

Rebuttal to "The Name Kelsey" published by "Save The Name Of Kelseyville"

Alan Fletcher, June 16, 2024, in support of changing "Kelseyville" to "Konocti".

Summary

Around May 7, 2024 the group "Save The Name of Kelseyville" (now morphed to "Save Kelseyville") created a new website. www.savekelseyville.com, and modified it in early June.

Their home page does admit that the Kelseys were evil people, and their "About" page is similar to their previous statements, which I have already rebutted.

But they have a new page, "The Name Kelsey", which claims that the the town of Kelseyville and it's various previous names like Kelsey Creek are apparently different places and are not, after all, named for the evil Andy, but after some fine fellow who happens to bear the same name.

They suggest a string of minor Kelseys: a William who came in 1861, and a Burton who first shows up in records of 1867, who, they claim, got the very first land patent in the county in 1866 (Wrong!) They do not consider that, if the area didn't already have a name, the pioneers would have honored one of their earliest arrivals, like Gaddy or Reeves.

They also suggest that the current name sprang out of nowhere in 1882 (through the belated renaming of the Post Office), and constituted the town's first legal existence.

So I set out to research census, government and newspaper records for the period.

First, I found recorded uses of the name Kelsey Creek in 1863, and of Kelseyville in 1866. That rather cramps their choice of "good" Kelseys.

The name 'Kelsey Creek' was used in the 1863 Statutes of California: 'Kelsey Creek Division' in the 1870 census constituted a 'legal document, official proclamation, or federal documentation'. And 'Kelseyville' was then used in the 1880 census.

But then I struck gold! The town of Kelseyville was legally established by a Lake County Judge! *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 ... Witness my hand at Chambers, in the town of Lakeport, this the 6th day of May A.D. 1871 J. B. HOLLAWAY, County Judge.*

In short, I have established that eponyms of 'Andy Kelsey' have been used continuously, that no other name such as 'Uncle Sam' was used locally, that there were no other viable 'Kelsey' candidates for the town name, and that there are, in fact, many legal documents using the 'Kelsey' name prior to 1882. 'Kelseyville' is, and always has been, named after the evil Andy Kelsey.

Text in Orange is by "Save Kelseyville".

Please note that historical documentation shows the spelling of Kelsey and Kelsay used interchangeably. Spelling variations of the surname Kelsey include Kelso, Kellsay, Kilsey, Kelcy, and Kelsy, among others.

Please note that the historical documentation of the eponymous location "Kelsey" is used in many contexts, with variations such as Kelsey's House, Kelsey Creek (both the river and the populated place), Kelsey Creek Division, Kelsey Creek Precinct, Town of Kelsey, Kelsey, Kelseytown and, indeed, Kelseyville, which are often used interchangeably.

[Note : I moved this element of their response to the top of the list].

It was in 1882 that the name of Kelseyville was officially designated to the current geographical area.

Wrong: The post office was renamed from 'Uncle Sam' to 'Kelseyville' in 1882. USPS names are independent of any other bodies, including the Census. . SN has presented no evidence that the use of 'Kelseyville' for local government was changed in any way in 1882. The BGN applied the name only in 1921.

There is no legal document, official proclamation, or federal documentation to name the town of Kelseyville.

Misleading: the legal use of Kelsey eponyms is well documented, such as an election nominating "Kelsey Creek" for the county seat in 1867, and 'Kelsey Creek Division' in the 1870 Census.

Wrong: The 1880 Census pages are headed "Kelseyville Precinct ~~Lakeport Township~~"

Very, Very Wrong (though this is new information I have just discovered.)

Kelseyville was legally created on May 6, 1871:

Notice to Property Owners

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, and all persons, companies, corporations and other claimants claiming land in said town are hereby notified to apply to the County Judge of said county, and file their application for said land, and pay the amounts of assessments as required by law within 6 months from the date of this notice. All lands not applied for, and assessments not paid in the time above required, will be entered by said county judge as delinquent, and, after thirty days notice, shall be sold at public auction. Witness my hand at Chambers, in the town of Lakeport, this the 6th day of May A.D. 1871 J. B. HOLLAWAY, County

Judge.
(ap13-4w.)

The supposition that the name was specifically named after Andrew Kelsey, who resided in the area from 1847 to 1849, is speculation.

Not even Wrong (to quote a sceptical physicist): The Kelsey name was notorious from San Francisco, to Sacramento, and up to Oregon.

An 1873 article in the Lakeport Avalanche regard Andy Kelsey as the namesake.

Most of the later pioneers (1853 and on) came through Napa, and would surely have been told about the whole Kelsey saga.

The alternative speculation is that the names of Andy Kelsey and his brothers had been forgotten by 1863. That would be like forgetting, today, that Barrack Obama ran for president 17 years ago.

William Kelsey arrived in 1861,

Are they suggesting the town and creek are named after him? We then have to 'speculate' how a settlement of 73 pioneer families decide - by 1863 - to name a creek after a minor newcomer, just two years after he arrives. And then that in 1866 some 500 families start using this newcomer's name in 'Kelseyville', despite the fact that said William Kelsey did not even live in the new 'Kelsey Creek Division', but in the wider 'Big Valley' area. If the settlement had no name, would they not have named it after a pioneer like Gaddy, Reeves or one of a dozen others.

and from then on, many Kelseys populated the county.

Indeed, they came in flocks. (Mary Nobles).

Twenty-one years, 1849 to 1882, elapsed between Andrew Kelsey's death and the naming of Kelseyville.

Wrong. Their arithmetic is as good as their logic. That's Thirty-Three years.

