

Gualala in the Late Nineteenth Century – A Timber Company Town as Cultural Landscape

The significant story of Gualala, California, between 1863 and 1906, is the industrialization of lumber and the development of a single company town. The Gualala Lumber Company was unique in that it survived even through the depression of 1900, which stifled the lumber trade in San Francisco and caused a number of large Humboldt County sawmills to cease operations.ⁱ The mill was equipped with the most modern machinery in its day and had the first triple circular saw in the country.ⁱⁱ The Gualala River Railroad Company, owned by the Mill Company, had the widest gauge railroad track on the West Coast at 68 1/2 inches.ⁱⁱⁱ The town was the greater region's commercial and cultural hub – it had a dance studio, an Opera, and a Municipal Band (organized by the Company).^{iv} When the mill burned down in 1906 it meant the demise of the company, and for most of the locals it meant a similar fate for the town.

Cultural Resource Management (CRM) involves identifying, evaluating and preserving cultural resources, which are those parts of the environment to which people ascribe significance because of its association with the practice or beliefs of a living community. The National Park Service, under the auspices of the U.S. Department of the Interior, defines a cultural landscape as “a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.”^v The landscape approach in CRM and archaeology is an increasingly important avenue for both academic research and contemporary heritage management. The need for heritage areas are both practical and social, they may include a desire for tourism, education, cultural heritage, or preservation of the landscape. Cultural landscape studies identify multiple interests and issues and combine not only tangible evidence of an important historical event, but also speaks to the intangible qualities of the time through the telling of the everyday life of the people involved.

Research of the original land deeds, mortgages, and tax statements exposes the financial expenditures and questionable land dealings of two San Francisco lawyers in acquiring and then expanding the local lumbering enterprise.^{vi} The construction of this enterprise, in its initial phase of investment, relied on social and family influence. They engaged in constructing dummy entry claims for land titles, and in this way these capitalists lowered their exposure to financial risk. Land parcels were acquired substantially below market value from individuals who had no intention of following the letter of the land laws, which required the legal title holder live on and improve the land. I will argue that this manner of consolidating land by corrupt means displaced equal access opportunities for others wishing to start a business and settle in the area. Moreover, it created a shift from craft to industrial enterprises. Small-scale timber operations lost out to a large corporate interest. The Gualala Lumber Company owned the mill with eleven associated buildings (blacksmith, carpenter shop, and storehouses, among others), as well as the railroad, the ships and the landings, the store, the hotel, and most of the timber for miles around. This monopolizing of businesses constrained the possibility of similar efforts by other settlers. Furthermore, when laborers were organizing for a shorter work-day and questioning the employment of Chinese labor, they had little recourse but to accept the company's terms.

Land deeds and tax statements only reveal the transactions of wealthy entrepreneurs and the individual holders of homestead claims. They lead the investigator into believing that Gualala fit the typical image of an early Western town built on an extractive industry and comprising mostly single men, with barely a woman or child in sight. Census data offers a much more informed history, as it lists entire households by age, sex, ethnicity, and occupation – this paper will show that for this town that typical image is successfully debunked. Moreover, we can compare Mendocino County census records from the *9th Census of 1870* with the *12th Census of 1900* to see how demographic characteristics changed over time.^{vii} Gualala, from the beginning, was a multicultural Western town, but social and political privilege became more and more for white settlers alone.

Historical evidence suggests that advantages orchestrated by the state were unfairly manipulated by white capitalists intent on establishing a local timber industry. John Walton, an historical sociologist and anthropologist, found this to be the case in Owens Valley. Walton makes the claim that “the expansionary state sponsored the Indian conquest, homestead settlement, and consolidation of frontier society from 1860 to 1900.” It succeeded to help, in a limited way, status groups and social classes; it provided land, some police power, and minimal government.^{viii} The same can be argued to have occurred in Gualala. The Lumber Company benefited directly and indirectly from federal and state government policies and practices. In 1857, Thomas Henley, the California Superintendent of Indian Affairs, established the Mendocino Reservation on the coast north of Gualala for the internment of Native Americans. By 1860, a second Mendocino County location was established inland at Round Valley Reservation.^{ix} The reservations secured the absence of the remaining Native Americans who had survived the Mexican occupation - two land grants had laid claim to their territory.^x The Homestead Act of 1862, the Timber and Stone Act of 1878, and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 assisted Euro-American settlement. As was the case throughout the country, Mendocino County set aside Sections 16 and 36 for school sites, but in 1883 the state transferred the title to both Sections over to the Gualala Lumber Company. The next year, in 1884, the Gualala River Railroad, property of the lumber company, was sold to the state for delinquent taxes. The company continued to use the railroad and was able to redeem this property six years later on December 20, 1900. By the time the company sold out in 1903, 18 miles of logging roads were helping transform the bucolic Redwood landscape of Gualala into an eroding clear-cut terrain.

The little town of Gualala on the northern California coast is said to have received its name from the Pomo word qh awala li, which means “water coming down place”.^{xi} Here the Gualala River flows into the sea, for centuries drawing three Pomo tribelets to its waters. Since 1859 it has marked the northern boundary of Sonoma County and the southern boundary of Mendocino County. At this divide, the river runs in an east-west direction from its headwaters in western Sonoma County at Black Mountain, north of Cazadero. It follows a twenty-five mile

north-south course before it changes abruptly to this westerly course and empties into the Pacific Ocean. Before white settlement dramatically changed the traditional subsistence strategies of the Pomo Indians, they would come down from their ridge top settlement and gather seafood and salt at the rivermouth.

