011. Wine grapes, valued at \$582,942,100, had a record year.

Year-end statistics show Sonoma County vineyard acreage more than doubles during a 20-year period, from 28,000 acres in 1989 to 62,900 acres in 2009. The total in 2012 is 59,219. There is also a movement toward a few major operators dominating the market--the 10 largest owners control 25 percent of the county's vineyards.

Beer becomes a new economic force in Sonoma County with 18 breweries or more, three distilleries and four cideries operating in early 2013. Value of craft beer, liquor and cider production is \$122 million.



Sonoma County jobless rate for May, 2013 hits 6.1 percent, a sharp drop from a year earlier at 8.5 percent. July jobless figure is 7.1 percent followed by 6.6 percent in August. Health care, hospitality and business services help strengthen the economy.

A July fire destroys the historic Frizelle Enos Feed Store on the eastern edge of downtown Sebastopol. The business had been in operation for 80 years. Arson was suspected.

University researchers, researching words used on Twitter, place Santa Rosa as the sixth happiest metropolitan area in the United States. Napa finishes first.

At mid-year 2013, Sonoma County housing market continues to rebound. County median sales price climbs to \$439,000. An economic forecast in November indicates county is "clearly moving forward."

The Bay Area's largest casino, owned by the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria and located just outside Rohnert Park opens for business Nov. 5. The Graton Resort & Casino is valued at \$800 million. At 340,000 square feet, it is the most expensive private development project in Sonoma County History.

In a "spinoff" move, Agilent Technologies announces plans to set up its electronics measurement division in Santa Rosa, where more than 1,100 employees are currently located.

Marches and vigils occur daily protesting the fatal shooting in October of Andy Lopez, 13, by a sheriff's deputy. The deputy shot Lopez after he spotted the boy walking down a street with a BB gun designed to look like an AK-47 assault rifle.

As of July 1, Sonoma County population jumps 3,850 to 492,337 from a year earlier.

As part of the effort to restore the wetlands in San Pablo Bay, the Sonoma County Land Trust coordinates an \$8.3 million deal to buy the 1,092-acre Haire Ranch on Skaggs Island.

## 2014

2013 is reported driest year in Santa Rosa history, with 8.71 inches of rain. Previous low was 11.38 inches in 1976, well below average of 32.2 inches. No charges are filed against deputy accused in fatal 2013 shooting of 13-year-old Andy Lopez

French wine giant Pernod Ricard enters Sonoma County market, buying Kenwood Vineyards from F. Korb and Brothers. Kenwood Winery was founded in 1970.

Strong earthquake, centered in Napa County, hits the North Bay early Sunday, Aug. 24. The 6.0 temblor strikes at 3:20 a.m., damaging homes, wineries and historic buildings. More than 200 people seek treatment in Napa but there are no fatalities. Most damage in Sonoma County occurs at wineries. Total cost could be more than \$1 billion.

A countywide ban on plastic bags goes into effect Sept. 1. Policy is implemented because of environmental concerns about heavy use of plastic bags. Grocers and retailers are required to charge 10 cents for each paper bag they provide customers.

Keysight, an electronic measurement company that was a subsidiary of Agilent Technology, spins off and becomes the largest company ever based in Sonoma County.

A giant storm roars in from Hawaii Dec. 11, bringing hopes of ending the drought that has left much of the state with limited water supplies. Petaluma and Healdsburg face major flooding and many roads are closed. Cazadero, Cloverdale, Guerneville, Healdsburg and Santa Rosa all record five inches or more of rain over a 24-hour period.

Palm Drive Hosplital closes in Sebastopol; Sutter Hospital opens at new location in Santa Rosa.

Graton Resort and Casino in Rohnert Park, in its first year, runs up \$190 million in net revenue over six months. Its 2,000l workers make the second largest employer in Sonoma County.

After a long legal battle, Drake's Bay Oyster Co. closes down at the end of the year.

Home sales fall for the second straight year although median price continues to rise. Median price hits \$481,000 in November.

Food maker Amy's Kitchen continues its growth, expanding its operations in New York, Santa Rosa, Medford, Ore. and Pocatello, Idaho. Lagunitas Brewing Co., the fifth largest craft brewer in the U.S., expands from its Petaluma location with plans for more production facilities in Chicago. Smaller counties, including Sonoma and Marin, gain from federal action to provide doctors with an improved payment plan for Medicare patients.

