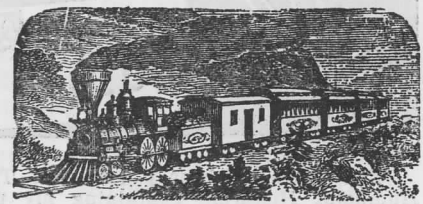




# The Humboldt Historian

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Eureka, California

## Pioneers Brought Religion to Humboldt... Grizzly Bluff Scene of Early Church

By IOLA S. YOUNG

**T**HE GRIZZLY BLUFF Presbyterian Church was organized on October 21, 1888 under Rev. Earl T. Lockard who had been at work there since July of that same year. Sunday School had been held in the schoolhouse and church services were continued there after the formal organization of the church.

Fifteen charter members signed the roll on that day in October. They were Richard Pearson, his wife Ellen, and their two daughters, Matilda and Amanda; William Stillings, and his wife Eliza; John Sweet, his wife Margaret, and their two daughters, Eliza and Janet; John B. Sweet (a nephew of John Sweet) and his wife, Susan; John Logan Sweet (son of John Sweet) and his wife, Jessie; and Lydia Sweet, wife of Fulton Sweet, (son of John Sweet).

All of these members were admitted by letter, and the nine bearing the name Sweet were from St. John's Presbyterian Church of Windsor, Nova Scotia.

Others joined the new congregation and plans were at once formed for construction of their own sanctuary. An attractive church facing the corner was built across the street and was finished and dedicated on July 5, 1889.

John Sweet, aged 71, who had been an Elder in his home church, and John B. Sweet were elected the first Elders of this new church. Others, subsequently elected to this office were: William Barber, George W. Sweet and John L. Sweet, all elected August 17, 1890; Dr. Kime was elected on August 7, 1898, on the same day he and his wife were admitted to

the church by letter, Dr. Kime from the Presbyterian Church of Bandon, Oregon, and Mrs. Kime from the M. E. Church of Grants Pass, Oregon.

The last Elder listed was Mr. A. J. Newman, no date given, but he and Mrs. Newman had been received on April 3, 1898 by letter from the Presbyterian Church of St. Helena, California.

Rev. Lockard did not remain long with the thriving new church but left in 1890. The editor of the "Ferndale Enterprise" spoke highly of his work under the heading:

### A GOOD RECORD

"The Rev. E. T. Lockard who has just resigned as pastor of the Grizzly Bluff Presbyterian Church, leaves a good record behind him for diligent and earnest work in the cause of Christ. During his term of service here, he has never missed an appointment, and since his arrival, he has seen the one little church of the Presbyterian faith at Port Kenyon, expand into three organizations in the valley.

"At Grizzly Bluff, a new church was built under his direction at a cost of \$3,000. and but the small sum of \$250. remains to be raised to place the edifice out of debt. He has received into the church 46 persons in all, 13 by letter and 33 by profession of faith."

From this it would seem that the little church at Port Kenyon was the older of the two congregations. Rev. Lockard lived at Grizzly Bluff and preached in the church at Port Kenyon in the afternoon, driving there by horse and buggy.

After the departure of Rev. Lockard, Rev. John M. Smith was installed in the Grizzly Bluff Church on May 15, 1890. The last record of his service was the infant baptism of George William Gormley on April 21, 1895.

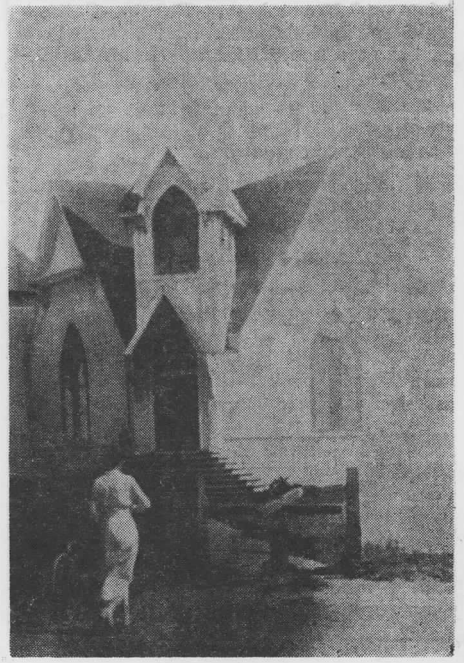
Rev. Smith was very active in the community. Of the 41 recorded baptisms, 26 were during his pastorate. From 1891 to 1894, seventeen weddings were registered.

Most of these couples were from Port Kenyon, Ferndale, or Grizzly Bluff. Some of the names that might be especially interesting today were: Cyrus Boynton and Mary Sweet; James Albert Haywood and Kate Elvina Damon; Ernest Davenport and Lillian Garrett; Clarence Mathews and Lillian Reas; Peter Becker and Elsie Martin; Smith Hart and Meda Sage.

Rev. G. A. Hutchison came to the church in 1896 and served until January, 1899, when he became pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Fort Bragg.