But counting from the death of Kelsey to the first use of 'Kelseyville' in 1866, is Seventeen years. Which is rather a short time for forgetting the Kelseys.

Any direct connection between the name of Kelseyville and Andrew Kelsey is without foundation.

Wrong: The eponym 'Kelsey' has been used from at least 1848 until today, without interruption. (The area itself was never called Uncle Sam: that was the mountain and the post office, not the town, though it did appear on some maps. Local newspapers from 1871 on only refer to 'Kelseyville'.)

Wikipedia, the BGN case file, two 1873 sources and numerous other documents make the connection. Are they all unfounded?

The only other source for the name would be one of only three minor Kelsey families in Clear Lake between 1861 and 1866. None of these are likely to be honorees for a creek and town name.

Any attempt to sever the name of the Kelsey brothers from Kelsey Creek and Kelseyville is preposterous at best, and delusional at worst.

Please review the timeline. The research references are cited.

Incomplete: Their research sources are cited. Only two references (source and page number, or a link to a document) are given: the 1860 census and Burton Kelsey's 1874 land patent . They refer to, but don't provide a link to, a key map.

The following table contains detailed responses with links.

1	• YYYY	Timeline as presented by SK	Link
2		Comments by AF/C4H	
3	• YYYY	Timeline as augmented by AF/C4H	

4	• 1841	Nancy Kelsey, wife of Ben, is the first white woman to travel across the county over the Sierra Nevada into California	
5	• 1846	Bear Flag Revolt, Nancy helps make the Bear Flag	
6		Really? Are you suggesting that Kelseyville ia named after her?	
7	• 1847-	Andrew Kelsey lived in the area ...	
8	• 1848	The Mexican-American War ceded Alta California to the United States as a Territory	
9	• 1849	within two miles of Mr. Kelsey's house ... about twelve miles from Mr. Kelsey's	Alta California 15 November, 1849
10	• -1849	until his death	
11	• 1850	murdering Andrew Kelsey and a Mr. Stone, who were residing at 'The Lake.'	Daily Pacific News 30 May 1850
12	• 1850	Ever since the murder of Andrew Kelsey at the Clear Lake by the Indians	Daily Alta California 11 March 1850
13	• 1850	California becomes a state	
14	• 1853	The first house in the county (outside of that built by Stone and Kelsey), was built by Robert Gaddy, now living near the mouth of Kelsey Creek, by Charles Ferguson, and C. N. Copsy, in 1853, and was a log cabin.	Palmer 63

15	• 1854	Mary Nobles (Reeves) We were the first family to come into Big Valley. The Hammachs and the Reeves arrived in lower lake about the same time, but the Hammacks stayed there a day or two to make repairs on their wagon, while the Reeves came on ahead. The only other Americans were the cattlemen Robert Gaddy ... and Tucker	Mauldin 871-889 William and Mary Nobles / Wolfe
16	• 1854	Nobles: Father took up 160 acres ... But before the [Vallejo] case was settled, American farmers were allowed to file claims under the 'Squatters' Rights Law', and that's what father had to do right away. Within a week after he came into the valley, he had to leave mother and four young children camping in a strange land of bears and indians, and go to Napa to file claim.	
17	• 1857	The first settlers here were of course, Stone and Kelsey, but it was long after their day before any idea of locating a town here was had by the citizens of that section. The first business place was opened here by a blacksmith by the name of Benham, who opened a shop here in 1857, and he had associated with him a wagon maker named German. No other place of business was begun until 1864, when T. F. Fall opened a store, which was the pioneer in that line. <hr/> No other Kelesys are mentioned.	Palmer 63
18	• 1858	Uncle Sam post office is established in what is now Kelseyville, the oldest town in Lake County	
19		Palmer: 'To this township [Big Valley] belongs the honor of having the first settlement in the county', but not necessarily the oldest town.	Palmer 161
20	• 1860	U.S. Census had no Kelseys listed in the Uncle Sam Post office, and there was no reference to Kelsey, Kelsey Creek, or Kelseyville	1860 Census
21		Misleading: Towns and adresses were not recorded, just a 'residence number' and a 'family number'. Since families had many children, it is better to compare data using the number of residences. There were 72 residences in the Uncle Sam PO, and no Kelseys. The census refers to the whole area, then part of Napa County, as 'Clear Lake Township' -- where 'Township' would be equivalent to the modern 'Supervisors District'.	
22	• 1861	Lake County Formed	
23	• 1861	Nobles: Finally, in 1861, we settled permanently in Kelseyville. But there wasn't any town then. Everybody lived on farms and raised stock. Father did a thriving business shoeing horses and mending farm machinery.	
24	• 1861	William Kelsey arrived in the area	
25		Correct. He shows up first in the 1870 census in the Big Valley (not Kelsey Creek) division under Uncle Sam PO, but appears in no other records.	
26	• 1861-1865	US Civil War. Lake county was probably not heavily involved.	

27	• 1863	State School Fund, —Tne following is the semi-annual apportionment of the State School Fund, for the counties of Napa and Lake. ... Kelsey Creek, 58 ch.. \$33.64 The school was not located near present day Kelseyville, but at Hell's Bend of Kelsey Creek.	Napa County Reporter 28 November, 1963
28	• 1863	thence South to the line between Ormiston and the widow Kelsey ; thence East to the gate on Ormiston's Eastern line ; Thence on or near the old road as it now runs,.to Kelsey Creek; thence across said Creek at the most suitable point near the present, with leave of suitable deviation to its intersection with the county road al J. H. