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# CLOVERDALE

# REVEILLE

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## U.S. Hotel and stage line have connection with lodging in Upper Lake

By James Wagele, Christopher Berry and Joan Wagele

More than a century ago, Cloverdale had a small town at the northern end of Clear Lake. My wife Joan and I stumbled onto this relationship during a 2009 stay at Upper Lake's historical turn-of-the-century Tallman Hotel where antique

leather-bound guest registers stand on display behind the front desk. When the clerk on duty allowed us amateur historians to look through the oldest of the volumes, Joan was delighted to spot a name she recognized. An entry for Aug. 25, 1906, showed a Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Sedgley-Cloverdale. J. L. is Cloverdale's legendary stagecoach driver

Jotham Loring Sedgley. His wife Caroline was the daughter of pioneer businessman and rancher Fred Yordt, and their son Charles was the cashier for Bank of Cloverdale.

During another stay at the Tallman earlier this year, our curiosity was piqued! Encouraged by hotel owners Bernie and Lynne Butcher, we returned at the end of July with two Cloverdale Historical Society colleagues, Sally Belford and Christopher Berry, to take a more thorough look at the hotel archives. After several hours of examining the registers and an interesting visit with Bernie in the deep shade of the hotel's pleasant garden, we left with a lot of helpful information about historic Upper Lake as well as evidence of 72 Tallman registrations by Cloverdale residents between 1906 and 1915.

From Bernie we learned that Upper Lake, just like Cloverdale, had



THE SIGNATURE OF Jotham Loring Sedgley, Cloverdale's legendary stagecoach driver, was found in the old Tallman House hotel ledger.

functioned as a transportation, tourism, and agribusiness center in the late 1800s and early 1900s and that stagecoach routes had once connected these two small towns. At Cloverdale, travelers typically arrived from the Bay Area by train and transferred to stages bound for local resorts, such as The Geysers or Pop McCray's Old Homestead. If traveling farther, through Anderson Valley to the coast or to Clear Lake, train passengers would likely have spent the night in a Clover-

dale hotel before beginning the long trip by stage the next day.

There was more than one route from Cloverdale into Lake County. The Tallman ledger shows that on at least one occasion, Sedgley reached Upper Lake from Ukiah. These stages very likely departed from Cloverdale's U.S. Hotel,

which stood on the southeast corner of Cloverdale Boulevard and Second Street.

Since there were no passenger trains serving Clear Lake, passengers arrived in Upper Lake by stage and would have disembarked at the Tallman Hotel. There they

>PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 11



THE OLD "TALLMAN HOUSE," now the restored Tallman Hotel, had an historical connection to Cloverdale. People in the photo include Mary Tallman, the lady in black on the hotel's porch.



THE OLD U.S. HOTEL in Cloverdale, like the Tallman, played a key role locally in the decades around the turn of the century, serving as a stage stop and providing overnight accommodations for passengers.



# U.S. Hotel and stage line – cont.

could connect with transports taking them east into the Central Valley via the Bartlett Springs-Colusa Road or to one of several resorts north of the lake or at Blue Lake. Because Upper Lake was a shipping point for wood and agricultural products, travelers checking into the Tallman may also have been coming to Upper Lake for business.

Of the 72 Cloverdale entries in the Tallman register, 41 were for stage drivers, including Sedgley (15) and A. F. Lea (26). There was also a sprinkling of other prominent Cloverdale names including members of the pioneer Kletser, Brush, Yordt, Merihan and Cooley families, as well as early rancher Charles Black with his wife and son Oscar.

Upper Lake's Tallman and Cloverdale's U. S. Hotel played key roles locally in the decades around the turn of the last century, serving as stage stops and over-night accommodations for passengers. However, by the 1930s when automobiles, trucks, and highways had replaced the combination of railroad and stagecoach-travel, auto courts and motels sprang up, causing the older hotels to become unfashionable and out-of-date. The U.S. Hotel was destroyed in a spectacular early-morning blaze in 1947 and has long been just a memory. In contrast, the Tallman was simply abandoned in the 1950s and stood empty for nearly 50 more years.

In 2006 a restoration of the 1896 Tallman was completed by its new owners, the Butchers. Besides the hotel itself, today's Tallman features a complex of buildings, including newer units with Japanese soaking tubs on private decks, a conference center, a swimming pool and the beautifully reconstructed Blue Wing saloon and restaurant. The original saloon, built



Bernie Butcher, owner of the Tallman Hotel and Blue Wing Saloon, along with his wife, Lynne, points out Cloverdale names in the historical hotel ledger to local residents Sally Belford and Joan Wagele.

in the 1880s, had been demolished at the beginning of Prohibition in 1920. Next to the Blue Wing still stands the original livery stable where Cloverdale coaches and horses may have spent the night.

The livery stable has its own 21<sup>st</sup> century connection to Cloverdale. For 10 years it was home to the antique plumbing fixtures business of Sheldon Steinberg, who supplied the fixtures found in the restored Tallman. Steinberg recently moved the business, known as the Elegant Bowl, to Cloverdale.

While the Cloverdale to Upper Lake stages stopped running a long time ago, there's good reason today to renew the run. The elegantly restored Tallman, with its companion Blue Wing restaurant, has become a destination in its own right. Starting from the Cloverdale History Center, directly across the Boulevard from the site of the old U.S. Hotel, you can now make the trip in just one hour via U.S. 101 and California 20.



Bernie Butcher, left, talks to Cloverdale's Jim Wagele at the Blue Wing Saloon dining establishment next door to the Tallman Hotel.



The dining room at the new Tallman Hotel in Upper Lake provides a lovely retreat for hotel visitors.



Bernie Butcher in one of the hotel's rooms.

