

HISTORY
OF
"RATTLESNAKE ACRES" VINEYARD
CALISTOGA, NAPA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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***** EXCERPT – DRAFT VERSION *****

Author's Note: This is an excerpt from a larger history of the ranch on which I live, located about a mile and a half north of downtown Calistoga on Highway 29. Out of curiosity, I started this project several years ago, and continue to add chapters as I research the history of each of the owners of this property. The Veale chapter is essentially complete, and is presented in draft form below. – Dean Enderlin, Calistoga, September 2007.

THE THOMAS VEALE FAMILY

Thomas Fletcher Wells Veale was born at Eldara, Pike County, Illinois on 22 January 1843. He was one of four sons born to William Veale (1808 –1871), a native of Cornwall, England, and Margaret Wells (? – 1854/5), a native of Kentucky. In 1856, about a year after Margeret's death, William Veale brought Thomas and his siblings to California. They departed Illinois on November 5, 1856, traveling via New Orleans, through the Isthmus of Panama to San Francisco.¹ They arrived in that city on 24 January 1857, and settled for a short time in Solano County.² By 1860, the family had settled in Vallejo Township in Sonoma County, on a ranch between present-day Petaluma and Cotati.

After the outbreak of the Civil War, Thomas returned to his hometown of Eldara, Illinois, where he enlisted on 15 August 1862. He may have been prompted to join the war effort by his Petaluma family and neighbors, who were strong supporters of the Union. With the exception of the "California 100," patriotic young men in California, who wished to join the military and directly participate in the war, had to return to their home states to enlist. Thomas, being a native of Illinois, did just that.

Thomas was mustered into Company G of the 99th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment on 23 August 1862 at Pittsfield, under the command of Captain H. D. Hull. The 99th was the first regiment sent by Illinois under the call of 1862. Thomas' military career was short-lived, however, when problems arose while the company was stationed at Salem, Missouri from September 17th to November 20th.³ Near the end of the company's period of encampment at that place, Thomas was seized with a fever while on picket duty. He applied to the company surgeon

¹ The Veale Heritage, volume IV, no. 3, July 1981, page 87 (reprinted in Timetravelers.com: The Veale Family's Journey Through Time, 1600 through 2000, prepared by Robert L. Veale).

² The Veale Heritage, volume IV, no. 3, July 1981, page 87.

³ Dyer, Frederick H., 1908, A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion. Des Moines, Iowa: Dyer Publishing Company.

to be relieved of duty that night, but his request was denied. Unable to remain at his post as ordered, Thomas called upon a comrade-in-arms to take his place while he left to recover. In the morning, upon returning for treatment, he learned that his company was being ordered forward to Hartville, preparatory to battle. Still sick, but unwilling to stay behind, he marched with his company for three or four days. At Houston, Missouri, he could march no further. There, he was admitted to a makeshift hospital, where he was diagnosed with German measles (rubella) and declared unfit for duty. His condition worsened when the disease settled in his lungs, and it was feared he had only a few weeks to live. The grave prognosis proved to be wrong. His condition gradually improved, and after about three months in the hospital at Houston, he was transferred to the hospital at General Grant's field headquarters at Milliken's Bend, Louisiana. There, Thomas was honorably discharged on a certificate of medical disability on 11 April 1863. Too weak to return home on his own, he was transported to his old hometown of Eldara by his father, who traveled all the way from California to get him. In Eldara, Thomas was treated for the after-effects of the measles by their family physician, Dr. Moorhead, and finally returned to Petaluma later that year.

Thomas continued to convalesce at his father's Petaluma ranch for several months after his return to California, but doctors still gave a grave prognosis. As a last resort, Thomas was prescribed a concoction of cod liver oil and French brandy. The remedy worked, and he recovered sufficiently to resume a halfway normal life. Though his lungs remained weak, he claimed to achieve some comfort with the use of a patent medicine produced by Madame Emily Preston, an amateur healer based in Cloverdale, California. Antique bottles found in the house of his former ranch at Calistoga suggest that Thomas continued to rely on patent medicines for his ailments into his later years. One of his possible favorites was Warner's Safe Kidney & Liver Cure, a popular cure-all of the 1880's and 1890's.⁴ In later years, he was a regular customer at Armstrong's drugstore in Calistoga. He also sought treatment for five months in San Francisco, at the office of Dr. Jamison on 148 Eddy Street, though he claimed that Dr. Jamison's medicine did him no good.