## 2015

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that Sonoma County population reached 500,292 in 2014, surpassing the half-million mark for the first time. Led by the grape industry, the Sonoma County Crop Report valued the 2014 farm sector at slightly under \$900 million. The wine industry continues to expand in Sonoma County as fears grow over events that create crowded highways and bring fear of environmental damage.

Larger wineries, such as E&J Gallo Winery of Modesto, continue to acquire family-owned north coast wineries. Among Gallo's purchases, the historic Asti Winery near Cloverdale.

Businessman-philanthropist Henry Trione, one of the shapers of post World War II Sonoma County, dies in February at age 94.

Santa Rosa is ranked as having the third worst roads in the U.S. among midsized urban communities, ranked only behind Flint, Mich., and Antioch, Ca. Huge Lake County fire starts Sept. 12 and slips into portions of Sonoma and Napa Counties. It destroys almost 2,000 structures and burns an area nearly five times the size of San Francisco. Four people are killed and insurance costs are estimated at \$700 million.

Multi-year drought continues through 2015, forcing County residents to cut back on outdoor irrigation.

More than 3,000 people are estimated to be homeless in Sonoma County, increasing calls for local governments to create more affordable housing opportunities. Nearing the end of the year, the median single-family home price is about \$530,000.

In January, Kevin Jorgenson of Santa Rosa and partner Tommy Caldwell become the first to free-climb the face of the Dawn Wall at Yosemite's El Capitan.

As Santa Rosa is declared the "medical cannabis center of the world," some citizens praise the "open attitude" in the area while others express fears of crime and environmental concerns. In December, the Emerald Cup festival draws 21,000 to Sonoma County Fairgrounds for a weekend frolic.

Palm Drive Hospital is reborn as Sonoma West Medical Center, serving residents of west Sonoma County.

Following a sheriff deputy's shooting of Andy Lopez, 13, in 2013, plans move forward to name an independent body to examine community relations with law enforcement agencies.

Russian River Health Center in Guerneville, which services 3,500 patients, is badly damaged by a suspected arson fire in December.

Craft beer giant Lagunitas Brewing Company expands, opening a new plant in southern California and selling a 50 percent stake in the company to Heineken International. The growing Sonoma County firm is now valued at around \$1 billion dollars.

## 2016

County's unemployment rate drops to 3.5% in mid-year, the lowest level in more than 15 years. People in vineyard work and the hospitality industry complain of a shortage of qualified workers.

A toxic algae bloom cuts sharply into dungeness crab sales.

For the second year in a row, major fires sweep through Lake County. Nearly 300 structures, including more than 175 homes are destroyed and a suspect is faced with arson charges.

Sonoma County swimmer Maya DiRado wins four medals at the Rio Olympics. The former Mario Carrillo High School student wins a silver, bronze and two gold medals. As fears of a housing crisis grow, Santa Rosa passes a rent control ordinance. Cities around the county look for ways to encourage more housing construction. In late 2016,

the median home price rises to \$575,000. Rent for an average two-bed, two-bath apartment rises to more than \$2,000 a month.

Competition in the grocery business is intense. In October, the historic G&G supermarket, headed by Robert Gong, sells stores in Petaluma and Santa Rosa to Safeway.

The hospitality business prospers. County revenues in the hotel area are double the figure for 2009. Graton Resort and Casino in Rohnert Park opens a 200-room facility and becomes one of the largest employers in the county with 3,000 employees. Sonoma County plans airport expansion as passenger count rises 25 percent over 2015.

Wineries, craft beer and specialty cheese production also make gains. For the first time, wine bottle sales surpass \$10 a bottle

In spite of much good economic news, homeless problems continue in winter. It's estimated at the end of 2016 that some 3,000 county residents live day-to-day without shelter and many find refuge under the freeways. Various groups work to ease problems of dealing with winter weather and increased demands to clean up garbage.

While the county's many wineries remain popular places to visit, the beer business continues to grow. Lagunitas Brewery, following its 2015 deal with Heineken, makes new buys in South Carolina, Texas and Sonoma County. Russian River Brewing Co. opens a brewery in Windsor and Bear Republic plans an opening in Rohnert Park in 2017.

