

A Brief History of the *St. Helena Star* Newspaper By Leo Martin

On September 25, 1874 the first issue of the *St. Helena Star* was printed in a small room in a frame building that stood on Hunt Avenue (corner of Hunt and Main Sts). It was four pages with seven columns. The publisher was Dewitt C. Lawrence. Abraham Clock, one of pioneer residents, paid \$20 for the first issue. A subscription cost \$3.50 per year. Using a Washington hand press, each sheet of paper was laid upon the type forms, then cranked by hand so the forms moved under the part that was to apply the pressure. This completed, the forms were rolled back, the printed sheet removed and the process continued.

In October 1876, the *Star* moved into upstairs rooms in the Fulton Building (probably 1230 Main Street) above Sciutto Electric Supply (today Amelia Claire Boutique) . In early 1876, Charles A. Gardner acquired the paper and in late 1877 purchased a lot, about where the Model Bakery is now located, for a new office. In July 1878, Gardner leased the paper for one year to N.A. Morford, recently principal of the public school.

In March 1883 Willis A. Mackinder purchased one half interest in the *Star*.

In January 1885 he purchased Gardner's remaining interest. In June of that year the *Star* resumed publication on Fridays only, instead of Mondays and Thursdays as in the past. In 1887, the *Star* had two competitors in the field - the Times and the Independent, the latter issued in both daily and weekly editions. At the end of the year, all competitors suspended, leaving the *Star* the only paper in town.

At about this time, the paper moved into the Oddfellows Building (completed 1885). A cylinder press had been purchased.

September 28, 1887 brought the news that Mackinder sold the *Star* to his brother Frank B. and Jesse H. Dungan, a newsman from Nevada. A four horsepower steam engine was added to the equipment for running the presses. Steam was obtained from Duckworth & Genung's Foundry (on Railroad Avenue where Terra Restaurant now is). In October 1891, Dungan retired and sold his interest to Frank Mackinder.

Frank Mackinder was 21 years old when he bought the newspaper and began learning the printer's trade. continued as editor until his death in (1937). The paper has since been under the management of Mrs. Mackinder and her son Starr Baldwin has been editor. In 1900 Mackinder constructed a stone building for the *Star*, sharing the building with the post office as he was postmaster from 1899 to 1915. In 1924 the post office moved out. The *Star* Building is a stone structure 34 X 75 feet in size. There was a large handsome business office, a cozy editorial room, and a large mechanical room with generous natural light.

The machinery was "of the latest type (for 1924) and each machine had an electric motor. The equipment handled all types of printing.

The Star reached practically every family in the area, including, Pope, Chiles, and Conn Valleys.

Long time employees of the Star were:

Edwin L. Paulson, who started in 1902 as foreman. He designed much of the advertising and was a skilled mechanic.

Martha Klubescheidt joined the Star just after high school. She learned to use the linotype machine, was the bookkeeper and also wrote articles.

Augustina Cavallini joined right out of school and resigned when she married Joseph Fosetti. After being widowed she returned and stayed on for many years, operating the linotype machine and the folding machine.

The apprentice in 1924 was Leo Harrison, who had been there for 2 years just out of school.

This information comes from the 50th Anniversary Edition of Sept 26, 1924.

Leo Martin was a retired cashier of Carver National Bank official who wrote in 1944 a series of articles summarizing the news from the *Star*.