

Issues relating to Citizens For Healing's proposal to rename "Kelseyville" to "Konocti"

By Alan Fletcher, C4HA. Aug 6, 2025.

Summary

We have identified some issues that have been raised during the four-year process of our efforts to rename Kelseyville to Konocti:

- 1. Is the commemoration of the name of Andy Kelsey offensive to the Tribes of Lake County, and will changing the town name lead to healing?
- 2. Did C4H adequately involve the community in their proposal?
- 3. Did C4H obtain tribal support before submitting their BGN application?
- 4. Did the BoS correctly make its recommendation despite Advisory Measure U?
- 5. Are the costs relating to the name change acceptable?
- 6. Was Kelseyville named after Andy Kelsey, and not some other person?

Our documentation shows that the answer to all those questions is "Yes".

Issue 1: Is the commemoration of the name of Andy Kelsey offensive to the Tribes of Lake County, and will changing the town name lead to healing?

We relate three instances where Andy, Ben and Sam committed personal atrocities against individual natives.

Will the name change bring healing to the Tribes of Lake County?

Flaman C. McCloud Jr, Chairman of Big Valley: *By voting YES to change the name, we can begin a healing process that unites our communities.*

Moke Simon, Lake County Supervisor and Chairman of Twin Pines: *So yes, this name change would start the process and it's going to be a long one, but ... it would absolutely start that healing that needs to happen for the Indigenous 7 nations in this county.*

See [Kelsey Offenses, and Tribal Healing](#) (Copied inline below)

What were some of the specific offenses of Andy Kelsey, Ben Kelsey and Sam Kelsey?

Andy Kelsey: *And they were terribly cruel. Andy Kelsey tied an indian boy to a wild horse, with his feet roped together under the horse's belly. Then he made the horse run away, and the boy was dragged to death. The Indian women never forgave that.*

Ben Kelsey: *... had a man arrested and sentenced to 100 lashes for looking askance at his wife. "After this punishment, on the same day, we are informed, Kelsey sought the wretched offender and laid him dead at his feet, shooting him in the presence of several gentleman, who remonstrated with him on the barbarity of the deed."*

Sam Kelsey: *Some twenty roving hot-headed democratic young men, shouldered their rifles, and with the Kelseys departed for Napa Valley, where, on the farm of a Mr. Fowler, they found a number of Indians who had hired themselves to Mr. Fowler for the summer. With heroic bravery and more whisky, they leveled their rifles, and soon stretched fifteen unarmed, peaceable Indians dead at their feet, burnt their huts, and departed for Santa Rosa to repeat their deeds of daring.*

The offenses of the Kelseys, and the repercussions, are described in many of our supporting documents, particularly our [Short](#) and [Long](#) Histories.

Will the name change bring healing to the Tribes of Lake County?

Flaman C. McCloud Jr Chairman of Big Valley: *The town of Kelseyville bears the name of Andrew Kelsey, a figure associated with the suffering endured by the Pomo people during the 1800s. This name serves as a painful reminder of a time when our ancestors faced unimaginable hardships. By voting YES to change the name, we can begin a healing process that unites our communities. It's a step towards fostering an environment of love, forgiveness, and growth for both current and future generations, showing that Lake County is a place where we honor and respect the history and the people who have shaped it.*

Moke Simon Lake County Supervisor and Chairman of Twin Pines: *Would the name change help start with the healing? ... [If] This name change happens. .. It will start the healing, whether you believe it or not, for the indigenous people in this community. It's a pure, pure yes to that question ... So yes, this name change would start the process and it's going to be a long one, but it's a .. it would absolutely start that healing that needs to happen for the Indigenous 7 nations in this county.*

Issue 2: Did C4H adequately involve the community in their proposal?

Citizens For Healing (C4H) first got together as a few individuals in October, 2020 - meeting publicly in Kelseyville Pioneer Park.

Anticipating that renaming would be through a county-wide, ballot, we launched a series of round-the-county informational meetings from Kelseyville and as far as Clear Lake. Our March, 2022 kick-off meeting was widely reported in the press.