Prehistorically and historically the Gualala River divided Pomo territory. The Bokeya occupied the region to the north, from the Navarro River southward some thirty-five miles to the Gualala River; the Yokaya settled the area south of the Gualala River. This was Kashaya territory too, for they lived in proximity to the river for the longest time, and in the largest numbers than any other Pomo tribe. The Kashaya inhabited a thirty-mile stretch of coastline from Duncan's Point south to almost Gualala, and inland some 5-13 miles. Coastal settlements were both seasonal campsites and permanent villages for these Native Americans. One of the main Bokeya villages was pdahaw, at the Garcia rivermouth, approximately fifteen miles north of Gualala near Point Arena. One of their two seasonal campsites was at qh ahwala li, at the Gualala rivermouth. This camp had a permanent village (Latcupda) on the headwaters of the Gualala River North Fork at Signal Ridge, where bows and arrows were crafted from rhododendrons growing amidst towering Redwood trees. According to anthropologist Robert F. Heizer "One tool, unique to Latcupdas and unknown anywhere else, was an axe described as 'grey and green,' about the size of a woman's fist, made of 'green' stone and used to fell trees."^{xii}

The Native population had the means to timber harvest their lands, but the scale of their operation was miniscule next to the prodigious display of the mills and machines of white settlers. In 1862, the Bodega saw mill and the Timber Cove saw mill were consolidated and reconstructed at the mouth of the Gualala River. Although socially and spatially isolated from the urbanization occurring in and around San Francisco, Gualala, located approximately 120 miles north of the city, supplied the timber that was in demand in that region. The little north coast town soon became a part of a broader social, economic, transport and communication network, and in this way it became a community critical to the industrializing West. In 1864, F. B. Heywood and S. H. Harmon, with a handwritten deed of indenture, sealed in pencil, paid

George E. Webber of Mendocino County \$20,000.00 for the remaining half interest in certain land portions. A year earlier they had paid \$12,500 for the initial half interest.^{xiii} Thus began the extractive presence of a pioneering logging company that would remain active for over thirty-five years.

The San Francisco capitalists who owned the company lowered their exposure to financial risk by diversifying their investments, using innovative technologies, monopolizing the local business opportunities, setting up an efficient mill site, and relying on cheap, non-European immigrant labor. These measures were emphasized in order to maximize profits for the owners of the new industry and thus lower their exposure to financial risk, at the same time they served to monopolize business opportunities. There was a store built across from the Gualala Hotel in 1869 by two gentlemen, Peters and Zadoc; however, it was not to survive. A few years later the only store in town belonged to the lumber company. This remained so for decades. The Gualala Lumber Company was making sure they had the necessary requirements to participate in the growing industrial Western economy. These included markets, labor, capital, and transportation – how all these were manipulated and integrated, according to historian Richard White, is the story of the West.^{xiv} In the decades after the gold rush, it was less expensive to ship redwood over the rocks of the Mendocino coast than it was to bring lumber out of the forests of the Sierra.^{xv} Gualala was one of the early shipping ports because the Gualala River was a good sized river that allowed small vessels access during part of the year. Most of the lumber went to San Francisco and nearby Bay ports. To make a large-scale timber mill viable, it was necessary to acquire acreage far in excess of what the law allowed. Historian Merle W. Wells explains the predicament saying: “Since federal law effectively required that a successful lumber company acquire its timber through fraud, it is not surprising that a number of major lumber companies began to acquire extensive tracts by dubious means, otherwise they could establish no major commercial lumber industry at all – an alternative clearly unacceptable to a developing industry, region, and nation.”^{xvi} As for securing necessary labor, the company employed a large number of

immigrants; Chinese males in particular were an important component to the development of this lumber town.

Between 1852 and 1890 California's population grew faster than anytime in its history and the Chinese immigrant played an important role in this growth that occurred in the fledgling market economy. The Chinese were far more concentrated in California than anywhere else in the union. In 1852, the number of Chinese in California rose to about 25,000. Concentrated in the mining regions and in San Francisco, they were now by far the largest of the foreign minorities.^{xvii} By 1870, California was home to nearly 50,000 Chinese. The Mendocino County *Census of 1870* shows fifty-three Chinese males working in Gualala - nineteen working in the sawmill, fourteen laborers, eleven fishermen, four washermen, three cooks, and two domestic servants. By 1890, there were over 72,000 Chinese in California, but by 1900 the Chinese Immigration Act had caused a rapid decline in their numbers, and this is reflected in the Mendocino County *Census of 1900*.

