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## Holdenried: The Kelseyville I see

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Note: In this document I call the original inhabitants "Natives", and those who came later as "Settlers" ... a more neutral term than conquistadors (like Vallejo), or colonizers.

Here is the Kelseyville I see: When I drive over the bridge and into town, I see a town that sits at the base of Mount Konocti. I sense a vibrant community with positive energy.

Over the past several months, I have been disheartened to hear and read that there are people who have shamed the people of Kelseyville, telling us we are not a caring town because of our name. If these people, most of whom are not Kelseyville residents, were truly involved in the veryday activities of this town, they would know first-hand the incredible caring community support that is central to Kelseyville. I am sure that other communities have this support, but this is who we are today.

We (C4H) see the same vibrant community.

We think the town and community are wonderful .... but we, and the Natives of Lake County, also see a name which ... has a repulsive odor (See the Record Bee article: "A rose by another name ...")

I cannot help but wonder how people in the other Lake County communities, who are loyal to their hometowns, would feel if they were told by an outlier group that they need to change the name of their town.

In geologic terms, an "outlier" is a rock similar to others, but separated from it. In that sense, I am the same as you, but living in a nearby town. Key members of our group live and work in Kelseyville. Tribal leaders live in the Zip code.

The ultimate 'outliers' -- the Federal and State governments -- decreed that names which are derogatory, such as N\*\*\*\*\* and Sq\*\*\* WILL be changed. Thus "Sq\*\* Valley" is now "Yokuts Valley" ... and did not need to be "saved" from the change.

A name which is offensive ... such as "Evans" .. is not derogatory, but due to his historical association, was deemed by the Board on Geographic Names to be offensive. Mount Evans is now Mount Blue Sky. (That process took three years.)

Our primary goal is to remove the offensive name "K\*\*\*\*\*". A Native speaker at our Upper Lake meeting (which you attended) said "any name but K\*\*\*\*\*". However, any Native name needs tribal approval: all seven tribes approved "Konocti".

We have been told that we not only need to change the name of our town, but that a new name has been chosen for us without any input from the citizens of our town. This is just plain wrong.

At some of our early round-the-county meetings (particulary, Lakeport) opponents of the change were asked for alternative names. Their answer was "Kelseyville for ever!"

We reached out to the community, including people who are KBA members, some of who attended meetings. We announced our main meetings in the local press. Our mailing list c4h@groups.io is open to anyone, including opponents to the change.

At the July BOS meeting on Measure-U we proposed that the advisory ballot should solicit alternative names. Ignored.

Any individual or organization can propose alternative names to the BGN. You can propose another name (To honor another settler, I recommend Reeves.)

At the January 2025 BoS meeting "Save Kelseyville" Chair-person Rachel White stated that you indeed knew how to propose a different name, but would not even consider doing so.

In Kelseyville, I see volunteers in organizations, churches, schools and the business community who continually pull together to make this a caring town. I have seen the local 4Hers plant daffodils on Main Street and at Ely Stage Stop; I have seen Scouts post the American flags on the bridges and all along Main Street on patriotic holidays. Those flags were donated by Kelseyville organizations.

I see volunteers at the churches packing bags of groceries and handing them up twice a month. I see parents giving incredible extra hours to support the school activities. I see parents and teachers who coach our children and serve as leaders of youth organizations. I see the Kelseyville Lions' Club serve breakfasts to benefit local organizations. I see the Kelseyville Sunrise Rotary Club donate to local charities and mentor high school youth.

The five successful major events that are presented annually on Main Street are a tribute to the energy and dedication of the many Kelseyville community volunteers. These events celebrate the people of our town and open their arms to visitors. These annual events, plus the summer street dances, bring thousands of people to our town. Tourism is alive and well here.

All of us in C4H have participated in local activities. I have marched in the Pear Festival Parade, served at the dinner, and danced in the streets. Friends have businesses there.

There are no dark clouds here.

Really? (But I'm glad you read Lorna's cover letter to the BGN: "The one dark cloud hanging over this country town is that it is named for Andy Kelsey. As you read the history it will become clear to you just how evil he was. ")

The name Kelseyville is a name that was assigned to us in 1882 by the US Post Office.

It wasn't assigned by the Post Office, which just caught up with local usage. Read on.

Two years ago, I spent several hours reading and researching the minutes of the Lake County Board of Supervisors from 1880 to 1882.

I could not find one mention of a motion or a statement of who made the decision to change the name of this town from Uncle Sam to Kelseyville.

That history is too late a period: the critical history concerning the name does not start in 1882, it ends there. And key records were lost when the courthouse burned in 1867.

In 1882, this area of Kelseyville was not a legal district.

Yes it was: The "Town of Kelseyville" was established as an assessors district by a Lake County judge, on May 6, 1871.

"Public Notice is hereby given that the Plat and Field notes of the Town of KELSEYVILLE, was this day filed in the office of the County Recorder of Lake County, State of California ..."