We were then informed that BGN was responsible for name changes, so we switched to preparing a proposal, which took almost a year. During this time we continued to hold both public and working meetings, and filed with the BGN in October 2023. This coincided with a supervisor primary election for the district 5 (including Kelseyville), at which renaming was an election issue.

We spoke about these efforts at public meetings such as the KVUSD "Land acknowledgement" proposal (packed by our opponents) and at the BoS when the County Visioning Forum made its report. We recommended that the BoS form a Limited Purpose, Limited Time committee to address the issue.

In July 2024 the BoS approved an advisory ballot, Measure-U. We regarded this as totally ill-advised, and opposed it. We recommended that the ballot solicit alternative new names. We prepared proposals for the ballot measure, but did not campaign on the issue. We continued to hold informational meetings in Lakeport and Kelseyville. In Dec 2024 the BoS decided to recommend the name change.

We have always been open to considering a different replacement name, but opponents have been adamant that it will be "Kelseyville for ever".

All our plans and submitted documents - including drafts - were posted on our Web site. Our main mailing list has always been open to anyone.

See [Community Consultation \(About Page\)](#) (Copied inline below)

Citizens for Healing History 2020-2025

By Alan Fletcher 5/1/2025

The beautiful and thriving town of Kelseyville, sitting at the base of Mt. Konocti, is currently named after a brutal man.

Andy Kelsey — with his brothers and his partner Charles Stone — enslaved, starved, abused, raped, tortured and murdered the Pomos living under their control. In 1849, the Pomo held a tribal court and decided to execute Kelsey and Stone.

In revenge for their deaths, brothers Ben and Sam Kelsey and their posse stormed Napa and Sonoma Counties indiscriminately killing Pomos. They were followed in 1850 by the cavalry, with orders to "exterminate, if possible, the tribe", which they almost did, at Bloody Island. The Pomos have not forgotten the Kelseys or the repercussions which continue to affect them.

The commemoration in the town name of these brutal men is offensive to all the local tribes and to many residents throughout the County.

The offensiveness of the name has been discussed in the press since at least 1985, and in 2006 Clayton Duncan of Robinson Rancheria succeeded in his campaign "I am not your mascot" to change the schools team name. He also started to campaign for a change in the town name: almost equal numbers of Lake County residents signed online petitions for and against a name change.

In 2020 a Kelseyville resident decided to reactivate the idea. Citizens For Healing therefore formed as an intentionally NON-organized group. C4H started to investigate the possibility of a name change.

During our first year (2020-2021) we held monthly organizational meetings in Kelseyville's Pioneer park, at which we were advised by a Tribal Cultural Director, and by two Tribal Historical Preservation Officers (THIPOs -- who each held the position for multiple tribes.)

As an example of our early involvement with Natives, [KQED](#) reported on the 2021 Bloody Island Healing Ceremony and on C4H's hopes to change the name.

C4H's minutes for March 2021 indicate that both Ron Montez and Robert Geary were present when the name "Konocti" was proposed. We eventually adopted the name "Konocti" as a gesture to acknowledge the wrongs done to the original inhabitants of Lake County. THIPO Robert Geary discusses the name Konocti in a January 2021 KPFZ interview: [KPFZ Robert Geary](#).

We created a web page (initially [c4h.club](#)) and an open mailing list, c4h@groups.io. We encouraged opponents to join the list, as long as they engaged us respectfully.

In September 2021 one of the advisory Tribal Officers Ron Montez Sr reported: "I have contacted each tribe in Lake County for their approval to change the name of the town Kelseyville to the name of Konocti and the 7 tribes are unanimously in favor of the name change to Konocti."

At that stage we were informed by the Registrar of Voters that a name change would require a county-wide ballot. It was only at this stage that we adopted the proposed name "Konocti". We prepared a public information campaign, and held a series of public meetings around the lake. The initial meeting was featured on the front page of the Press Democrat and of the Lakeport Record Bee. Prominent opponents were interviewed in those articles.