## 2017

A giant wind-driven fire causes heavy damage and 40 fatalities in October. The so-called wine country blazes hit Sonoma, Napa and Mendocino counties, wiping out more than 6,000 homes and businesses. More than 6,000 firefighters from across the U.S. fight the various blazes. Lawn signs welcome the presence of the brave "First Responders."

There is damage "almost everywhere." Among the losses: Many of the Fountaingrove hillside homes in Santa Rosa, Coffey Park, Journey's End Trailer Park, Bennett Ridge, the Hilton Hotel, the historic Round Barn built in 1899, the home of the late Peanuts cartoonist Charles Schulz, portions of Cardinal Newman High School and areas around Larkfield. Helping neighbors in need, the North Bay Fire Relief Fund raises almost \$30 million by the end of 2017 from more than 38,000 donors.

Fifty-three years earlier, in 1964, a similar fire threatened Santa Rosa but was beaten back before it did serious damage to the city. This time, the blazes kept coming.

Median single family home prices hit a new high in at \$656,900, breaking the old record of \$619,000, set in August, 2005. In the recession that followed, the median price dropped to \$305,000 in 2009. Current problems include serving a growing

homeless population, made more severe by the major October fire.

Heineken, the world's second largest beer brewer, buys the final half of Sonoma County's Lagunitas craft beer Brewing Co. Heineken bought the first half in 2015. Lagunitas founder/chairman Tony Magee is named Heineken's director of global craft beer.

The jobless rate in Sonoma County drops to 2.8 percent in November, 2017. A year earlier, the jobless number was 3.7 percent.

SMART passenger train service between Santa Rosa and San Rafael gets underway in August with what appears to be substantial interest to find an alternative to crowded highways. Next step involves expanding the line to Larkspur, providing better ferry access to San Francisco.

At a cost of \$10.5 million, Santa Rosa works to revitalize its downtown area with the completion of a reunified Old Courthouse Square.

In addition to fire, Sonoma County has a stormy weather year, ending drought fears after five "dry" years. Heavy rains for the weather year from October 2016 to September 2017 rises to more than 60 inches in Santa Rosa, the highest total since records were kept, starting in 1902.

What's the future of the marijuana business in Sonoma County? At the start of 2018, the state stands ready to legalize the sale of marijuana, leading to a good deal of maneuvering to create a new market for the controversial drug. Cannabis growers and manufacturers have bought commercial properties, especially in Santa Rosa. Some communities such as Rohnert Park and Sonoma, are "snubbing" the industry while others, including dispensaries in Sebastopol and Cotati, look on the new plan as a positive economic opportunity. The state's new recreational marijuana industry has a projected value of \$7 billion.

## 2018

Homelessness continues as a growing problem in Sonoma County. A government report indicates the county has more than 2,600 homeless adults, 715 of whom are listed as chronic cases. Critics say the problem is complicated by "high rents and low wages."

Rebuilding after the 2017 October fires remains slow. Of the 5,000 plus homes destroyed in Sonoma County, 57 percent of property owners have failed to apply for a building permit. Insurance problems, rental deadlines and a shortage of trained laborers have added to the difficulties for fire victims. Prices of Sonoma County homes drop. The median sales price rises to a record \$700,000 in June but falls to around \$600,000 late in the year. In April, the jobless rate in Sonoma County drops to 2.5 %, an 18-year low. By September, there was another dip to 2.4. The majority of jobs came from construction and manufacturing.

Russian River Brewing Co., makers of Pliny the Elder, opens \$50 million brewery,

brewpub and restaurant in Windsor. The new site is expected to more than double production in 2019 to 40,000 barrels. The company's first operation continues on Fourth St. in Santa Rosa.

Dispensaries open in Sonoma County as state legalizes recreational marijuana use. Rohnert Park's Department of Public Safety faces lawsuits and investigations related to its activities in stopping motorists near the Sonoma-Mendocino county line, more than 40 miles from their city borders.

Sears Department store closes in downtown Santa Rosa, indicating possible shopper shift from brick and mortar stores to "digital shopping." Expanded airline flights and new downtown hotels in Santa Rosa indicate optimism over expanded tourist activities in the county.

