

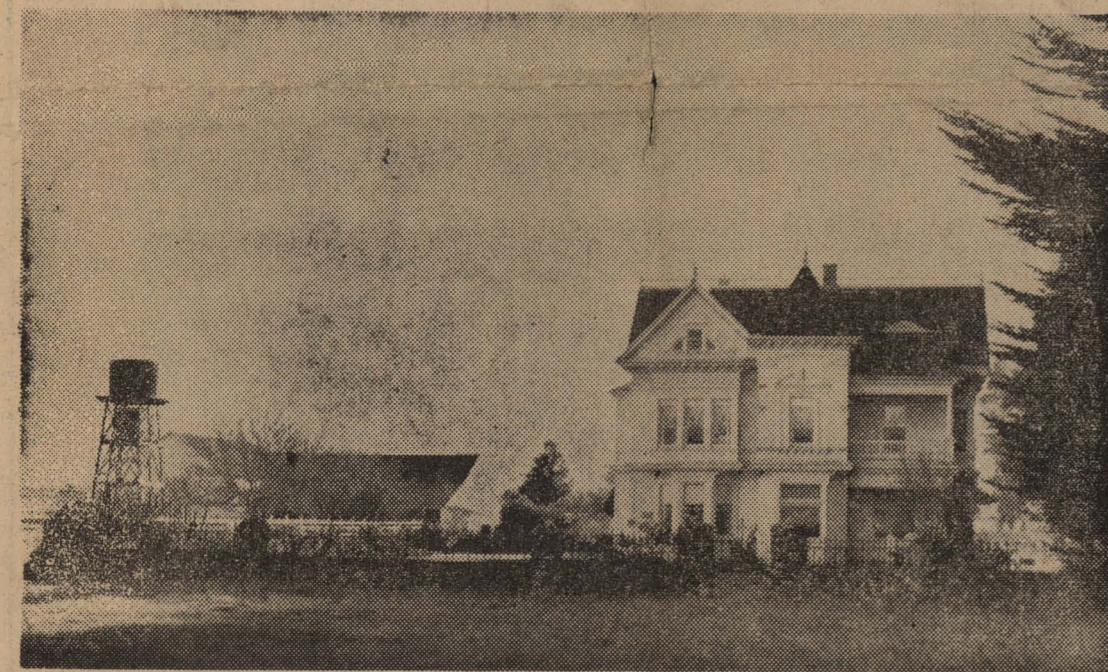
# Hydesville--Pioneer Humboldt Town



Hydesville school now has nearly 100 pupils.



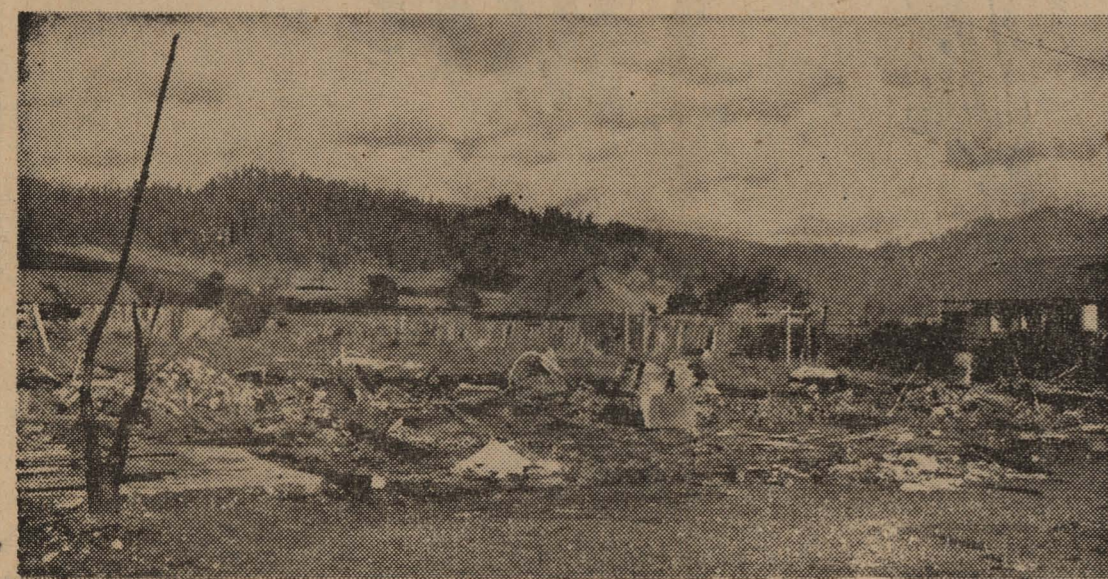
Store and Post Office are in town's center.



One of Hydesville's fine older homes sets serene.



New houses are being built for Hydesville's new people.



What remains of the historic Hydesville hotel after fire.