The Kelseyville Business Association immediately held an advisory poll of its members, many of whom abstained, and the results were "close". The KBA immediately formed a "Save The Name" subcommittee with the sole purpose of opposing a name change.

Many of our round-the-county meetings were attended by opponents to the change. We solicited suggestions for other names, but were told adamantly that it would be "Kelseyville for Ever".

Two of our meetings were held in Tribal Halls — Habematolel and Elem — at which many Natives spoke in support of the change. Several speakers said this was the first time they'd been "invited to the table". "It's still an open wound that's not been healed. We are a hurting people. We've wanted to change the name way before [anyone non-Native] thought of it,"

In November 2022 — following a tip-off by a local , retired attorney — the Registrar of Voters informed us that the US Board on Geographic Names (BGN) has jurisdiction over the names of "unincorporated populated places", and that they will, on a case-by-case basis, change a name which is "offensive ... to a racial group".

We announced the change of venue from County Ballot to BGN Application on our web page in January 2023. This was not a "back door secret effort" to bypass local opinion, as some have suggested. ([Letter by Peter Windrem](#)) This was not done in secret: we posted our drafts for discussion as early as March 2023: [Wayback Machine](#)

Since the new name-change effort would now be done in writing, we spent almost a year preparing our application to the BGN, which we submitted in October 2023.

This coincided with the supervisor's primary election for District 5 (Kelseyville), in which renaming was a major issue - including the knowledge that it was BGN matter.

In June 2024 the Lake County Visioning Forum delivered its final report to the Board of Supervisors. The report identified the history of the county and the name of Kelseyville as factors, but - regarding the issue as outside of their brief - made no recommendations. Supervisor Green proposed establishing a Limited Time, Limited Purpose Committee to review the name change, but that received no support.

In July 2024 the BoS decided to hold an advisory ballot measure : "Shall the Board of Supervisors recommend approval of the proposal to change the name of the town of Kelseyville to Konocti". C4H believes the measure was deeply flawed in concept, timing, demographics and in detail. We prepared ballot arguments, but yielded that right to Mr Flaman McCloud, chairman of the Big Valley Ranchera. We decided to remain as an "issue advocacy" organization, and thus did not campaign on Measure U. The results were about 30% For and 70% Against. The demographics are highly skewed to Whites: fewer than 3% of voters are Native American. On December 10, 2024 the BoS decided 3-2 to recommend the change, and submitted a letter to the BGN.

In Feb 2025 the BoS considered sending a report to CACGN and BGN outlining the difficulties they had encountered in the process, but decided not to do so. In addition they instructed County staff to spend no more time on the name change. At that meeting the chairman of "Save Kelseyville" stated that they would not suggest any alternative new name.

C4H has continued to hold informational meetings on the renaming issue, including a "2nd annual Earthday Picnic" in Kelseyville.

Issue 3: Did C4H obtain tribal support before submitting their BGN application?

C4H has worked with individual Natives since its inception.

One of our early supporters and advisors was the late Thomas Leon Brown, then cultural director of Elem. Two Tribal Historic Preservation Officers worked with us in their official capacity of interacting with the Tribes: *I have contacted each tribe in Lake County for their approval to change the name of the town Kelseyville to the name of Konocti and the 7 tribes are unanimously in favor of the name change to Konocti.*

Two Tribes hosted our meetings, at which many Natives spoke.

After we filed our BGN application three Tribes immediately sent letters of support. Subsequently all Lake County Tribes and all National Tribes have submitted formal approvals to the BGN.

When the BoS decided to hold the Measure U advisory ballot we worked with a Tribal Chairman, and deferred to him on writing the ballot proposal.

In short, we have cooperated with the Tribes from the start, giving them the respect they deserve as sovereign nations.