In Santa Rosa, on 1 July 1866, the blue-eyed, brown-haired Thomas married Flora Wallingford Clark, daughter of Heman K. Clark.⁵ The Clarks – like the Veales – were an old Petaluma family. Flora's uncle, Pennsylvania native Almer Clark, crossed the plains from Illinois in 1850, and arrived in Placerville on September 10th of that year.⁶ He and his family ultimately settled in Vallejo Township in Sonoma County in June 1853, and were neighbors to the Veales. Flora's father (Almer's brother) probably came to California about the same time as Almer, leaving his family behind for a time in Hebron, McHenry County, Illinois, with Flora's older sister, Harriet Irene Coggsweil and her husband. Flora was probably a native of McHenry County, born 27 June 1846.⁷

Thomas and Flora moved around quite a bit in the first years of their marriage. They lived in Petaluma for a time, where their first child, Cora Jane, was born on 31 August 1867. By

⁴ A Warner's bottle was found in the Veale house by Roy Enderlin while dismantling the upstairs floor in the 1950's.

⁵ Sonoma Democrat, 14 July 1866, page 5, column 4: "At Santa Rosa, July 1st, 1866, by Rev. N. Burton, Mr. Thomas F. Veal to Miss Flora Clark, all of Vallejo Township." Also, Marriage License, issued in Sonoma County 30 June 1866 and recorded 16 July 1866 by Noah Burton, Preacher of the Gospel.

⁶ Anonymous, 1880, History of Sonoma County. San Francisco: Alley, Bowen & Co., pp. 690-691.

⁷ Flora's father appears in McHenry County in the 1840 census.

1870, they had settled near Alisal in Monterey County. Thomas was farming there, but had no land of his own. Sometime around 1877, the Veales arrived in Calistoga. By then, their family had grown with the addition of a son, Almer F., born 19 August 1872. A third child had died as an infant around 1870.

In 1880, Thomas, Flora and their two children were living on the northern outskirts of Calistoga. Thomas was farming, Flora was keeping house, and Cora (then age 12) was attending school. Things must have been looking up for them financially, because their household included a servant named John Shields. On 10 February 1885, Thomas struck a deal with Charles A. Duebel to purchase Duebel's property in Calistoga -- the old O'Brien place. Veale paid \$2,250 in gold coin for it, borrowing \$1,200 from his neighbor, John Greer.⁸ Within a month, he was hard at work on the place, as a newspaper article in the *Independent Calistogian* newspaper explains⁹:

Thos. F. Veal, who bought the Deuebel farm of 22 ¼ acres on the Lakeport road above town, has been busily engaged preparing land for setting ten thousand vine cuttings. He will have a pretty home there in time.

The Veales probably moved into the O'Brien house on the Duebel property shortly after purchasing the place. The house had recently been rented by Sebastian Martz, so it was probably in well kept condition. Those first years must have been happy ones for the Veales, as their children grew up and their newly acquired ranch developed. In addition to the winegrapes, the Veales were probably also responsible for planting fruit trees in their front yard, some of which survive to this day. Among the trees in this orchard were a Eureka persimmon, a white fig, two Valencia-type oranges, and two varieties of cherry.

The happiest of days for the Veales came in 1886, when their daughter Cora Jane was married on the ranch. The wedding was described in detail in the *Independent Calistogian* newspaper under the heading, "The Evey-Veal Nuptials"¹⁰:

EVEY-VEAL.—At the residence of the bride's parents, near Calistoga, August 11th, 1886, by Rev. E. H. King, Mr. David D. Evey and Miss Cora J. Veal.

The ceremony was succeeded by a very excellent dinner, after which the bride and bridegroom repaired to their home, which was in readiness for their reception.

The following are a few of the presents from friends and relatives:

Parlor organ and toilet set, from parents of the bride; 1 doz. silver tablespoons, Mrs. W. L. Hopper; 1 doz. silver teaspoons, Miss Mattie Benson; 1 doz. napkins, Lee Hopper; ½ doz. linen handkerchiefs, Myrtle Hopper; gold lace pin, Almer Veal; silver sugar spoon, Mrs. J. J. Multer; 1 doz. silver knives and forks, T. F. Veal; silver butter-knife, table linen and towels, Mrs. T. F. Veal; hand-painted and embroidered fan, Miss Ollie Wright; gold ring, J. R. Wright; \$25.00, A. L. Tubbs.