Most of the population recorded by the *Census of 1870* was European or Euro-American immigrants. There were no census records for Native Americans in the Gualala region in 1870, (they do appear in the *Census of 1900* but with little information to elaborate their life experiences). They were most likely interned in reservations, victims of violence, or incorporated into the forced labor system occurring in the interior portion of Mendocino County in the 1850s and 1860s. According to student historian Robin Thomas, the 1860 Mendocino County census records identified, by first name only, Native Americans of "several local townships."^{xviii} She does not mention Point Arena Township, which includes Gualala. There were sixty immigrants living in Gualala that came from Europe or Canada; many were Scandinavian, fifteen came from Sweden, a few from Denmark, a couple from Norway, and one from Finland. Three came from Nova Scotia, while five emigrated from England, Germany and Prussia, and nine from Scotland. There were twenty Canadians who emigrated. All others, eighty-five in number, were white folks who came from places within the United States. Fifteen emigrated from Missouri, twelve from Wisconsin, nine from Maine and Illinois, eight from New York, five from Pennsylvania, four

from Indiana, Arkansas, and Ohio, three from Iowa and Michigan, two from Kentucky, and one from Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Alabama, North Carolina, and Mississippi. Fifty born in California also contributed to the population, these were mostly children. The lumber industry up and down the California coast needed a fleet of ships to service it, which brought many Scandinavians to the area employed as skippers. There were so many Swedes and Norwegians operating these schooners that the fleet became known as the “Scandinavian Navy”.^{xix} Likewise, some historians, such as Vernon H. Jensen, suggest that the Lake States lumber industry moved into the West en masse - be it operators with all their capital or large segments of the labor force. The *1870 Census* shows that the majority of U.S. migrants, 56 out of 85, came from Lake States.

The local economy was based on extractive resources, mostly lumber related, but a few farmers contributed to the agricultural economy. The bark of the tanoak tree was a valuable resource for the tannic acid it contained, which was used in the leather tanning process. It was seen as a commodity accessible to the individual homesteader or small family. Its profitability also attracted outside contractors. Harvesting tanoak was a seasonal job that required peeling it off the tree when the sap flowed freely. It grew everywhere amongst the Redwoods in the region. This meant that tanoak work was in direct competition with those in the logging trade, if the loggers proceeded to harvest before the tanoak folk there would be little left to peel.^{xx} A few families in the earlier census records and in the land deeds report their occupation as “hewing railroad ties” or similar small-scale jobs like making fence posts or shingles. A thirty-six year old gentleman from Canada by the name of John Wood lived with his wife and baby and two boarders, he listed his occupation as “lumber manufacture” on the *Census of 1870*. The value of real estate was a category on the census form that was available but seldom filled in, but Wood had listed his assets at \$13,000, a very substantial sum. He does not appear in the *Census of 1900*. It is difficult to say exactly how many local men and families had hoped to make a small independent enterprise out of working in the woods, were it not for the burgeoning, competitive presence of the Gualala Lumber Company. The land south of the river in Sonoma County was

originally part of the German Rancho. This is apparent on the original diseno^{xxi}, which consisted of over 17,000 acres.^{xxii} The land consists of mostly barren coastal terraces that rise moderately to a heavily forested ridge. The original grantee used the land for cattle grazing in the northern area. As the land changed ownership it continued to be used for raising cattle and later dairy farming. Most all of the timbered land was sold to individuals intent on developing their own milling and timber company, but the vast majority fell into the hands of the Gualala Lumber Company.

Charles Nordhoff argued, in 1874^{xxiii}, that “a large part of the lumbering population consists of bachelors living in shanty towns.” The *Census of 1870* for Gualala shows that this interpretation puts too much emphasis on bachelors. It would be presumptuous to believe that the 128 men not part of a family household were single, perhaps wives living elsewhere awaited their return. Moreover, these men are in the minority, the census recorded a total population of 279 people. In particular, there were 133 white males over twenty-one years of age working in various capacities, thirty-six females listed as housekeepers, and fifty-nine children under the age of eighteen. Roughly 151 people were relatives – husbands and wives with young children, adult brothers, fathers and sons, nieces and nephews, and grandfathers and grandmothers called this place home.^{xxiv}

When the settlers first arrived in Mendocino county they secured food and shelter needs. Then a church or common meeting place would be built. As the population grew, schools were established in a central location and took a variety of forms, a spare room on a family dwelling or a converted shed or barn. If constructed from scratch, the typical school would be rough wood inside and out with outhouses behind the school and a bucket of water near the inside entrance, a common ladle for all. There was a wood stove for heat and, usually in the beginning, no lighting except from the windows. Extant examples still remain.^{xxv} The *Mendocino Beacon* of January 27, 1883, reported that Gualala’s new schoolhouse was almost finished. It was described as being freshly painted and having “beautiful blackboards, sawed expressly for that purpose, are four by ten feet, and three in number. It is doubtful if there is another school in the county that possesses such blackboards.”^{xxvi}

Out of the total fifty-three household population recorded in the *Census of 1900*, twenty-nine were families with a total population of 130. Lots of farm families had school age children. The 1900 census showed nine men employed as farm laborers. This fact, combined with the increase of men who stated their occupation as “farmers” (up from three in the 1870 census to eleven), speaks to a significant pattern of land use change. The 1900 census had a new category that specified if the head of the household rented or owned the property he or she resided in. This revealed that most households, thirty-nine out of fifty-three, were renters. Land that had been cleared of timber became farmland. Of the fourteen owners of real estate property, eleven were farmers, two lived on farms but were capitalists (the mill owner and the primary original land baron^{xxvii}), and one was a “game hunter.” There were three farmers who were renters.^{xxviii}

The *Census of 1900* had a new category alongside sex and ethnicity, identifying an individual’s status as married or single. There were two single fathers as heads of households, one of whom had a daughter residing on the premises who was employed as a “hello girl”. This may well indicate the presence of prostitution in this lumber town; prostitution was common in many towns in the West engaged in lumbering or mining. According to historian Richard White, “probably more than 50,000 prostitutes worked the American West during the late nineteenth century.”^{xxix} The comparison of census records shows an increase in the number of females up from thirty-six females to forty six, three of whom were boarders listed as servants or cook, and one of whom was a single business woman, a co-owner of a laundry.