Sonoma County board of supervisors agree to pay \$3 million to settle a lawsuit in the shooting death of Andy Lopez, killed by a sheriff's deputy in 2013. His BB gun was mistaken as an assault rifle by the deputy.

Helen Rudee, a pioneer for women's rights, dies shortly after her 100th birthday. She became the first female chair of the Santa Rosa School Board and was the first woman on the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, serving three four-year terms. She also became a leader in the local Women's History Project. Colorful Maestro Bruno Ferrandis retires after 12 years as conductor of the Santa Rosa Symphony.

## 2019

A nearly decade-long drought ends with heavy rains in Sonoma County in February-March. Flood damage is especially heavy in the lower Russian River around Guerneville. Estimate of damage to homes, businesses, roads and other infrastructure comes to more than \$150 million. More than 1,700 homes suffer major damage.

Gallo, the world's largest wine company, announces major acquisition from Constellation Brands, paying \$1.7 billion for 30 wine and spirit brands including Clos du Bois, Mark West, Ravenswood, and Franciscan Estate. Completion of the deal is expected by early 2020.

A plan is announced in April between the State and Sonoma County to provide three years to map out a future plan for the Sonoma Developmental Center property in Eldridge. The center had been a long-time home for developmentally disabled individuals.

The value of the North Coast grape harvest, including Sonoma County, reaches a record, more than \$2 billion. More than 558 tons of grapes were picked in Sonoma, Napa, Lake and Mendocino county, a 20 percent increase over 2017.

The Bay Area is pinpointed as having the third largest homeless population in the U.S. Sonoma County is estimated to have 10 percent of that population, behind Santa Clara, San Francisco and Alameda.

Census Bureau statistics indicate an estimated loss of population in Sonoma County of 3,300

residents in 2018, following the devastating fires of 2017.

Sonoma State University, 58 years old, graduates its largest class in May, 2,917 students.

Santa Rosa Jr. College, in its 100th year, notes the ethnic diversity at the school, including a record number of Latino graduates, 587.

Sonoma County's total agricultural output for 2018 crosses the \$1 billion mark in value for the first time. Wine grape harvest leads the way with a value of \$777 million, followed by milk and Misc. livestock/poultry.

There's no place like home, especially if the value of one's property keeps going up. A September report indicates that property values went up for the 7th straight year. All properties in the county were deemed to be worth \$94.2 billion, an increase of almost 6 percent.

In late October, after marking the second anniversary of major 2017 fires, windstorms hit the North Bay again, triggering major damage and evacuation of large numbers of people. The Kincadee fire, which started in northern Sonoma County near the Geysers, was perhaps the biggest fire ever in the North Bay, causing damage to nearly 400 buildings and forcing evacuations of many thousands of residents. Fortunately, there were no fatalities.

Homeless crisis becomes very public as hundreds of people camp on the Joe Rodota Trail west of Santa Rosa. Elected officials seek solutions, most of which carry a heavy price tag.

Smart train system opens new terminal which provides extended service from Santa Rosa to Larkspur.

## 2020

In March, a worldwide coronavirus outbreak hits Sonoma County, forcing county officials to set up a (shelter in place) isolation program. Residents are ordered to isolate themselves at home except for necessary shopping needs. Many businesses close down, raising unemployment levels dramatically.

By the end of the year, hundreds of cases were being reported daily, testing the ability of hospitals to care for victims. At the end of the year, there were more than 190 deaths, more than 5,000 active cases and more than 18,000 total cases. Development of vaccines raises hopes for disease control.

Fire once again strikes Sonoma County and surrounding areas for the third time in four years. The Glass fire in September and October burns more than 67,000 acres, and destroys almost 650 houses and 350 commercial structures. Some 3,000 firefighters are involved in controlling the damage.

By November, with the help of volunteers, trails and campgrounds reopen at several locations, including Sugarloaf State Park near Kenwood.

Showing a strong will to overcome adversity, fire victims of Coffey Park in Santa Rosa gather in their "new homes" to party and celebrate a comeback from the Tubbs fire of 2017.