Upon further research and in his obituary, I learned that John S. Kelsey arrived in this valley as a small child with his parents, William Henry and Annie Laurie Kelsey in 1872. After his father died in 1873, he was raised by his grandparents, Jack and Emma Jones Kelsey, who had arrived in 1873.

In all of the years of this community, there has never been a time, event or a mention of honoring Andrew Kelsey. It is a name that was assigned to us.

Toponyms of 'Andy Kelsey' have been used continuously for the creek, the area, and the town since at least 1863. No other name such as 'Uncle Sam' was used locally, and there were no other viable 'Kelsey' candidates for the town name.

William Kelsay, who settled in 1861, lobbied for naming the town after his distant cousin Andy. The name "Kelseyville" was chosen by pioneers, and was first used in print in 1865: "... in Kelseyville, in front of Leech's building, over Uncle Sam's Post Office ..."

There are, in fact, many legal documents using the 'Kelsey' name prior to 1882. Census records, deeds, precincts, and voters rolls.

I talked to Rachel White at the Mexican Independence day festival. She said Kelsey Creek is named for Andy Kelsey ... but Kelseyville isn't!

An 1873 article in the Lakeport Bee: *Mr S[tarkey] informed us that he visited this valley in the spring of 1848' and states 'Mr Kelsey, after whom the creek and town are named, was then the only American settled in Clear Lake valley, and resided in an adobe house about a mile or less from where the town of Kelseyville stands. ... Subsequently Kelsey was killed by the Indians. '*

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

We have never allowed the actions of this man to define who we are.

You surely know by now that the name "Kelsey" is offensive to Natives.

You are now defined by preferring to stick with Andy Kelsey as a tainted brand name, rather than make a gesture of reconciliation to the Natives.

I believe the name came as an evolution of naming names. This was an historic practice in communities across this nation. In this town there are many streets that carry the name of early settlers. In the Kelseyville Riviera there are many streets that carry Indigenous names.

It was named after the first American settler - ignoring Vallejo, of course. And ignoring the names of villages in the area, like Habenapo. But other towns, initially named after early settlers, changed their names. Forbes to Lakeport, Grant to Lower Lake. Only a few remain - Cobb, Buckingham, Jago Bay (none of whom committed atrocities)... and Kelseyville.

Indigenous names like Chippewa, Pawnee, Cheyenne, Montezuma? And Kah Bel Trail. An honor, or cultural appropriation?

This community acknowledges the early history and importance of the Native Americans to this land. We hear their stories. Their stories are important. The pioneer families who came into this valley in the late 1800s to live and work this land also have their stories that are important. Let's get together and share our stories.

You heard their stories at our meeting in Upper Lake: that the name "Kelseyville" is like "a wound infected for years".

And were you not at the July 2024 BoS meeting?

*Good morning. Morning. My name is Myron Holdenried. I'm a resident of Kelseyville. Will changing the name really heal all the problems? Thank you.*

*Supervisor Simon: Yeah ... Myron Holdenried. So you asked the question as you walked away. 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. OK, I just wanted the answer. You asked it. I wanted to give you my answer. ... 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.*

You heard. But you still think your brand name is more important. In short, we think you are "not caring."

The name Kelsey is NOT a derogatory or offensive name.

See above for the distinction.

Who decides if a name is offensive? The one saying it, or the one who is offended?

The history with Andrew Kelsey is offensive and should be placed in its historical context. He was only here for two years, from his arrival in 1847 to his death in 1849. He was not here for years and years.

But the legacy of the Kelsey brothers' atrocities lives on. The cavalry (sent to "Exterminate, if possible, the Tribe"). The broken treaty, the allocation of over 99% of their land to homesteaders. The virtual slavery through the "Act for the Government and Protection of Indians" (living Natives remember that their great-uncles had to carry papers to prove that they were 'owned'.) The request by "people of lake county" to have all remaining "Indians" relocated to Round Valley. The loss of 99% of their population to European diseases. (Yes, settlers died too, but there was always another wagon, never another village.)

The "historical context" for commemorating Kelsey is at his crypt, not in a town name.

Texans remember the Alamo. Pomo remember the Kelseys.

The name Konocti is not a name that our community has chosen. Konocti is the name of the mountain that stands tall in the center of Lake County.

The name "Konoclti" has been suggested as an alternative since at least 2007.

Shasta is the town under Mount Shasta. Rainier and Mount Rainier. San Jacinto and Mount San Jacinto ....  
Konocti and Mount Konocti.

Please vote NO on Measure U.

C4H as an organization is not campaigning for this measure. But I think you can guess how we hope people will vote.

A full rebuttal of the "Save The Name" position on the names of the town is on our website at <https://citizensforhealing.org/stnk-knames.php>

And, yes : I would be ashamed to live in a town named for Andy Kelsey. And proud to live in Sikom, if the town of Lucerne were renamed.