The CALISTOGIAN acknowledges the receipt of an abundant supply of delicious wedding cake, and tenders the young couple best wishes for their happiness and prosperity.

⁸ Book 27, Page 45, Napa County Mortgages. Mortgage made 10 February 1885, signed 10 February 1885 by T. F. Veal to John Greer, both of Napa County. Released 16 December 1892 (Book No. 5 Releases, page 346).

⁹ *Independent Calistogian*, Wednesday, 11 March 1885, page 3, column 6.

¹⁰ *Independent Calistogian*, Wednesday, 11 August 1886, page 3, column 4.

The groom, David D. Evey (1864 – 1932) was the son of the Veale's upvalley neighbors, Joseph and Sarah Evey (for whom Evey Road is named). David was born on Mt. St. Helena, and grew up in the Bennett Farm District. He was a rancher, and for many years was foreman on the A. L. Tubbs ranch, which adjoined his father's land.

When the 1890's rolled around, the pleasant times at the Veale residence came to an end. The troubles probably started when their daughter, Cora Jane, who was living with her husband on the Evey ranch at the foot of Mt. St. Helena, unexpectedly died due to complications giving birth to their first child. She was only twenty-four years old, when she died on 20 December 1891. Within months of Cora's passing, a flurry of complicated land transactions took place between the members of the Thomas Veale family. In the first transaction, dated 19 March 1892, Thomas deeded half of his Calistoga ranch to his 20-year-old son, Almer, for love and affection.¹¹ Next, in September of 1896, Thomas deeded one quarter of his remaining interest in the ranch to his wife, Flora.¹² This made Almer, with his half interest, the controlling owner of the ranch. Almer's interest in the ranch increased to three quarters in August of 1898, when his mother deeded her portion to him.¹³ These efforts to give Almer the controlling interest in the ranch may have been a consequence of Thomas' and Flora's pending divorce, which was finalized in December of 1898.¹⁴

Almer F. Veale moved to San Francisco about the time of the divorce. He graduated from the California Medical College there on 19 May 1897,¹⁵ and became a San Francisco physician. He was living with his mother in a rented house at 2032 Howard Street in 1900, but was in his own place at 526 Guerrero by 1903.¹⁶ He never married, and died in Placer County on 11 May 1913, at the age of 40.¹⁷ Little is known about his career as a doctor, although he was accused of having "exhumed and willfully and maliciously mutilated the body of a deceased person" days before the Great Earthquake of 1906. The accusations that led to the arraignment of Dr. Veale were found to be unwarranted, and the case was dismissed.

Flora kept the name "Veale" for the remainder of her life, referring to herself as a widow. She moved to San Francisco after the divorce. She continued to hold her interest in the Calistoga ranch, and eventually became sole owner. Almer deeded his interest in the ranch to her in 1902. Her estranged husband, Thomas (who had since remarried), deeded his interest in the ranch to her in 1904, along with a small adjoining parcel he had recently acquired from Lydia Bentley, wife of Civil War veteran Daniel M. Bentley, in 1902.¹⁸ As sole owner of the combined parcels,

¹¹ Thomas F. Veal to A. F. Veal, deed dated 19 March 1892 for love and affection, recorded 1 April 1892 in Book 50, Page 47, Napa County Deeds.

¹² Thomas F. Veal to Flora W. Veal, deed dated 8 September 1896 for \$10 gold coin, recorded 8 September 1896 in Book 58, Page 417, Napa County Deeds.

¹³ Flora W. Veal to Almer F. Veal, deed dated 4 August 1898 for love and affection, recorded 10 August 1898 in Book 62, Page 354, Napa County Deeds.

¹⁴ Decree of Divorce, Napa County Superior Court Action No. 1738, filed 27 December 1898: Thomas F. W. Veal, plaintiff, Flora W. Veal, defendant.

¹⁵ Weekly Calistogian, Friday, May 23, 1897, page 3, column 2.

¹⁶ 1903 San Francisco Directory.

¹⁷ Although the California Death Index indicates that he died in Placer County, his estate was probated in San Francisco (probate file 15906). He may have died while traveling.

¹⁸ Thomas F. Veale to Flora W. Veale, deed dated 23 January 1904 for \$10 lawful money (actual sale amount uncertain), filed 28 January 1904 in Book 77, Page 319, Napa County Deeds.