In November, Santa Rosa and six other cities and public agencies sue Pacific Gas and Electric Co., alleging negligence by the utility in causing the Kincadee fire of 2019. The fire burned more than 77,000 acre and destroyed more than 370 buildings.

Parties and special events mark the celebration of the 1920 passage of the 19th amendment, giving women the right to vote. Shortly thereafter, Sonoma County has its first policewoman and women serving on trial juries.

Santa Rosa High School celebrates its 145th birthday after first opening its doors in 1874. Until that time, Petaluma had the only high school in the county. Montgomery High School opened in 1958, followed by four more school and Ridgway, near SRHS. A major fire in the early 1920s forced Santa Rosa to work from a “mobile school system” for several years.

The historic Willie Bird turkey operation moved out of Sonoma County, setting up a new operation in Sonora County.

George Ortiz, a leader in the Hispanic community and co-founder of the California Human Development Corporation, died at the age of 85. The organization serves some 25,000 people a year in 31 Northern California counties.

Brett Crozier, who grew up in Santa Rosa and later became commanding officer of the aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt, lost his job in a conflict over how to deal with the corona virus aboard his ship. After it was learned he had been infected, it was reported he received cheers from the crew as he left the ship. He was a 1988 graduate of Santa Rosa High School.

Spencer Torkelson, a baseball star at Casa Grande High School in Petaluma, was the number one pick of the Detroit Tigers in the baseball draft of 2020, The honor included a healthy bonus of \$8.4 million dollars.

His family reports he first started working on his swing at the age of 18 months.

Sonoma Hills Farm, on the outskirts of Petaluma, celebrates its first official harvest of locally grown cannabis,

The Viviani family, longtime owners of the Sonoma Cheese Factory In Sonoma, sells historic site to Ken and Stacy Mattson of the Sonoma Best Hospitality group in \$3.75 million deal.

Damage from fires is expected to cause up to \$150 million in losses to grape growers in and around Sonoma County.

# Top 10 news stories of 2017 led by Sonoma County wildfires



**KEVIN MCCALLUM**

THE PRESS DEMOCRAT | December 29, 2017, 9:05PM

| Updated 15 minutes ago.

## **Top news stories of 2017 in Sonoma County**

1. October fires
2. Housing crisis deepens
3. SMART service starts
4. Old Courthouse Square is reunified
5. Homelessness grows more visible
6. Trump resistance
7. Arrest in Jenner beach murders
8. Historic wet winter
9. North Coast prepares for cannabis legalization
10. Change in Sheriff's Office leadership

The infernos that terrorized the North Bay in October cleaved 2017 in two.

The loss from those historic fires is so extensive, the trauma so deep and the task of rebuilding so daunting, that the year, looking back, is now divided. There were the 10 months before powerful inland winds drove flames into rural and urban neighborhoods, leveling more than 8,000 structures in the nation's costliest-ever wildfires. And there was everything since.

Our lives were upended and our region will never be the same. Yet Sonoma County and its surroundings also marked brighter milestones this past year, including the start of commuter rail service after decades of planning and years of construction, and the reunification of Old Courthouse Square in downtown Santa Rosa. Both projects survived controversy and their realization required sustained political will and sacrifice by taxpayers.

Sonoma County, along with much of California and other parts of the nation, became a bastion of political resistance to the new administration of President Donald Trump, whose inauguration was followed a day later by the Women's March series. In Santa Rosa, more than 5,000 people filled downtown streets in one of the largest local political demonstrations in memory.

Cannabis fans had much to cheer in 2017 as the industry moved closer to legal production and sale of marijuana for recreational use, a landmark, voter-approved shift sure to bring profound change to a region with deep roots in the medical and black-market trade.

Local law enforcement officers, meanwhile, announced their own surprising breakthrough: the arrest of a suspect in the notorious double murder that claimed the lives of a young couple sleeping on a Jenner beach in 2004.

There was little resolution, however, to the region's chronic housing crisis. While several major projects have advanced, the fires dealt Sonoma County's housing supply a severe blow, ratcheting up both sale prices and rents. Homeownership is growing further out of reach for many middle-class families, and displacement is a daily risk for many more low-income residents.

With hopes for a resilient year ahead, here then are Sonoma County's top 10 stories of 2017.

#### 1. October fires

Four hours. That's all it took for gale-force winds to propel fire

12 miles from Calistoga at the north end of the Napa Valley, over rural ranches in the Mayacamas Mountains, through upscale homes of Fountaingrove, and across six lanes of Highway 101 into Coffey Park, a dense Santa Rosa neighborhood where devastation would later be described as “warlike.”

And the Tubbs fire, though now California’s most destructive ever, was not the only inferno of the night, when big blazes simultaneously erupted late Oct. 8 across the North Bay. Together, they would account for 40 deaths, including 24 people in Sonoma County, nine in Mendocino, and seven in Napa. The average age of the victims: 70.

They also displaced tens of thousands of residents, destroying more than 6,000 homes — 5,130 of them in Sonoma County — and more than 150 businesses. Insured losses top \$9 billion.

The disaster, unstoppable in its first hours, was confronted by waves of firefighters, police officers, residents and caregivers who put themselves in danger to alert and evacuate neighborhoods. All told, about 100,000 people in Sonoma County — one in every five residents — were under mandatory or advisory evacuation orders as the siege stretched on.

## **Most Popular Stories**

Top comics stand up in Santa Rosa for fire victims Grant

Cohn: Next step for 49ers is to complete the defense

Troubled life comes to tragic end in Ukiah standoff 2

suspected gang members arrested at Montgomery High

Petaluma Seed Bank leaving its iconic 1920s building

It took a full 23 days and help from up to 6,700 firefighters in the county, including crews from across the nation, to bring the three largest fires fully under control. The hunt for the cause of the blazes continues, with state investigators closely inspecting utility equipment near suspected ignition sites. The county's wildfire warning system, including emergency officials' decision not to use Amber Alert-style wireless messages for more widespread warnings, is also under state review.

So many other uncertainties cloud our future. Those who lost homes face agonizing dilemmas: How to clean up their properties? Will insurance pay enough to rebuild? Where will they live in the interim?

The cleanup is now going full-tilt, but huge questions remain for our economy and the next phase of the recovery. Where will the army of construction workers come from? How quickly can governments process building permits? Should future construction be restricted in areas such as Fountaingrove, which has now burned twice in 55 years?

As the New Year dawns, the top story of 2017 is very likely to evolve into the top story of 2018.

2. Housing crisis

Sonoma County's housing crisis deepened in dramatic fashion in 2017. Housing values that had eclipsed pre-recession records and rents both spiked in the wake of the fires, which knocked out 5 percent of Santa Rosa's housing stock. While new construction increased, with 400 new homes either completed or approved for construction by mid-year in the city, government efforts to spur even greater activity, especially in the lower-income units, were outmatched by demand.

November ended with a record high median price of \$656,900 for a single-family home, an increase of 115 percent from the February 2009 low of \$305,000.

While skyrocketing values have homeowners in an enviable position, the soaring prices and rents have made housing costs a bigger stretch — or put it entirely out reach — for thousands of others.

To bolster supply, the county advanced its sale of the 82-acre site former hospital on Chanate Road to local developer Bill Gallaher with plans for up to 800 units. Across town, SMART agreed to sell a 5.4-acre site to a Santa Clara developer with plans for 268 units.

But in a sign of the high stakes and powerful interests in play over housing, the Santa Rosa City Council's 2016 decision to enact rent control was narrowly overturned at the ballot box in June following an unprecedented infusion of cash from outside real estate interests.

SEND TO SEAN--

**CORRECTION CORRECTION CORRECTION**

**From The Sonoma Democrat, 17 February 1877, page 5, col. 2.**

**“A Female M. D. Ella M. Barrett, of Healdsburg, who graduated at the Medical College for women in New York April 4th 1875, filed her certificate in the clerk’s office of this county on the 13th inst. in accordance with the act of the last Legislature to regulate the practice of medicine.”From The Sonoma Democrat, 17 February 1877, page 5, col. 2.**

**she’s incorrectly listed in 1859. change to 1877.**

**Selective history of Sonoma County, as of June 2014--**

Lee Torliatt, Sonoma Historian Editor, to Colbert Report

Selective History of Sonoma County:

It should be noted that this area is Sonoma County but there is also a historic town of Sonoma.