See [Tribal Consultation](#) (Copied inline below)

Tribal Support for Renaming Kelseyville to Konocti (Revised Submission)

By Alan Fletcher 5/1/25

Note: We distinguish between "Natives" (Indigenous peoples) and "Settlers" (everyone else) and generally mean Lake County, unless otherwise specified. By "Tribes" (capitalized) I mean the Federally recognized Tribes of Lake County. By "tribes" (un-capitalized) I refer to the original villages and peoples of Lake County.

The close involvement of C4H supporters with Lake County Natives (enrolled and un-enrolled) goes back decades.

For example, in 1995 Dallas Cook was a founder of [KPFZ 88.1 FM](#), which established two radio shows with Native presenters -- Clayton Duncan, and James & Gail Brown Eagle.

Over the past twenty five years most of us have attended the Bloody Island sunrise healing ceremonies on a regular basis - led by Clayton Duncan and his brother Doug. These have almost always been followed - and in recent years proceeded - by social gatherings.

Some of our (present) members who are long-time Lake residents supported Clayton Duncan's campaign in 2006 to rename the high school mascot from "Indians" to "Knights". ([Record Bee](#)) Clayton also attempted to rename the town of Kelseyville, in 2009 ([Record Bee](#)) and in 2018. ([Record Bee](#)) For the latter, he was informed by the registrar of voters that it would be by county ballot. Incidentally, the new name "Konocti" was suggested at that time. An independent online petition suggesting a name based on Mount Konocti was launched in 2020. ([KZYX](#))

In 2020 Lorna Sides and Dallas Cook started to talk about re-activating the name change process, with a slightly different tack. The old Settler name of Kelseyville would be changed by Settlers. In addition to Clayton Duncan, one of our early supporters and advisors was the late Thomas Leon Brown, then cultural director of Elem. He suggested the name "Citizens for Healing".

Incidentally, the concept of "healing" is not a new one. The governor of California established the Office of Truth and Healing. At the KVUSD "land acknowledgement" meeting the word healing was used fifteen times. When the ballot measure was passed, Moke Simon said "This name change happens, it will start the healing, whether you believe it or not, for the indigenous people in this community. It's a pure, pure yes to that question."

Starting in early 2021 we were advised by two Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPO's), Mr Robert Geary of Elem advised us on tribal names, and that different tribes have different names for the same place. He stressed the importance of getting permission both from the "donor" of the name, and those of the area receiving the name. ([KPFZ](#)).

Mr Montez of Big Valley participated in that meeting, and assisted us over several months. He is a member of the National Association of THPO's which states, with particular attention to renaming: "Typically, the best person to talk to when you reach out to a tribal nation is their tribal historic national preservation officer. These officers are in charge of information about cultural ties to certain places."

At our 3/8/21 Zoom meeting we noted Mr Montez's [RM] presence in his official capacity.

[VB] Yes, Ron, we're glad that you're here. Glad that you're present. Because we've been treading water until we had some official representation. So please, accept our Thank you. For your stellar [inaudible talk-over] .

[RM] No, I'm pretty flexible. I'm, I'm kind of in the middle of trying to write some grants for NAGPRA issues that I have in my office. I have some funerary objects need to be repatriated. I've been in contact with some of the different museums. And there may be some more stuff coming back. So all of my attention a lot of my focus is in that direction at the present time. But I'm flexible whenever you guys set a time I can probably work around. I can get on my phone.

He suggested the name Konocti, which had been discussed at the meeting with Robert Geary.

Mr Montez said that all THPO's of the Lake County Tribes met regularly, and that he would ask them to consult with their tribal authorities as to whether the proposed renaming was welcome:

On the 4/11/21 Zoom:

[RM]: [I'm] Uh, Tribal Historical Preservation Officer. So I'm here to preserve our culture and our history and our language and our customs and so on. So I have a group of men that I meet with, and so I can just work through them to get the word back to their business committees, or however they're they're set up on their res to get some input on the name. I'll bring it and give it to you guys.

According to the [Press Democrat](#) : "Ron Montez, an elder with the Big Valley Band of Pomo .. was instrumental in securing support to change the name of Kelseyville from all seven tribes around the Clear Lake."