Unlike the *Census of 1870*, the *Census of 1900* recorded the number of Native Americans living in the greater Point Arena Township, which included Gualala. In this wider region there were eighty Native Americans. No occupational category was available on their census records. It asked only for names by households and tribal affiliation and for mixed blood amounts. This later category indicated four individuals as being 1/2 mixed, eighteen a 1/4 mixed, and one person as being 1/8 mixed blood. But, the 1/2 mixed blood did not identify another ethnicity. All the Native Americans were listed as Bokeya. Historian Melissa L. Meyer, in her essay “American Indian Blood Quantum Requirements,” explains that the rationale for noting blood

levels was mandated to ensure that American Indians were enrolled in a federally recognized tribe in order to receive federal benefits. These enrollments are linked to property rights rather than the long-standing, complex bonds of tribal affiliation and traditional kinship ties. This was initially established to create a census for the equitable distribution of land entitlements and other allotments, the first to receive benefits were those Native Americans of mixed blood. The government reasoned that this would be a “civilizing” measure that would speed assimilation and eventually lead to reduced federal financial responsibility. The 1887 Dawes Act was a landmark time for this activity as reservations were divided into 40 to 160-acre parcels.^{xxx} The following year, in 1888, the White Men and Indian Women Marriage Act was passed, “to regulate effects of marriage between white men and Indian women, prohibiting white men of intermarrying to obtain tribal rights and to protect property.”^{xxxi}

Comparing the 1900 census records with the census of 1870 shows certain demographic shifts over time. The total population of 1900 was 258, which is a decrease from 279 in 1870. The population of children under the age of eighteen increased from fifty-nine to seventy. The census of 1870 listed some fifty children born in California, that number rose dramatically - 142 people listed California as their place of birth, however, many were men who were employed as laborers. The 1900 census also showed, unlike the 1870 census, the category of “boarders”, the majority (fifty-three) of which were white men working as day laborers. Although, identifying boarders in the 1870 is obvious, because households are listed and family members are easily distinguished by their surname. New patterns of ethnic in and out migration are evident. For the first time Italians (7) and Portuguese (3) settled in Gualala. Half of the Canadians listed in 1870 were absent. The pattern of United States born migrants choosing to locate in Gualala was fairly comparable to what the earlier census revealed, although their numbers decreased, while California born increased. More than half the Chinese laborers were displaced by Euro-Americans, their numbers dropped from fifty-three Chinese males to twenty.^{xxxii}

The China Gulch area is where the Chinese made their huts, grew their gardens, raised chickens and pigs, and gathered fish. It was in very close proximity to the mill site. Much of the

old growth timber in Gualala was gone by 1894 and second growth logging had already begun at China Gulch. Annette White Parks, the author of the only complete history of Gualala, suggests that this might explain the departure of the Chinese, which was said to have occurred quite unexpectedly and for some unknown reason at about this time.^{xxxiii}

It is clear, however, that after 1870 anti-Chinese sentiment in California grew to a fevered pitch. In 1878, the *Mendocino Beacon* ran a story on Chinese immigration, specifically about how British Columbia was likely to adopt the policy of a “head tax” on Chinese as they arrived. This, they argued, would encourage their migration to the California coast, where, they said, “there already exists a hatred for the race.” The article calls for measures to be taken to stop their immigration or make inducements for them to leave. They are said to “not make the country richer, or develop its resources”, but only to exclude the Americans from learning useful trades, as they argue, “almost every vocation is filled by Chinese.” Furthermore, they argued that “They are seen as a loathsome class who bring with them the germs of leprosy to break forth anew in this country.”^{xxxiv}

At the same time and in a similar vein the paper reported on the efforts to organize workers. “As far as the question is concerned in our county,” it wrote, “we understand that the meetings are for the mutual benefit of workingmen . . . we heartily wish them success, and will render them our support.” Moreover, the paper makes a stand that would seem to favor the worker over the capitalists, saying “Having wealth and influence would not make a man better than the one who has not that luxury. We regard the laboring man as the bone and sinew of our Republic.”^{xxxv}

In the 1870’s, San Francisco began to swell with anti-Chinese sentiment. Labor union sympathizers supported efforts to stop the Chinese alongside members of “anti-coolie clubs” with demonstrations, parades, and mob violence. San Francisco during the 1870’s saw a rising number of unemployed from all over the state seeking refuge in the city; bitter over the inequitable displays of wealth they sought a forum for their grievances. On July 23, 1877 a group gathered in front of city hall without any forethought of denouncing the Chinese, but members of

the anti-coolie clubs barged in with banners and called for a resolution against the Chinese; refuted they took to damaging a number of Chinatown laundries. In the fall of 1877, in response to this turmoil, the Workingman's Party of California was formed. Denis Kearney, first its secretary and then its president, ended his speeches with: "And whatever happens, the Chinese must go!"^{xxxvi} Historian Daniel A. Cornford in *Workers and Dissent in the Redwood Empire* explains how some lumber employers, in Mendocino's neighboring county of Humboldt, "seriously contemplated the extensive employment of Chinese labor." In the 1880s, the relationship between the county's white and Chinese residents was deteriorating in many townships, eventually culminating in the expulsion of all Chinese from the entire county in 1886.^{xxxvii}