## New Home Area Once Pack Train And Stage Depot

By CHET SCHWARZKOFF  
PHOTOS BY DICK RYAN

On a tableland, as the road starts its climb toward the Van Duzen river canyon, you come to a town that arrests your attention not alone because of its historic appearance, but also because it occupies a setting of unique beauty. The town is Hydesville, located some twenty-five miles from Eureka on the Fortuna-Red Bluff highway.

Ahead of it loom the timbered coast range mountains, bulking blue-gray against the sky. About it rise the forests and hills whose like are only in the Redwood Empire. And deep alongside of it, the Van Duzen river ripples down its valley to afford a vista of serenity and scope.

Historic? Yes, Hydesville has played its role in the Land of the Giants, as its pioneer-front business buildings and Victorian era homes will attest. But more than that—Hydesville is getting its share of the influx of new population into Humboldt, as many a new home, and others under construction, show. Along the several miles of highway that roughly comprise Hydesville's "city limits," you will see many a fine home, some new, some recent, some a generation or more ago . . . but all replete with that atmosphere of pleasant living which fits so well with the town's surroundings.

### HYDESVILLE OF TODAY

Hydesville is an unincorporated town, with a population within its trading area of some 350. Its main center is where the highways from Fortuna and Alton meet. There its several stores and school seem to converge about a tall flagpole, bequest of a pioneer resident, and a landmark whose original dates back to 1864.

The school carries all eight grades, and has a total of some 95 pupils, and three teachers. Due to Hydesville's recent growth, it is somewhat overcrowded, and residents of the town express hope that it eventually will become part of a consolidation and thus provide needed funds for expansion. There seems an unusually high number of first, second, and third traders. This, explains Mrs. John Wilcox of the school board, is due to the numbers of younger residents attracted to the town by the opportunities in the lumber business. Most of Hydesville's population is engaged in lumbering in one phase or another, although a few operate dairies.

Notable among Hydesville's agriculturists is Everett Beck, who is operating an experimental plant nursery in conjunction with the University of California. Beck is experimenting with some 125 varieties of non-native plants in an effort to find additional varieties suitable to Humboldt's climate. Among his successful crops is one known as "subterranean clover," a variety of legume from Australia. This plant perpetually re-seeds itself by growing much of its seed underground. Thus, Beck explains, even sheep, that crop closely, cannot exterminate it, and the clover is good for indefinite pasturage. It cannot be harvested for hay, however. Beck has 20 acres of subterranean clover growing now, and plans to triple his acreage in this pasture plant soon.

### HYDESVILLE HISTORY

Hydesville was founded in 1858, and was originally called Goose Prairie. Due to the efforts of a man named Hyde, who owned much of the original township, the name was later changed.

The new settlement grew rapidly, and by 1859 there were a wagon and carriage shop, blacksmith, saddler, carpenter, shoemaker, livery stable, and general store operating there. And its school had jumped from nothing to 34 pupils!

What made the town grow? Because it occupied a strategic location for pack trains coming down from the mountains to switch their loads into wagons, whence they were hauled down to the then harbor of Hookton, on Humboldt Bay. For many years, Hydesville was an important pack train center. Then the Eel River and Eureka railroad built as far up the Van Duzen valley as Burnell's Station in the 1880s, and later into Carlotta.

"That killed Hydesville," says Mrs. Frank Williams who, with her sister, Miss Gertrude Graham, owns one of Hydesville's most beautiful Victorian era homes. Mrs. Williams, herself a native Humboldt, is an authority on Hydesville history.

But Hydesville had other interests to fall back upon ere long. Not only was it noted as a desirable place to live, because of its climate

and setting, but it also became a changeover place for the stages on their overland journey to San Francisco. So, between this, and the ever-growing lumber industry, Hydesville kept its place in the sun.

Hydesville's main street is unusually wide, and Mrs. Williams tells you the reason. In its heyday as a trading center and pack train headquarters, they needed plenty of turning room for the big wagons that took on loads for Humboldt bay. So . . . their street is 102 feet wide . . . and many a crowded city today, whose streets were laid out in horse-and-buggy days would give most anything for thoroughfares as wide as that of Hydesville.

### EARLY DAY FAMILIES

Many famed Humboldt names are associated with Hydesville. There are the Grahams, Goulds, Fishers, Williams, Beabers, Becks, Dinsmores, Harvilles, Vances, Manarys . . . and The Pacific Lumber company, which once made headquarters there. In fact, the town's directory is an index of noted names.

Noted among these, Mrs. Williams says, was the Cooper family, whose extraordinary pioneer day experiences are almost without parallel. There were five brothers of them, and they came from Nova Scotia around Cape Horn on a sailing ship in 1848. After landing in San Francisco, they were attracted to Humboldt, and commenced ranching in the Van Duzen valley. Indian troubles were rampant in those days, and three of the brothers were killed by warring redskins. A fourth died of exposure and hardship while trying to blaze a trail across the mountains into Red Bluff, for the purpose of driving cattle into Humboldt. The fifth and surviving brother, John Cooper, settled in Hydesville and operated a grist mill there for years.

Another old time resident, but who is still very much alive, is John T. Beaber, who first set up housekeeping in Hydesville with his bride in 1898. Mr. Beaber worked for several lumber companies in his earlier days, but for the past 40 years has been an insurance representative.

John Beaber recounts that when he came to Hydesville, there were two large livery stables in the town, and it was an overland stage headquarters.

### OLD STAGE ROUTE

Up until 1914, when the Northwestern Pacific railroad drove its golden spike in the Valley of the Giants, and opened the rail route from Humboldt to San Francisco, stages used Hydesville as a horse-change and stopover place. In those days, it took 12 hours from Eureka to Bridgeville, where horses were changed again, Beaber says. The stage route—now almost forgotten—ran through Hydesville, Bridgeville, Blocksburg, Alderpoint and Harris, on its way to Willits. Another stage line went through to Santa Rosa, where it connected with the railroad terminus of that day. Gradually, as the railroad built its way up the valley toward Ukiah, and finally Willits, the stage routes shortened. And at the last, they ended when the railroad came all the way through to Eureka. Toward the last, automobile stages were coming in, but horses were used over the rougher mountain routes.

And those were the days, too, Mr. Beaber recounts, when Strong's Station was quite a going resort. Townspeople, as well as visitors to the redwood country, used to sojourn there and enjoy the excellent hunting and fishing which that comparatively primitive area provided. Of course, he added, most of the through travelers to and from San Francisco came and went by ship, rather than overland stage. But the stages carried the mail, as well as local passengers and those who preferred the journey by land instead of by sea.

### A LOOK AT THE TOWN

As you drive along Hydesville's main street, you see a mixture of



The Williams' home typifies an age of pleasant living.



Typical modern residence, set amid pastoral surroundings.

the past and today. There are the commodious homes of the 1880s and '90s—and right alongside of them you will see today's modern stucco bungalows. There is the flagpole—symbol of pioneer America—with its sides scorched from a recent fire. Here and there is an old false-front store building, no longer in use, or converted into a storage loft.

One large structure, now apparently abandoned except for storage, has a faint lettering on its upper front that says "Feedstable." Here was your service station, complete with all auxiliaries, in the days when hay—not gasoline—turned the wheels on the road . . . but turned them much more slowly. Oil wells, tank ships, and great manufacturing companies were not needed to supply fuel to the "Feedstable." It was brought in from the fields alongside, available for use right away—and no tax per gallon! On the other hand, however, it took days to get to San Francisco where now it takes hours. But at that, you wonder, when you look at those peaceful Victorian homes and commodious stables, so innocent of gasoline—let alone atomic power—you wonder just who DID have the best bet!



Hydesville's church beckons of a Sunday.

## Advertising Shift Toward Visual Media to Continue Trend in 1949

NEW YORK—Editor & Publisher predicts a prosperous 1949 for American newspapers.

In its Jan. 1 issue, the publishers and advertisers' weekly says advertising lineage, barring unexpected developments, should surpass 1948's record total; circulation will remain at a high level; more newsprint will be available, and new equipment will be easier to get.

On the debit side, Editor and Publisher said newspaper production costs rose to a new high in 1948 and may go even higher in 1949.

Termining 1948 the best year in the history of newspaper advertising the weekly said the dollar volume probably would reach \$434,000,000, compared to \$357,000,000 in 1947.

And 1949 should be better, Editor & Publisher says, predicting intensified promotion in such fields as durable household goods, automobiles, soapless detergents, soaps, waxes and polishes. Other industries, such as food, tobacco, beverage and travel, will hold their lineage at high levels.

The publication foresaw continuance of the advertising trend to newspapers from other media, possibly at a quickened pace. In at least a half dozen cases, the weekly said, advertisers already preparing large-scale switches from radio to visual media, includ-

## New Year's Eve Party at Church

A New Year's eve community party was held Friday in the Hydesville church with games supervised by Virginia and Barbara Hill. Musical features were directed by Mrs. Kenneth Fox, and Rev. Floyd D. Anderson led the devotionals. The group enjoyed refreshments, served by women of the church.

### CRASH FATAL

SAN JOSE—Joseph E. Jones, 59, Irvington, died in a hospital here today of injuries suffered Wednesday in a crash between the truck in which he was riding and a Southern Pacific switch engine in Irvington.

a ton will hold for the first six months of 1949.

Warning of the possibility of increased production costs, the weekly said that despite record circulation, advertising volume and dollar income, most newspapers came through 1948 with reduced profit ratios.