Flora was the first person to own the full acreage of the ranch as it exists today. She sold the parcels to Harry Miller in 1912.¹⁹

In the last year of her life, Flora returned to the place of her childhood in Petaluma. She died there as the result of a stroke on 4 November 1917, at the age of 71. She left an estate valued at \$10,000, which was divided between her ex-brother-in-law, William Roe Veale, and her friends, Fred and Esther Farquar. According to her death certificate, her remains were buried in Cypress Hill Cemetery in Petaluma, where other members of the Clark family also lie.

Thomas Veale remained on the Calistoga ranch in the years following his divorce from Flora. He was still living there in 1900, with a housekeeper named Nellie Newman (age 30) and her son, Verne (age 6). On 30 December 1903, he married Ellen Catherine Boase (1867 – 1935), a native of England. The event was noted in the *Weekly Calistogian* newspaper on 1 January 1904:

The ringing of wedding bells was heard in Calistoga on Wednesday of this week, the occasion being the marriage of T. F. Veale and Miss Helen Boase. The ceremony was performed at the home of the bride on Washington street and the Rev. J. H. Buxton tied the matrimonial knot. The marriage took place at 12:30 o'clock. The bride was handsomely attired in gray and held a bouquet of chrysanthemums. The groom wore the customary black. Nellie Power and Vern Newman, two little girls, were maids of honor.

The invited guests numbered about twenty, and after the ceremony was over and congratulations were offered, the party sat down to a sumptuous wedding feast. Mr. and Mrs. Veale will make their home in Calistoga, and have many friends here who join *The Calistogian* in extending congratulations.

After the marriage, the Veales settled into Ellen's home on Washington Street in Calistoga. Flora Veale had obtained a controlling interest in the ranch by then, so staying there was probably not an option. After deeding his remaining interest in the ranch to Flora in 1904, Thomas' part in the history of the ranch officially ended.

Thomas was not a well man. He complained of lumbago, rheumatism, lung disease, and a host of other lesser ailments throughout the latter half of his life. His lung disability entitled him to a veteran's pension, which partly supported him from 1884 until the time of his death. His wife, Ellen, nursed him as best she could in the years following their marriage. In late 1915, Thomas' condition worsened to the point that he required hospitalization. Unable to afford hospital and nursing costs, Thomas opted to go to the Veterans Home of California in Yountville. He took the train from Calistoga down the Napa Valley to Yountville, and was admitted at the Veterans Home on 7 January 1916. Thomas died at the Veterans Home from heart failure and chronic bronchitis on 26 April of that year, at the age of 73.²⁰ His funeral was

¹⁹ Flora W. Veale to Harry Miller, deed dated 24 February 1912 for \$10 gold coin (actual sale amount uncertain), recorded 26 February 1912 in Book 102, page 235, Napa County Deeds.

²⁰ His obituary appeared in the *Weekly Calistogian* newspaper, Friday, 28 April 1916, page 4, column 4, under the headline, Thomas F. Veale Died at the Veterans' Home:

Thomas F. Veale of Calistoga, who had been a patient at the Veterans Home Hospital for several months past, died at that institution at a late hour Wednesday night. Death was due to heart failure and chronic bronchitis of which he had been a sufferer for a long time.

Mr. Veale was a native of Illinois and was aged 73 years, 3 months and 4 days. He came to California fifty years ago, leaving shortly after the close of the Civil War, of which he was a veteran.

held at the Methodist Church in Calistoga, and he was buried in the Boase plot in the Calistoga Pioneer Cemetery.

After Thomas' death, Ellen continued to live at their home at 831 Washington Street in Calistoga into the 1920's. Unfortunately, her mental health declined over the years, and by 1923, she had reached a point that she required a court-appointed guardian to handle her affairs. That person was Ellen's nephew, Richard Rains Veale, the famous sheriff of Contra Costa County. Ellen was eventually admitted to Agnews State Hospital in Santa Clara, California. She died there on 25 January 1935. She is buried beside Thomas and her parents in the Boase plot in the Calistoga Pioneer Cemetery. Their plot lies at the entrance of the cemetery, where the white marble monument, with escutcheon marked "VEALE" on the column, is the first to greet visitors as they enter the grounds.

The deceased had been a resident of Napa county during the greater part of the last half century and lived most of the time in or near Calistoga. For many years he was engaged in farming, but of late years resided at his home on Washington street in town.

Mr. Veale is survived by his wife, his two children by a former wife having passed away some years ago.

The remains were brought to Calistoga and the funeral will be held at the Methodist church Sunday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock, and interment will be made in Calistoga cemetery.