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BUILT IN 1888, the Grizzly Bluff Presbyterian Church served the community until 1910 when it was sold to the Grizzly Bluff School District. This year, ownership passed to a private party.



## Grizzly Bluff Church

(Continued from Page One)

During these years, a Methodist Church had been built at Grizzly Bluff. The lot for the building was donated by Mr. L. Church. Others of the early families supporting this church were: J. W. Kelly; James Lawson; J. A. Davenport; T. C. Ferrill; and S. M. Woodward.

Some of the Methodists had been worshipping with the Presbyterians, and a few Presbyterians transferred their membership and support to the Methodists. This church held Sunday School and worship services in the afternoon under the pastor of the Ferndale Methodist Church until about 1916 when the congregation merged with the Ferndale Church.

The last minister listed in the records of the Presbyterian Church was Rev. C. P. Hessel, who succeeded Rev. Hutchison on May 7, 1899. His pastorate was short, since he was installed as pastor of the Arcata Presbyterian Church on January 22, 1902, but during that short time he gained the deep affection and respect of all who knew him.

His last entry in the record book was February 10, 1901, when the name of Stella Sarah Goble was placed on the roll. Until her recent death, she was probably the last living person whose name was so enrolled. As Mrs. Joe Early, she spent most of her life in the Grizzly Bluff area.

Again the Ferndale Enterprise spoke highly of a departing minister:

"Rev. C. P. Hessel, who for some time past has been in charge of the Presbyterian Church at Grizzly Bluff and Port Kenyon, has been selected to succeed Rev. J. S. Todd as pastor of the Arcata Presbyterian Church and will assume his duties at that place in a couple of weeks. Mr. Hessel, during his pastorate in this valley has merited and won the esteem of a large circle of friends who will certainly regret to see him leave here. He is a gentleman and a scholar and a hard and conscientious worker in the cause of Christian religion. The Enterprise wishes Mr. Hessel every success in his new field of labor."

After Rev. Hessel left, the attendance and membership dwindled. A young minister, perhaps a student, was there for a while but services were finally discontinued.

But Rev. Hessel never forgot

the people in his former parish. It is told that he returned when he could, to visit them, baptizing children in the homes and bringing comfort to the sick and lonely.

The late Charles Philip Sweet of Eureka was not only baptized by and named for Rev. Hessel, but in 1920, he and Florence Atwell were married by this same minister.

As the community grew, and the Grizzly Bluff School needed a second teacher, the church building was acquired for a classroom and has been so used for many more years than it was for church services.

Alterations were made — the stained glass windows have been replaced by proper school windows and the sloping floor has been made level. The pulpit on the little corner platform opposite the entry doors to the tiny vestibule, gave way to the teacher's desk. The Sunday School room, on the south side of the sanctuary, had panels in the wall that could be raised, thus making room for larger groups to be seated.

The long shed, built to stable the horses and vehicles of those early day church goers, became a fine rainyday play area for the school children of a later date.

During those years, Grizzly Bluff was a busy village, the prettiest place in the valley. The road leading there was bordered by tall poplar trees. The late Mrs. Ernest Smiley (Carrie Kelly) once said those trees had been planted by her grandmother.

Other buildings at Grizzly Bluff besides the two churches, were a store and post office, a blacksmith shop, and the two-story hall where the Grizzly Bluff Social Club met. Garret's mill was just up the road and Church's grist mill was on the corner across from the church. Ambitious plans for a sidewalk to Ferndale were being carried out so that pedestrians and bicycle riders could get there even when water might be flooding a couple of low places in the road where the wooden walkway was supported on stilts.

There were many attractive homes in the area around Grizzly Bluff, and many of them had cypress hedges sheltering the family orchards and berry gardens. In

## DOWN MEMORY LANE



By W. J. "Hap" Waters

### Dangerous Autos

**I**N THE EARLY DAYS of the automobile in Humboldt County, the pioneers encountered many harrowing experiences due to the inadequacy of the cars.

One of the drawbacks was the lack of brakeing power. The older models having brakes only on the rear wheels, when the combination of a heavy automobile and very steep grades was encountered, the motorist was in trouble.

One case in point was when Ernest Sevier, a former prominent Eureka attorney made an auto trip to San Francisco over the old Bell Springs mountain road with his family.

On one of the steep grades, nearing a "hair-pin" turn, his brakes gave up.

On his right was a canyon and a drop of several thousand feet, on his left was clay bank which he managed to maneuver and "kiss" the entire distance to the bottom. When they reached it all were unnerved and exhausted.

Thank heaven for the four-wheel brakes of today, which could have made the journey in the 1908 Lozier that Sevier was driving a pleasure instead of a pain.

front of the George W. Sweet home were four cypress trees trimmed to spell the word HOME. Eli Bagley is said to be the one who had trained them so.

The dignified two-story home of Mr. and Mrs. L. Church stood near the central corner of Grizzly Bluff, and with its inside shutters and attic stairs leading to a trapdoor in the roof, it had a flavor of New England architecture.

Now the old church stands stark and alone at the crossroads of a once thriving and lovely village.