

Shively--A Man Said It Was Paradise

Pioneer's Vision Will be Realized If Bridge is Built

By CHET SCHWARZKOPF
PHOTOS BY DICK RYAN

Shively is a secluded community, some 40 miles south of Eureka. No better description of its setting can be made than to quote its original discoverer, William Shively, who called it "Paradise." Shively is not on Highway 101, although you must go by that route most of the way to get there. Shively is separated from the rush of traffic on Redwood Highway by Eel river, hence its seclusion—which is one of its most delightful features—and one of its perennial headaches.

For the great sweep of Eel river skirts the plateau upon which Shively stands and, with its towering stand of redwood timber, gives the town a boundary more definite than any man-made line. The headache part of it comes when that boundary goes on flood and takes out the temporary bridge which links a population of 250 people to the highway.

The problem is as old as the town, which dates back to 1869. "If we had put in a permanent bridge as recently as twenty-five years ago," says pioneer resident Joe Stockel, "it would have paid for itself by now, just from the money that has been spent replacing the so-called summer bridge. Sooner or later, of course, it will be done. The county planning commission is working on it now. The people in Shively realize our county can't afford everything that is proposed, but we do think it is our turn."

And Joe seems right, for Shively has one of the richest areas of potential development in Humboldt county. Needed is a bridge that will keep it connected with the "mainland" the year 'round. Then, with its even climate, and breath-taking setting of woodland, hills, and river, Shively must forge ahead. Especially is it true nowadays, when the west is developing as never before. Despite its one handicap, however, Shively has attracted a number of new residents, and many others are waiting only for a dependable bridge.

"Look here," adds Joe Stockel, as he warms to his subject. "The increase in land value alone, in the Shively area, would be greater in actual dollars than the cost of a permanent bridge. Figure it out for yourself . . . added taxes, an immediate influx of new residents and—best of all—no annual bills for replacement of the temporary bridge. It's as logical as two and two . . ."

There is also talk of running a new highway from the southern end of Scotia, on the Shively side of Eel river, all the way to Fort Seward. Should that be done, Shively residents say, a great new area in the main Eel river valley would be opened, and Shively would stand at its gateway. You catch their enthusiasm as they talk, and you realize that the opening of the west is just as real today as it was in pioneer times—more so, because of modern transportation.

The Northwestern Pacific railroad runs through the middle of the town, and passenger trains from Eureka and San Francisco stop at the Shively depot. "The trains have been a big help at times," says Mrs. Lula Ewan, who has lived in Shively for thirty years. "But when the river is so high that it is risky to operate a boat across it, it is apt to disable the railroad as well. I have seen years when we have had to ferry across the river for as long as two months, before the bridge could be replaced."

And ferrying across Eel river at flood, they tell you, is not exactly a pleasure-journey. A number of Shively residents who work at Scotia and way points have come to regard themselves as "hardy river boatmen" during the winter—but they never miss a day on the job. "But it irks you to have a perfectly good automobile marooned at home—or worse yet, on the highway side," says Mrs. Kenneth Covington, whose husband works at Scotia. "Maybe you could mention something about the Shively bridge in your write-up. . . ."

HOW SHIVELY STARTED

Back in the early 1860's, William B. Shively came to California from the mid-west and settled in what is now Rio Dell—in fact, he at one time owned most of that town's area. Bill Shively got along well with people, whether Indians or white, and quickly became prominent in the newly settled community.

In due time, he met and married Carrie Gould Winemiller, a young widow with two sons, Francis and Charles, who herself was a member of the pioneer Gould family of Humboldt. Six children were born to them—Abbie, Dan, Lily, William, Ernest and Maud. Of the original family, Abbie alone survives. She is Mrs. Abbie Edwards, of Rio Dell, a

wide-awake lady in her eighties who enjoys reminiscing on early days in Humboldt.

"The Indians burned us out once at Rio Dell," Mrs. Edwards said. "But you can't blame them for not wanting outsiders moving in." Her eyes twinkle. "In fact, I hear that even now days when so many new people are coming into Humboldt. It's only human. But father made his peace with them and raised two Indian boys, Budds and Ben, after most of the tribe had moved to the reservation at Hoopa."

It was while on a hunting and fishing trip upriver with Budds and Ben, in 1869, that Bill Shively first set eyes upon his future town, according to Mrs. Verna Holmes, of Pepperwood, who is a daughter of one of the Winemiller sons.

"Grandfather was greatly impressed, as anyone is today who looks at the location," Mrs. Holmes said. "It was swarming with all kinds of wild game—deer, elk, bear and birds. He was the first white man to see the place. When he came home, he told grandmother 'I have found Paradise. We will move there.'"

Grandmother Shively objected at first, for Rio Dell was home, but finally consented when Bill promised to bring her back to Rio Dell after they had proved up on the place. But when that time came Carrie Shively had changed her mind. "We won't go home," she said. "This place is home now."

It must have been an heroic undertaking for a man to move a wife and four small children—for Abbie and Dan were born by then—into an unknown wilderness with the limited transportation of those days. But Bill Shively did, and he built the first log cabin in his new town-to-be. The Indians were still hostile up there, and for several years the Shiveleys and subsequent settlers did not dare light their houses at night until all blinds were pulled and the premises as thoroughly blacked out as in modern warfare.

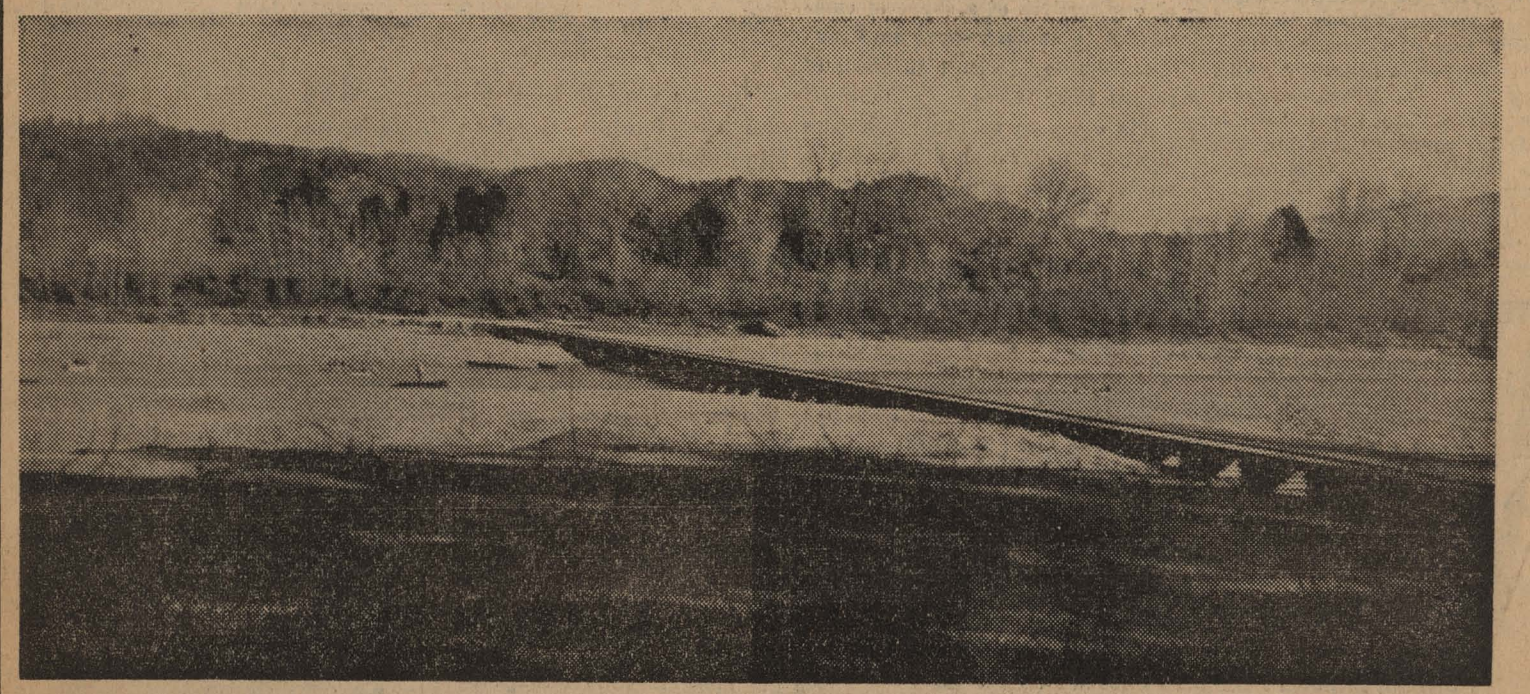
The years went by. Bill Shively had brought a number of other families into the town, and had planted a fine fruit orchard on his farm. The amazingly fertile river-silt soil produced anything that would grow in temperate zones, and the families prospered. To this day, Shively is noted for its truck gardens and apples, pears, and cherries. Even a willow riding switch, planted in the Shively front yard, grew into a great tree under which church services and picnics were held. So it was natural for the children, as they grew up, to start farms of their own on the Shively holdings.

LATER DAYS IN SHIVELY

About the turn of the century, Bill Shively sold his extensive timber holdings to The Pacific Lumber Company—the giant that was growing in Scotia—and the railroad was built into the town. Then began the community's heyday. Several hotels were built, of which the historic Stockel Resort still stands, although long since unused. A race track was built, and the town staged rodeos, fairs, races and dances. Logging lasted for over a decade, and it brought money and people into Shively. "She was a live town then," chuckles Joe Stockel, whose father built the Stockel Resort in 1906, after bringing his family to Shively in 1901. "And by the way, our house here is the home Bill Shively built in later days when his family was growing up."

When the logging boom was done, Shively settled back into the pastoral existence from whence it had started, and it continues in its tenor today.

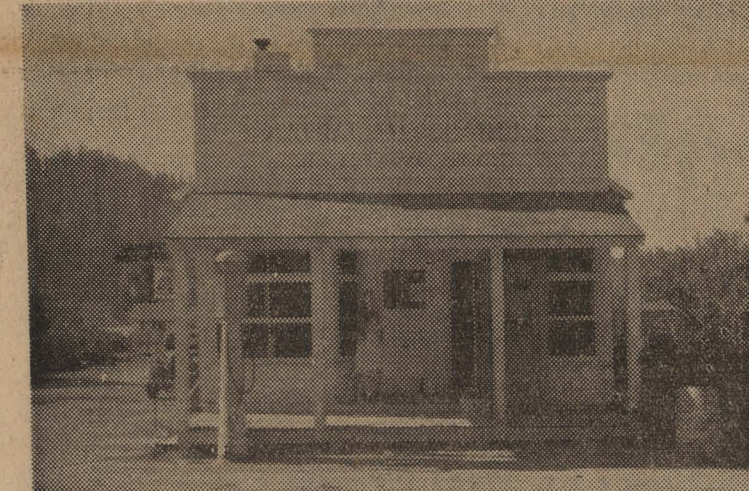
Notable among the town's enterprises is the Gilbert Robinson ranch, a holding of some 125 acres, whose owner raises cattle and purebred Suffolk sheep. Robinson came to Shively from Rio



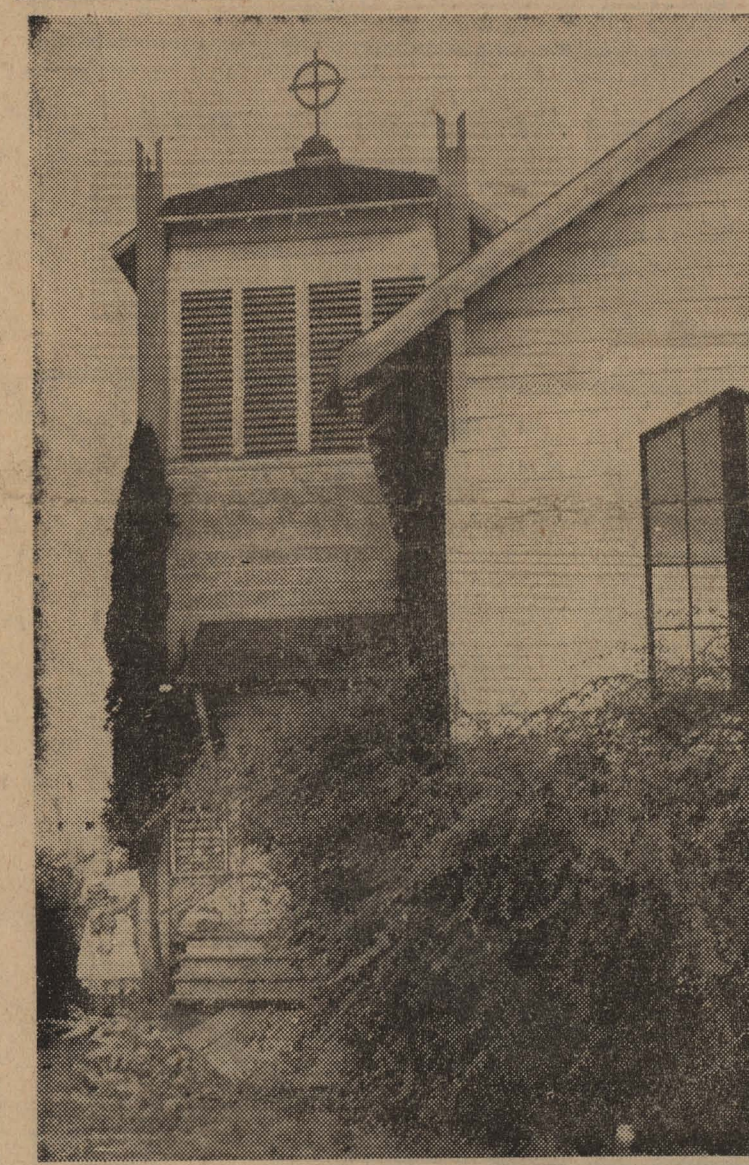
Looking at Shively bridge from 101 Highway side. Note fishermen's boats in Eel river.



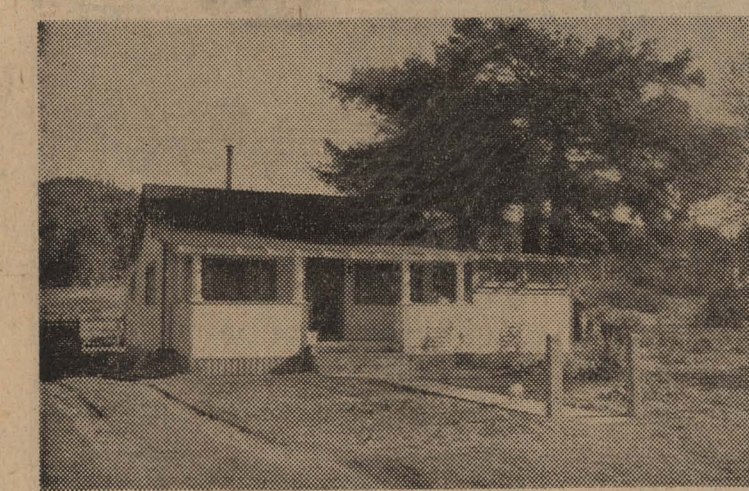
"High and dry, but standing by." Elmer Day sits in Shively's ferry boat.



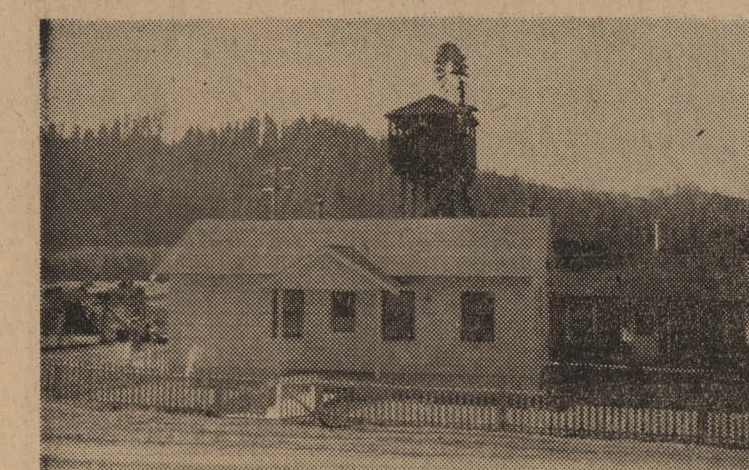
Postmistress Kathleen Chappell stands in front of Shively's store.



Old Shively church is used for town meetings, Ladies' Aid, and 4-H club. Mrs. Myrtle Warner and son Charles in front.



Small dog on sidewalk valiantly guards Kenneth Covington home.



The old and new. Mrs. Myrtle Kemp's two houses surround ancient windmill.

Dell in 1913, and his holding is one of the town's show places.

SCHOOL AND ENVIRONS

Shively's Bluff Prairie school occupies one of the prettiest settings in a county noted for natural beauty. Set on high ground, overlooking the river, woods, and farming area, it offers a heritage to young America that the biggest school in the biggest city cannot match. For it is from schools like this that some of the best of contemporary America have come . . . and will continue to come. Traffic, noise, and nervous tension belong to the outside world "across the river." In a sense, time turns backward in its flight, and you see here the more peaceful era of by-gone days still in effect. It is food for thought.

Thirty-eight pupils attend at Shively's school, according to Principal Vernon Whalen and teacher Mrs. Ruby Bradfield. All eight grades are represented, and his assistant are doing a first-rate modern job in an environment that would be difficult to surpass.

Outdoor recreation is one of Shively's prime attractions. Surrounded by woods, hills, and river, the hunter and fisherman can find here a veritable Eden. Game of all kinds still abound the timberglades and hinterland, while Eel river offers some of its choicest steelhead trout and salmon fishing at the town's front door. Champion fisherman of the community is old-timer John Ewan, now retired, who spends much of his time at such famed fishing spots as Shively bluff, High rock, and the Holmes riffle. Let a permanent bridge be completed into Shively, its residents say, and it will become a year 'round resort, for its climate and location are made to order.

Most of Shively's population either operate farms—such as Joe Stockel's fine truck gardens—or work in the logging and lumber game. The town's combined store, post-office and telephone exchange is operated by Fred and Kathleen Chappell, who are more recent arrivals, and who have faith in the day that must come when the new Shively bridge becomes reality.

SHIVELY FAMILY AND TOWN

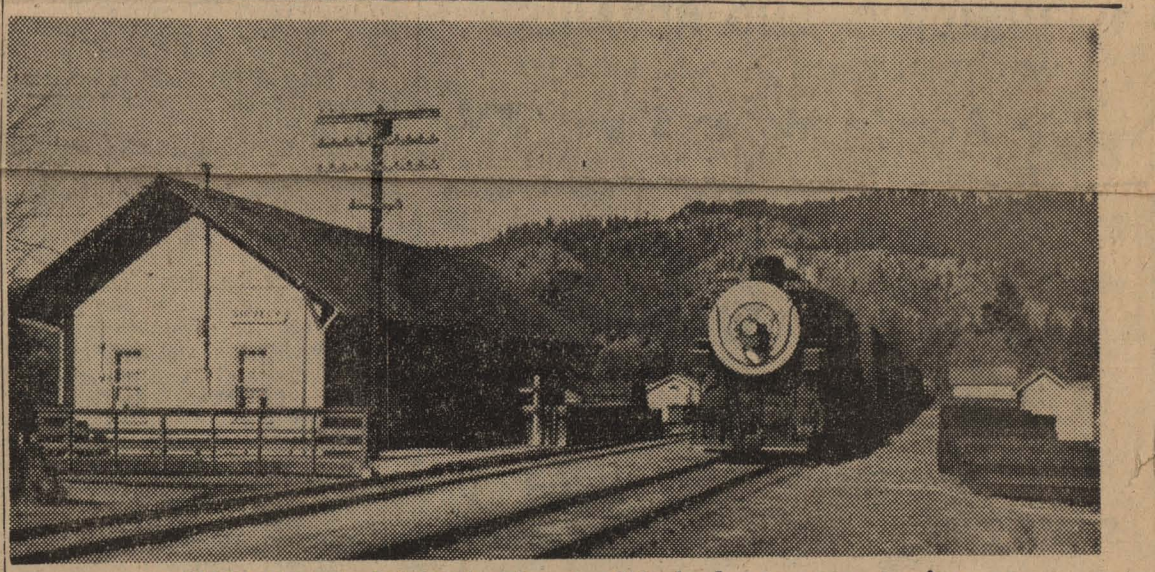
Descendants of the original Shively family have scattered over the west, but some few remain in Humboldt. Among those are Glenn and Bill Shively, of Eureka, grandsons of pioneer Bill Shively. Football enthusiasts will remember Glenn as one of Eureka high school's all-time great, back in the latter 1920's. The Shively brother's sister, Mrs. Beatrice Hoeft, now resides in Sonoma but, like the rest, was raised in the family's "home town."

No account of the Shively family and town would be complete without mention of "Budds," one of the two Indian boys adopted by grandfather Bill long ago. Budds stayed with the family all his life, according to Mrs. Verna Holmes, and was one of the finest of men. He was widely known and liked—obliging, dependable, kind, and good neighbor were some of the terms applied to him. And such was his strength and daring that he would take a boat or canoe across Eel river at the highest flood stage with ease. In a day of rugged pioneers, Budds was rated as a man among men. . . .

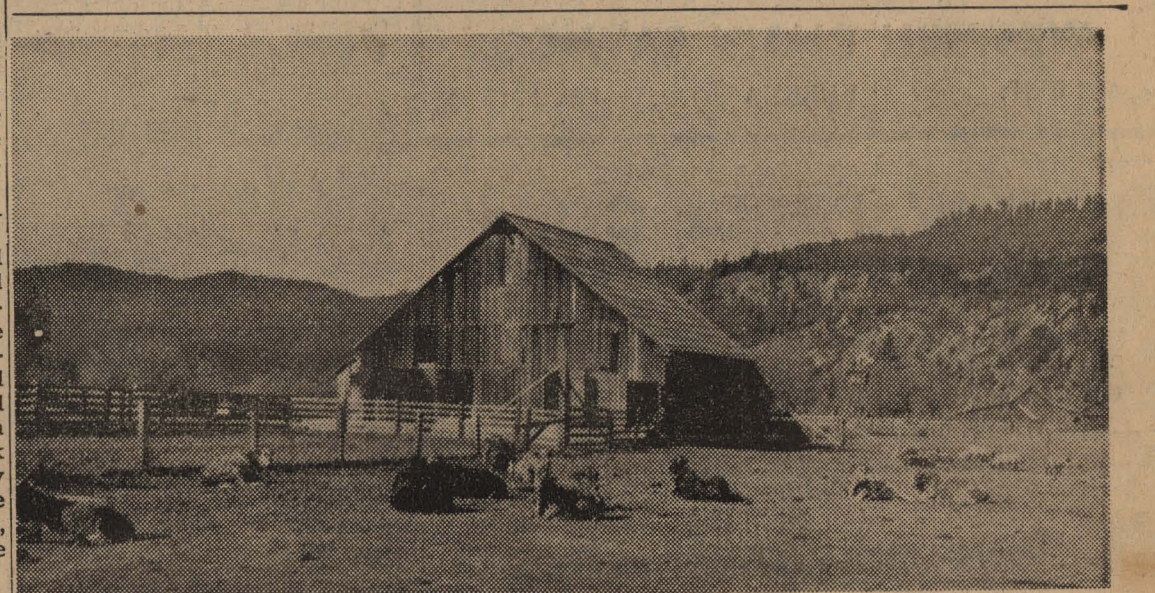
Thus ends an account of one of the Redwood Empire's unique towns—a place of rich soil and pleasant living set apart from the world's worry and hurry. The lobby of its one-time noted resort is now a vegetable and fruit packing room. But the day is coming—with the new bridge—when visitors and homeseekers again will know Shively. This time it will be the automobile age, instead of the railroad, which will bring them. And—Shively's people say—let them leave their troubles outside when they enter the portals, for here is Hesperides.



It's recess time for the 3-R-Agers at Shively's school. More fun!



NWP through freight thunders by Shively depot on way to city.



Some of the Gilbert Robinson purebred stock "pose" for camera.



The old Stockel resort dreams of heydays gone by. Note pre-prohibition "Humboldt Beer" sign on abandoned tavern.