At the same time, in 1886, assemblies of the Knights of Labor were organizing in almost all the county's towns. They soon were rallying for a ten-hour day. As Cornford explains it, the lumber employers were ready to agree to these terms but for the unwillingness of their "counterparts in Mendocino, where the twelve-hour work day was firmly in effect."^{xxxviii} A representative of the Knights went to Mendocino to try and organize support but failed "on account of the manufacturers owning whole towns and all the surrounding to their mills, and denying him the opportunity for public meeting."^{xxxix} Although, this account does not specifically cite the Gualala Lumber Company, it surely fits their corporate profile. According to Vernon H. Jensen, the Western lumber industry, comprised of Washington, Oregon and California, was characterized by a labor force often unemployed and thereby forced frequently to move about from one "disagreeable" and temporary camp to another.^{xl}

The 1900 Census had a new category of "months not employed," which listed eighteen individuals. Most were male laborers having been out of work for two to six months, three were farm laborers, two were carpenters, and two were female schoolteachers. David Warren Ryder describes life along the coast around 1882: "It was well that the Mendocino Coast attracted such men and women. Peopled by them and imbued with their indomitable spirit, it has battered down encroaching obstacles and conquered hard times and depression."^{xli} But, the Gualala Lumber

Company was unique in that it survived even through the depression of 1900, which stifled the lumber trade in San Francisco and caused a number of large Humboldt County sawmills to cease operations. Ryder explains that the depression of the early nineties was the result of various reasons, “including the fact that improvement and repairs requiring lumber can always be postponed, the lumber industry is one of the first to feel the effects of a business let-down”.^{xiii}

Although socially and spatially isolated Gualala’s supply of timber was critical to the newly industrializing West. Timber harvests in the East were reaching their limits, while the growth of the greater San Francisco Bay Area continued to increase demands for lumber. This appears a factor in migration patterns, which are evident when we compare the census and is corroborated by reports on timber issues in other primary and secondary documents. July 13, 1878 *The Mendocino Beacon* ran a report that discussed the serious shortage of pine and other commercial woods in Canada, Maine, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Timber shortages were discussed with an air of concern over depleting the forest reserves in Mendocino County, which would develop if timber interests tried to fill a national demand for lumber that reached \$500,000,000 annually. The *Beacon* article noted that the timber industry was an important factor in the economy of the county, but wanted harvest plans to reflect caution for depleting resources:

Doubtless the time will come when tree planting shall receive the encouragement it is given in other countries, and doubtless, also, a demand will arise for the abrogation of the duty of Canadian lumber, in order that we may have an opportunity to husband our own failing supply; but there should be no hindrance placed in the way of immediate energetic measures for the protection of the timber lands of the United States not yet surrendered to private or corporate control.^{xliii}

A number of special acts granting land to individuals determined the acquisition of timberlands by lumbermen. Early on, the Homestead Act of 1862, with its inefficient and sometimes corrupt administration, spurred questionable claims by companies.^{xliiv} Later, the act

most would invoke was The Timber and Stone Act of 1878. This act classified all timberland as agriculture, unless declared that the lands were unsuitable for agriculture. Records of land surveys in and around Gualala show declarations of land as useless for anything other than the timber. The government gave away its agricultural land, but if the land was deemed worthless for agriculture after timber harvest, the government charged \$2.50 an acre. As Richard White explains it, “settlers could only use the timber and stone they obtained from the land for their own fuel or construction needs. They could not sell it. Lumbermen, seeing their opportunity, had proxies file claims under the act.”^{xlv}

Evidence suggests that the land assets of the Gualala Lumber Company grew, under falsified claims, with the help of social and family relationships in the San Francisco area. For example, in 1876, James Anderson of San Francisco County received \$1.00 from S. H. Harmon (company partner) for 320 acres in Mendocino County. Nine more transactions by Harmon, just the same as this one, transpired within the next three weeks. It has been proposed that, “representatives for the timber barons would recruit idle sailors from the (San Francisco) docks and take them to the local government land office where they would file homestead claims on 160 acres of timberland. Each sailor would then be paid about \$50 to deed his claim over to a waiting timber corporation.”^{xlvi} However, most of the individuals involved in these transactions were listed in the 1879 San Francisco City Directory. They had San Francisco occupations such as salesmen, master mariner, tanner, grain commission broker, livery stable proprietors, grocery clerk, and marine surveyor.^{xlvii} When comparing these same individuals to the Gualala censuses of 1870 and 1900, none of their names appeared. This suggests that land parcels were acquired substantially below market value from individuals who had no intention of following the letter of the land laws, which required the legal title holder live on and improve the land. In 1884 and 1885, the most questionable activity of this kind took place. Representatives of the Gualala Lumber Company acquired 1,500 acres through 13 transactions for the sum total of \$141.00 (\$100.00 from a single deed transfer). For the years between 1885 and 1898, land records show 10 out of 18 transactions were for the purchase price of either \$5 or \$10 dollars.

Furthermore, ten pages of tax records for Sonoma County property of S. H. Harmon show only 320 acres for every year from 1884 through 1896, while the records indicate he had the deeds to more than a thousand acres in the county. Substantial land holdings, for the owners of the lumber company, accumulated in San Francisco, along with the Gualala timberland.^{xlviii} This type of illegal acquisition of lands, by corporate owners thirsty for profit, eliminates the possibility of equal access opportunity for others wishing to settle the area.

As historian Patricia Limerick explains, the emotional passion for profit was “at the core of the Western adventure.”^{xlix} The demand for profit reflected in the quest for land ownership was so great that the government could not keep up with its job of measuring, allocating, and recording parcels of open space. According to Francois D. Uzes, a California licensed land surveyor of the California State Lands Division, fraudulent surveys of the U. S. public domain may well have involved roughly one thousand townships, about 20 million acres, or 20% of all land in California. The most intensive time for this corrupt practice occurred under a notorious leadership of Deputy Surveyor John Adelbert Benson between 1873-1885. Moreover, in 1878, the U. S. Surveyor General Theodore Wagner of the San Francisco District Office was alleged to have engaged in “misconduct, corruption, (and) misappropriation of funds.” Specifically, Uzes says that “Wagner supposedly authorized the survey of fractional townships of mountainous and rugged land, wholly unsuitable for agriculture or settlement . . .”¹ These times and allegations coincide precisely with the suspicious undertakings occurring in San Francisco by representatives of the Gualala Lumber Company.

Historian Donald Worster describes the arguments of famous Colorado explorer John Wesley Powell who called for reforming the nation’s land laws in his *Report on the Lands of the Arid Region* (published in the same year of the *Mendocino Beacon* articles of 1878 that were previously mentioned).ⁱⁱ Powell emphasized the ubiquitous economic reality that wealthy and powerful men were exploiting the West’s natural resources. He called for federal land laws to be reformed in an effort to save the land for the people, rather than for greedy capitalists. 160-acre parcels were thought too much for private property rights, which he believed was at the expense

of small community needs. He tried to inform politicians and the public, for he feared states would abuse their power in allocating water rights and other such matters of resource use. As Worster explains it, “he wanted them to see that all the natural resources of the West were connected in a single integrated whole.” In this way he proposed federal involvement by the creation of different agencies to address specific resource needs by advising on planning and conservation matters.^{lii}

In 1935, a study was conducted by the National Resources Board describing the “roots of maladjustment” in federal land policy, their negative repercussions, and solutions to the problems they caused. The major cause was Congress’s decision to permit two land policies to overlap. The older system called for the continuation of “cash” land sales. It allowed squatters their rights to supercede others, gave land grants to states for education, and provided land warrants that benefited war veterans. These actions were then augmented with the newer policy that included free homesteads on quarter sections given certain improvements. In Merk’s words, “The results of the merging of the two systems were an encouragement of speculation and a limitation of the effectiveness of the donation policy.” This was compounded by “lax administration”.^{liii} Evidence suggests that advantages (land laws and their inefficient administration) orchestrated by the state were unfairly manipulated by capitalists intent on establishing a local timber industry.

George A. Gonzalez argues that environmental policies usually serve the political and economic interest of corporate America. “Federal policies that manage the national forests and parks have historically altered the operation of the economy to the benefit of capitalist concerns.”^{liiv} He claims that the Redwood National Park was an example of this as large timber firms that were involved profited from its preservation. He contends that economic systems historically privilege certain values and interests, often at the expense of other values and interests. Workers, Native Americans, and the environment itself are disregarded as capitalism prioritizes profits and the interests of the economic elite. Gonzalez claims that this occurs

because of the large amount of wealth and income the capitalist class have and because these resources are readily convertible into other central resources.^{lv}

The history of the Gualala lumber industry from 1863-1906 can be seen as an important antecedent to and the beginnings of the Progressive movement. Gonzalez states that “forest policies during the Progressive era were not based on the intersection of popular demands, pluralist politics, and the interest of autonomous officials.” He claims that they “were the outgrowth of an upper-class and corporate-based policy network promoting the use of particular forestry practices in both public and private forests in the United States.”^{lvi}

In 1903, the mill was sold to lumbermen from Arkansas and Louisiana for \$600,000, and the company changed its name to Empire Redwood, it mysteriously burned down after the transaction. In 1905, a new camp was located on the North Fork of the River easily accessed by a recent extension of the railroad. Production was operating at full speed when another fire hit, this one in 1906. At the time the mill and its related property was in escrow for nearly \$700,000 to E. K. Wood Lumber Company of Puget Sound, this included a reported 24,000 acres of timber land and 18 miles of logging road. The *Republican Press* September 7, 1906 reported the news and called the transaction “one of the most important deals in redwood lands that has occurred in years.”^{lvii}

In the end, the story of settlement in Gualala during Western Expansion under the Homestead Act was, as historians Ray Allen Billington and Martin Ridge suggest, not one of “downtrodden laborers rising to affluence through government beneficence”. In their words, Western expansion was “more often a tale of fraud and monopoly, which only ended with seven-eighths of the public domain in the hands of a favored few.”^{lviii} And Gualala wasn’t what Charles Nordhoff described a California coastal lumber town in 1874 to be - a population of bachelors living in a shantytown. Families comprised a majority of the population. The industrialization of lumber and the development of a single company town was obtained through exercising social power and resulted in establishing inequality. Through the corrupt consolidation of land, a shift from craft to industrial enterprise took place. The monopolizing practices of the Gualala Lumber

Company constrained business opportunities and labor negotiations. As asymmetrical power relations took shape through landscape transformations assisted by the state, Native Americans suffered from severed traditional ties to the land. In the aftermath, the ambiguous nature of culture forms and the structure of human social relations became apparent as individuals and groups negotiated access to the land and the nexus of power. Despite the successful show of assimilation through productive participation and resiliency in the face of incalculable hostility, the Chinese appear to have lost the most social and political privilege. Gualala, as cultural landscape, truly depicts the multicultural diversity and dynamics of the nineteenth century West.

ⁱ Daniel A Cornford, *Workers and Dissent in the Redwood Empire* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987),

ⁱⁱ Annette White Parks, *qh awa la li* (Ukiah, California: Fresh Cut Press, 1980), 77.

⁴ Ibid, 87; and Thad Van Buren, *Archaeological Survey of a Property in Gualala, Mendocino County, California* (Northwest branch of the California Historic Resource Information Center, 2000).

^{iv} Annette White Parks, *qh awa la li* (Ukiah, California: Fresh Cut Press, 1980), 72.

ENDNOTES

^v Charles A. Birnbaum, *Preservation Briefs # 36 – Protecting Cultural Landscapes* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1994), 1.

^{vi} The original land deeds, mortgages, and tax statements relating to land in and around Gualala, California during 1862-1911 were accessed through the Bancroft Library Manuscript Collection [BANC MSS 89/133 c].

⁷ *Census of 1870* (Ukiah Library: microcopy M - 593, Roll #43) and the *Census of 1900* (Ukiah Library: microcopy M - 653, Roll #68).

^{viii} John Walton, *Western Times and Water Wars* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 7-8.

^{ix} Thomas Owens, *A History of the Yokaia South Valley People* (SSU: Thesis, 1977), 25. For the original citation see the *Annual Report of the California Superintendent of Indian Affairs to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 4, 1857* (U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs)

^x See Annette White Parks, *qh awa la li*, (Ukiah, California: Fresh Cut Press, 1980), 15-16. In 1844, Rafael Garcia, a general in the Mexican Army, received the grante del norte consisting of about 40,000 acres, which extended from the north side of the Gualala River to Mal Paso. See also Susan M. Clark, *The Del Mar Ranch – 1846-1964* (SSU: Thesis, 1990), 6-8. In 1846, Rancho de Hermann, consisting of 17, 850 acres, was given to Ernest Rufus.

^{xi} Robert F. Heizer, *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 8 – California*, ed. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 278. See also Samuel A. Barrett, *The Ethnography of the Pomo and Neighboring Indians* (University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, 1908). And Alfred L. Kroeber, *Handbook of Indians of California* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1976), 232-233.

¹²Ibid, 289.

^{xiii} The original land deeds, mortgages, and tax statements relating to land in and around Gualala, California during 1862-1911 were accessed through the Bancroft Library Manuscript Collection [BANC MSS 89/133 c].

^{xiv} See Richard White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press 1991), 184-186.

^{xv} Karl Kortum and Roger Olmsted, *Sailing Days on the Redwood Coast* (The California Historical Society, 1971), 1

^{xvi} Merle W. Wells, "Timber Frauds on Crooked River" *Idaho Yesterdays* (Idaho Historical Society, 1985), 1.

^{xvii} J. J. Rawls and W. Bean, *California an Interpretive History* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 1988), 135. Chinese attention to American resources was clearly established by the emergent trade between the two countries. The first American ship to sail with goods for China was the *Empress of China* in 1784, it carried "thirty tons of ginseng, in addition to pig lead, pepper, woolen clothing and skins. . . Americans had shown a growing interest in purchasing silk, porcelain, tea, lacquer ware, furniture, and other Chinese goods." See Diane Mei Lin Mark and Giner Chih, *A Place Called Chinese America*. (The Organization of Chinese America, Inc., 1982) p. 1.

But, it was the western rim of America during the Gold Rush that was clearly the land and the time with enticing allure. The message of gold in California arrived with the ships docking in Chinese harbors. It is in California at the time of the Gold Rush that an increasingly industrialized region developed mutual relations for labor and goods from China and thus forged a dynamic capitalist relationship. The rush to California for gold meant a rapidly expanding demand for commodities, one essential ingredient was flour. "The Gold Rush and the subsequent boom in California wheat production spurred the rapid development of a . . . Pacific Coast flour industry . . . California millers created an industry that produced flour not only to meet regional demand, but also for overseas export by the 1860's. . . . By the turn of the century, flour had become the leading export commodity from the West Coast to China." See D. Meissner, "Bridging the Pacific: California and the China Flour Trade" (*California History*, Winter 1997/98) p. 82. The federal government sought to support this activity with legislation such as the Burlingame Treaty of 1868 that allowed free immigration from China. In 1870, the Civil Rights Act prohibited discrimination in the courts and taxes against immigrants.

^{xviii} Robin Thomas, "Ranches and Reservations: Forced Labor, Kidnapping and Enslavement of Native Americans in Mendocino County, 1850-1870" (SSU History 499, 2002), 10.

^{xix} Richard Dillion, *The Story of the Sea Ranch* (Sonoma County: Oceanic Properties, Inc. 1965), 15.

^{xx} Annette White Parks, *qh awa la li* (Ukiah, California: Fresh Cut Press, 1980), 32-33.

^{xxi} A diseno is the map of a desired piece of property that a petitioner presented to the Mexican governor in order to claim legal land title.

^{xxii} Susan M. Clark, *The Del Mar Ranch – 1846-1964* (SSU: Thesis, 1990), 6-8. In 1846, Rancho de Hermann, consisting of 17, 850 acres, was given to Ernest Rufus.

^{xxiii} Charles Nordhoff, *Northern California, Oregon, and the Sandwich Islands* (1874), 40.

^{xxiv} *Census of 1870* (Ukiah Library: microcopy M - 593, Roll #43).

^{xxv} *Census of 1870* (Ukiah Library: microcopy M - 593, Roll #43) and the *Census of 1900* (Ukiah Library: microcopy M – 653, Roll #68); and the Mendocino Coast Genealogical Society, (1991) 4 & 10.

^{xxvi} *Mendocino Beacon*, January 27, 1883.

^{xxvii} Cyrus Dwight Robinson was an influential landowner in Gualala and an important figure in California history. The 200 acres of adjoining land up the Gualala River that Heywood and Harmon bought for the mill site had been previously purchased from C. D. Robinson. He owned a grocery store in San Francisco in 1850. Before establishing himself in Gualala, he worked in the Feather River mines and the Trinity mines, as well as the woods of Humboldt. Then he took up farming, first in Colusa and then in Sonoma. He went back to Pennsylvania for his family and returned to run a hotel and ferry on the Russian River, a precursor of what he would begin in Gualala. He leased the Gualala Mill House as a hotel. In addition to these ventures, he had a livery stable in Santa Barbara, and bought land in San Diego where he planted the first Eucalyptus trees in California, which he had imported from Australia. According to the oral history of his great granddaughter (Edith Robinson Penry), at one time he was the tenth largest taxpayer in California (See Mendocino County Remembered 1977:113-114).

^{xxviii} *Census of 1900* (Ukiah Library: microcopy M – 653, Roll #68).

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- xxxix Richard Whit, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own* (Normon: University of Oklahoma Press 1991), 304.
- xxx For an interesting discussion on blood quantum, see Melissa L. Meyer, "American Indian Blood Quantum Requirements: Blood is Thicker than Family," *Over the Edge – Remapping the American West* ed. Valerie J. Matsumoto and Blake Allmendinger (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 231-252. For a related discussion, see Peggy Pascoe, "Race, Gender, and the Privileges of Property: On the Significance of Miscegenation Law," *Over the Edge – Remapping the American West* ed. Valerie J. Matsumoto and Blake Allmendinger (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 215-231.
- xxxi Duane Champagne, *Chronology of Native North American History*, ed. (Detroit: Gale Research Group, 1994), xviii.
- xxxii *Census of 1900* (Ukiah Library: microcopy M – 653, Roll #68).
- xxxiii Annette White Parks, *qh awa la li* (Ukiah, California: Fresh Cut Press, 1980), 106.
- xxxiv *Mendocino Beacon's* May 11, 1878. This reflects a growing body of anti-Chinese literature. 1873, H. J. West's *The Chinese Invasion* depicted the California Chinese to be the advanced guard that would overthrow the United States. The plot of another fiction, Atwell Whitney's *Almond-Eyed* (1878), repeated this message and added that the Chinese were introducing a smallpox epidemic. In 1882, Robert Wolter's *A Short and Truthful History of the Taking of California and Oregon by the Chinese in the year A. D. 1899* told how the Chinese navy would control the Pacific. These lengthy treatments, later called the genre of "Yellow Peril" literature, were echoed in shorter fiction published in such journals as the "Californian" and "Overland Monthly." See Stanford M. Lyman, "The Yellow Peril Mystique" (Human Sciences Press, Inc. 2000), 684.
- xxxv Ibid
- xxxvi J. J. Rawls and W. Bean, *California an Interpretive History* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 1988), 135&186.
- xxxvii Daniel A Cornford, *Workers and Dissent in the Redwood Empire* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 58-59.
- xxxviii Ibid, 86 (Cornford cites *Labor News*, June 27, 1914).
- xxxix Ibid, (Cornford cites *Western Watchman*, June 4, 1887).
- xl Vernon H. Jensen, *American Labor – From Conspiracy to Collective Bargaining* (New York: Arno and The New York Times, 1971), 99.
- xli David Warren Ryder, *Memories of the Mendocino Coast* (self-published:1948), 18.
- xlii Ibid, 38.
- xliii *Mendocino Beacon*, July 13, 1878.
- xliv Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest – The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987), 62.
- xlv Richard White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own* (Normon: University of Oklahoma Press 1991), 150.
- xlvi Donald F. Anthropy, *Redwood National and State Parks* (Happy Camp, CA: Naturegraph,1977), 32-33.
- xlvii San Francisco City Directory 1850, 1852, 1861 and 1879.
- xlviii The original land deeds, mortgages, and tax statements relating to land in and around Gualala, California during 1862-1911 (Bancroft Library Manuscript Collection [BANC MSS 89/133 c]).

^{xlix} Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest – The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987), 77.

^l Francois D. Uzes, *Chaining the Land- A History of Surveying in California* (Sacramento: Landmark Enterprises, 1977), 174-176.

^{li} Donald Worster, “The Legacy of John Wesley Powell” in *Reopening the American West* ed. Hal K. Rothman (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 81.

^{lii} Ibid

^{liii} See “Recent Land Policies of the Federal Government,” in *Certain Aspects of Land Problems and Government* (National Resource Board, 1935). This was cited by Frederick Merk in the foreword [p.xii] of *The Frontier in American Development*, ed. David McEllis (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1969).

^{liv} George A. Gonzalez, *Corporate Power and the Environment* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2001), ix.

^{lv} Ibid, x.

^{lvi} Ibid, 23.

^{lvii} *Republican Press* September 7, 1906.

^{lviii} See Ray Allen Billington and Martin Ridge, *Westward Expansion – A History of the American Frontier*, (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 350-351.

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