Soon after that meeting we were invited to set up an information table at the community breakfast at the Robinson Rancheria dance grounds, after the 2021 Sunrise Ceremony. We received broad support, and no opposition. Incidentally, KQED reported on that year's ceremony, referenced our activities, and quoted Kevin Engle, one of our members. ([KQED](#)).

In this process we came to believe that the name "Kelseyville" is disrespectful to Natives, and that an attempt to change it would be welcomed by them. We therefore planned a round-the-lake educational program, which we anticipated would lead to a ballot measure.

Before we launched the campaign, Mr Montez emailed us in his official capacity:

I have contacted each tribe in Lake County for their approval to change the name of the town Kelseyville to the name of Konocti and the 7 tribes are unanimously in favor of the name change to Konocti.

Ronald Montez Sr
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO)
The Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians
(email 09/09/21)

Note that the chairman of Big Valley Rancheria during the early years of our activity was the late Phil Gomez.

Our campaign kickoff at Big Valley Hall in April 2022 was attended by many Natives and Settlers. It was front-page news in the Press Democrat and Record Bee. We had only just adopted the proposed name Konocti.

The next several meetings, including Kelseyville, Lakeport and Lucerne were attended by supporters, opponents and those who came to find out about us. Many attendees signed an informal petition of support (submitted to the BGN). We had NO suggestions of a name other than "Konocti".

After our kick-off meeting, the next meeting with significant Tribal involvement was in Upper Lake, hosted by the Habematolel. This was set up by Mr Montez. Participants included at least two Natives who are now Chairmen or Vice-chairman of their tribal councils. In particular, the chairman of Robinson instructed his vice-chair, Supervisor EJ Crandell to attend.

Our collective notes indicate that nobody spoke against the proposal to change the name, nor the proposed name "Konocti".

The next meeting was held at Elem, presumably with senior tribal approval (I missed it, so have no notes).

We were then informed, at the Nov '22 meeting in Clearlake that the BGN has responsibility. Peter Windrem emphasized in a statement that this was not a "backdoor effort". [LakeCoNews](#) He officially informed county staff, who notified us. By the time we contacted the BGN our opposition had already filed an objection.

We announced this on our web page in Dec 2022: "This will be a business meeting, to discuss how to proceed now that the renaming would be done by the National Geographic Naming Committee, not by a Lake County Ballot." [C4H Dec 2022](#)

In one of our very first email communication with the BGN we ask:

We know that BGN contacts the local tribes for their input during the process. But would a proposal from one of the tribes make a stronger case? (We will be meeting with the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians this week and would like some information on this to share with him if possible.)

12/12/2022

We asked our tribal advisor to comment on some parts of our application. We filed our application with the BGN in Oct, 2023 -- over a year after we were informed of BGN's jurisdiction.

By the time our proposal was accepted and published in the [BGN case file](#) (January,2024) three Lake County Tribes had already sent letters of support:

Federally Recognized Tribes contacted under Policy X

Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians of the Big Valley Rancheria Support

Letter of Support from Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake (in which they specifically thanked us.)

[CA_KONOCI_HABEMATOLEL.PDF](#)

Subsequently all Lake County Tribes and all National Tribes have submitted formal approvals to the BGN ([NCA Resolution](#) - adopted)

After the BoS decided to hold an advisory ballot, we met with Chairman McCloud of Big Valley. He subsequently requested that the Tribes write the argument for the change, which we welcomed. We also cooperated with him on items that should be in his rebuttal to the opponents - who, incidentally, filed no rebuttal to his argument.

With the possible exception of Supervisor Crandell—who eventually voted to support our proposal—no Native has publicly opposed the renaming, in meetings such as ours, KVUSD and BoS, in person or by email.

Support for the change was clearly expressed by (then) Supervisor and Tribal Chairman Moke Simon: *Would the name change help start with the healing? ... [If] This name change happens. ... It will start the healing, whether you believe it or not, for the indigenous people in this community. It's a pure, pure yes to that question ... So yes, this name change would start the process and it's going to be a long one, but it's a .. it would absolutely start that healing that needs to happen for the Indigenous 7 nations in this county.*

Issue 4: Did the BoS correctly make its recommendation despite Advisory Measure U?

C4H opposed this ballot, calling it "*a matter of morals, not majority*".

In addition to the concept, the ballot measure was totally minimal: "*Shall the Board of Supervisors recommend approval of the proposal to change the name of the town of Kelseyville to Konocti*"

We chose not to campaign on the issue, and given the demographics, regard the 30% "yes" vote as a significant show of support.

In the end, the board decided 3-2 to support the change.

See [Measure U Page](#)

Issue 5: Are the costs relating to the name change acceptable?

For most individuals and businesses there will be no impact: The Mail will get through, even if the name of the Zip code is changed. The old and new names will be held as "overlays". so no Change of Address has to be filed.

A few businesses, such as those with Alcohol or DMV licenses may have to file a simple change of address form.

No deed, contract or any other document has to be updated.

No business or organization is required to change its name. Those that do may have to file a fictitious business name with the county.

See [Costs Page](#) (Copied inline below)

Costs

This analysis is based in part on the BGN's "Q&A" of October, 2024, and our original rebuttal of Save Kelseyville's arguments to the BGN

As noted in the Q&A, the BGN's authority extends to Federal use only, and specifically excludes the USPS, The US Census, and even local usage.

Zip Code Change

A separate application has to be made to the USPS to change the name of the Post Office ("last line") for the ZIP code.

There are three alternatives:

1. The USPS can accept the new name, in this case, "Konocti".
2. The USPS can keep the old name "Kelseyville"
3. The USPS can remove the old name, but use a different new name such as "Big Valley"

According the USPS representatives on the BGN, the old and new names would most likely both be held simultaneously as "overlays": Both will be acceptable as a mailing address. An official of the California USPS confirmed that "No change of Address is Required".

The USPS gave guidance concerning another Zip code where an "Overlay" was implemented. No change of address is required. [USPS Guide](#) Some institutions may automatically update their databases and send bills to the new address,

A few businesses (with DMV or Alcohol licensees) may have to submit a simple change-of-address form. Passport holders do NOT need to file a change of address. Registered non-citizens (such as Green Card holders) should probably submit a change of address.

Physical Addresses

A subsidiary question is then: do both addresses (Konocti and Kelseyville) serve as a "physical street address."

The answer is less definite, but probably "yes".

To the best of our knowledge, No deed, rental, will or other document needs to be changed. The Lake County Assessor routinely handles parcels at "Clear Lake Beach" (now Lucerne). The Assessor is the ultimate arbiter of physical street addresses.

An internet source says: *If you receive postal mail at your home, your residential address is a physical address and a mailing address.* (<https://www.legalzoom.com/articles/what-is-the-difference-between-a-physical-address-and-a-mailing-address>)

Shipping Companies (UPS etc) mostly use the USPS database, and will accept either.

Mapping Companies (eg Google Maps) will probably switch to the official name, but queries to the old name will be automatically redirected. For example, "Sq*** Valley CA" is now shown as "Yokuts Valley CA".

Businesses and Organizations

No business or organization is required to change its name.

If they do change, they can continue their company registrations as "Kelseyville Diner", and just file a Fictitious Business Name of "Konocti Diner". No contracts of any kind need to be changed.

The most expensive single items are probably signage on buildings and vehicles. There are only about 6 state-maintained signs on Highway 29, and even fewer county signs. Aside from the school district there are only a handful of large, expensive signs.

There is no need to repaint vehicles bearing the Kelseyville name. Perhaps one could apply a sticker "Now Konocti". And on new vehicles, for a few years, a small "Previously Kelseyville" would not be offensive.

Many businesses in Kelseyville already use "Konocti" in their name.

