

George Miller's Panther

By Donald R. Richardson

An excerpt from *Tractors, Trains & Shipwrecks*

The year before Dad and Mother bought the Miller Ranch, the owner, George Miller, moved back on the place from Healdsburg. Isaac Prest had leased the place and then bought 80 acres adjoining where he and his wife and son, John, moved. When the lease was up, George moved back to take care of the place. Dad used to visit with the Prests when they lived here, and also with George.

On one occasion, George had gone down to visit or do some business with his family in Healdsburg. He returned by stage to Stewarts Point and stayed overnight. Dad was to bring him out early in the morning so he could get back and open the store by eight o'clock.

Dad had Mr. Miller's groceries and belongings in the car the evening before, so around four a.m. we started out.

We came by the orchard around daylight and alongside the road, caught in the fence, was a forked horn buck. He had probably been in the fence overnight and had a broken front shoulder. Dad thought he could turn it free, but on second thought, he and George decided they had better put the poor thing out of its misery. They did this and cleaned it out field style, left him hanging in the fence to pick up on the return trip.

We went on our way and brought George on home. He had been away for several days, so when arriving home, he first went to his bedroom and looked under his mattress. He picked out a pearl handled revolver so he felt assured that no one had been in the house while he was away.

At the time, he was sleeping in what is now the dining room. While we were standing there, he looked out the window to the south and to the corral which was about a 150 feet from the house. He said one night, about 20 years prior, he put some cows and

calves in the corral to mark the calves the following morning. During the night, he heard a commotion and looked out to see what the trouble was.

It was a bright moonlit night and, by close observation, George noticed that there was a large panther in the corral, surely after the calves. George got his shotgun and buckshot, slowly opened the window, and shot the panther.

I listened in fascination at that tale and have since wondered about it many times as I look out on a bright moonlit night...over the same landscape.

Anyway, we left shortly after that tale and dropped by our waiting field-dressed buck, and on home.

I have seen several panthers or cougars at various times and places since then and each time I recall George Miller's story of his experience.

Born in 1914, Donald R. Richardson grew up in an era when ice was packed in sawdust, and he was one of only nine children attending Stewarts Point's one-room schoolhouse—beginning high school at the age of 11, he rode the train weekdays to and from Santa Rosa High School. He is a past president of Sonoma County Farm Bureau as well as Sonoma County Supervisor.

Tractors, Trains and Shipwreck are a collection of his stories: firsthand exploits, oddities, and homespun yarns from his boyhood...and beyond. He penned these tales late in his life, and died in 1983. His handwritten originals are included along with an array of vintage b/w photos.

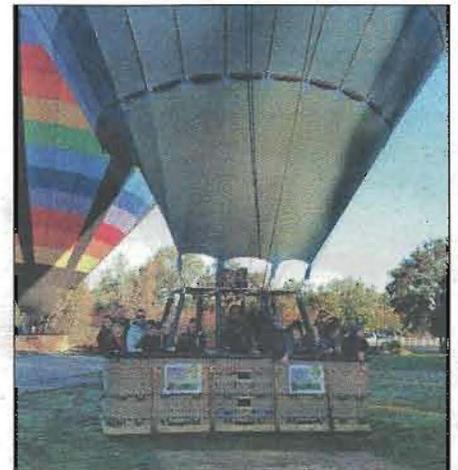
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Sonoma County Farm Bureau Your Agricultural November 2

Sonoma County Farm Bureau works diligently for our members' interests. Here's what we've done:

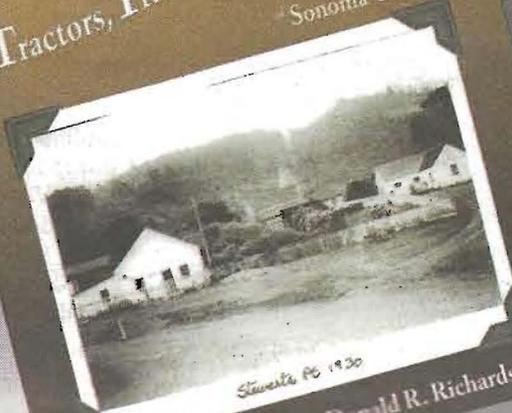
- Hosted our open house on November 9
- Sponsored the live auction at the 2017 Terry Lindley and support the SRJC Foundation Committee
- Attended Tomales Friends of Agriculture
- Continued to support the agriculture community by coordinating donations of supplies and horses
- Attended the California Farm Bureau Meeting

Love of the Land Balloon Ride



Chrissy Knox of Jelsie Events, who purchased the Love of the Land, was able to schedule and take her ride on a great time, and the weather was perfect. Thank you to the balloon ride and Chrissy Knox for purchasing it and supporting agriculture. *Photos courtesy of Blue Star Gas.*

Tractors, Trains & Shipwrecks
Yesterday's recollections
Sonoma County



Stewarts Pt 1930

Donald R. Richardson

Vintage ranching tales from one of Sonoma County's founding ranches

The handwritten anecdotes of (the late) Donald R. Richardson, a prominent ag leader and FB President

Step-back-in-time to the 1920s, 30s & beyond (with a historical endorsement on back jacket)

Accompanied by black/white period photos

A truly UNIQUE and memorable gift
ideal for personal OR business