The opposition's claims

The opposition claims that "The expenses for updating property titles, estate plans, business licenses, rental agreements, and other legal documents would be substantial.". But despite having a lawyer as a signatory for Measure U, and the full backing of the Kelseyville Business Association, they have quoted no legal basis for their claims, and no case studies of the costs to various types of local businesses.

Emotional and Sentimental Costs

A local minister, Clovice Lewis, has specifically addressed the emotional pain to ALL parties in his talk "What's In a Name". The emotional pain to Pomo of keeping the name was the subject of our meeting in Upper Lake. Some

opponents of the change were there.

Issue 6: Was Kelseyville named after Andy Kelsey, and not some other person?

"Save Kelseyville" claim that the town name was arbitrarily assigned by the USPS in 1882 when they renamed the "Uncle Sam" post office.

But the name "Kelseyville" had been used since at least 1865. And the "Town of Kelseyville" was established in 1871 by a Lake County judge, and was used in the 1880 census.

Most historians agree that Kelsey Creek, and Kelseyville are named after Andy Kelsey.

However, "Save Kelseyville" speculates that Kelseyville is named after some later, benign Kelsey.

But the only alternative Kelsey candidates arrived in the area in 1861. As the town formed out of scattered ranches William Kelsay reportedly lobbied for his distant cousin Andy. Nor is "The Widow Kelsey" a plausible honoree.

Suggestions that Kelsey Creek was named after an early trapper "George Kelsey" appear unfounded: Fur trapper George Wyman, who lived near Sutter Fort, married Andy's sister America Kelsey. But there is no evidence that he, or any other group of trappers, was ever active in the Big Valley area.

"Kelseyville" is, and always has been, named after the evil Andy Kelsey.

See [KV Name Page](#) (Copied inline below)

Kelseyville Names

There are of course numerous Native names for the Big Valley area.

In his appeal for the Mexican land grant, Salvador Vallejo called the ranchero "Lup Yomi" ("Rock Village") and Kelsey Creek "Rio Lup Yomi", though it is not clear if that name was used contemporaneously.

American Pioneers and settlers called the area The Lake, Mister Kelsey's, Kelsey's House, Kelsey Creek and The Town of Kelsey. In legal documents it was usually Kelsey Creek Township or Kelsey. The post office was created as "Uncle Sam" in 1858. That was not used as the town name, although it did appear on maps.

Most historians agree that "Kelseyville" was named after Andrew Kelsey.

But "Save The Name" now claim that the town is not named after the evil Andy, but some later, presumably honorable, town founder. In a letter to the Record Bee, Save Kelseyville secretary Marilyn Holdenried says "The name Kelseyville is a name that was assigned to us in 1882 by the US Post Office."

"Kelsey Creek" (the stream) appears in government records as early as 1863.

Extensive research shows that the name "Kelseyville" was first used in 1865, when there were only two families of Kelseys or Kelsays in the area: William Kelsay and "The Widow Kelsey". William Kelsay lobbied for naming the emerging town after his distant cousin.

Holdenried also says that "In 1882, this area of Kelseyville was not a legal district". But the "Town of Kelseyville" was established as an assessors district by a Lake County judge, on May 6, 1871.

The specific attribution of the town name to Andy Kelsey first appears in 1873. By that time the name "Kelseyville" was in almost universal local use.

In census records of 1860 the whole of the Lake (then in Napa county) was called "Clear Lake Township": In 1870 it was "Kelsey Creek Township" and by 1800 it was "Kelseyville".

Thus the change of the name of the Post Office from Uncle Sam to Kelseyville, was not the first stamp of official approval, but the belated recognition that local and official usage had changed.

A detailed rebuttal of the "Save Kelseyville" claims is in separate documents, <https://citizensforhealing.org/stnk-knames.php> and in [Rebuttal of Marilyn Holdenried letter to the Record Bee](#).

In Jan 2025 Lake County supervisor Helen Owens suggested that Kelsey Creek was named after an early trapper in Lake County, George Kelsey -- in the 1830's (even before Vallejo).

I found two candidates concerning "George", "Kelsey", "Trapper" and "Lake County":

- There was a [George Kelsey](#), apparently the deceased husband of the "Widow Kelsey" Permelia, but he died in Missouri, in 1859 - before the Kelseys came to California.
- Another candidate is [George Francis Wyman](#), who married America Kelsey, Andy Kelsey's sister: "When George first met America, he was a fur trapper. It was the next day after her father had died of smallpox [near Sutter's Fort]. He and his friend, Joseph Buzzell, had camped near the cabin where the Kelseys lived. They had ventured into California's interior, after hearing of the vast trapping opportunities, from Jedediah Smith." None of them are reported as having come to Lake County.

Yet another possibility is that Supervisor Owens' comments refer to a different Kelsey Creek. There IS a Kelsey Creek in Josephine County, Oregon (where America went to live with her blinded mother, Susan Cozzart), and another in Siskiyou County, CA. But the association with George Wyman and "Kelsey Creek" is muddy.

Trappers in Lake County

A related question is whether there were many trappers in Lake County. Palmer (p47) speculates that the Russians may have reached Clear Lake:

In 1811 the Russo- American Fur Company established a post at Bodega, and a few years later at Fort Ross, in Sonoma County. They extended their fur hunting operations all along the coast and up the streams leading therefrom, " hunting out " the entire section very closely indeed. As the game became scarce near the coast they extended their incursions inland, and in all probability they found their way into the Clear Lake Valley. Following up Russian River they would come to the rancheria of the Sanel Indians, who, it will be remembered, are a sort of second cousin to the Hoolanapos on the west side of the lake. It would naturally follow that they would hear of the lake and pay it a visit, and, when once there, would prosecute their hunting operations in it. No direct evidences are left of their visits to these parts ...

Palmer (p46) identifies a group of hunters who built a cabin in Lake County ...

It is authentically stated that in a very early day there was a party of hunters who spent the winter in the valley near Lower Lake. They were on their way from Oregon, and instead of keeping down the Sacramento River, the usually traveled route, they had started across the mountains, heading for the old Russian settlements at Bodega and Fort Ross. The Russians had left in 1841 ...

But this is after Vallejo came to Lake County in about 1840:

Just when Salvador Vallejo took formal possession of the valley is not now known, but Augustine, chief of the Hoolanapo Indians, informs us that it was about ten years before the killing of Stone and Kelsey, which would, at least take us back to 1840.

In "Mountains and Pioneers of Lake County" Henry Mauldin Notes:

Caleb Greenwood, a trapper (whether for the Hudson Bay outfit or the Missouri fur traders, or just on his own, no one knows, in company with a couple of others, was supposed to have spent a winter around 1826 at the lower end of Clear Lake. Ewing Young and his party came by the lake in 1831.

Biographies of Greenwood do not mention such an excursion, as he was more active in the Sierras (though he lived in Lake County at the end of his life).

Of Young, Mauldin says (Lake County in the Beginning - probably also in the Mauldin files)

In 1831 Ewing Young, a great trapper and hunter, came into southern California with thirty six men. Trapping, he worked his way north and in January 1833 came from the Sacramento Valley, along the south and west shore of Clear Lake to pass on up the coast.

and continues:

During the summer of 1833 John Works party of twenty seven white men, six indians and many pack horses came over the hills from Potter Valley and camped near the upper end of Clear Lake for a day. He represented Hudson's Bay Fur Company, looking for beaver, but none were found. His comment being that the territory was well suited to beaver, but the Indians, numbering so many, probably kept them down. Then the camp was set up for two days at Kelseyville. Many deer and bear were seen, altho great numbers of tracks were in evidence no elk were found. This group of men went through the lower end of the county on their way to the Sacramento.

In short: trapping in at least the main basin of Clear Lake was poor, there was no George Kelsey, and there were not enough trappers in the area to attribute the creek name of Kelsey Creek to the hypothetical George.

Of course, the Natives Americans in the area called Kelsey Creek "Hitch bidame", and Vallejo called it Rio de LupYomi.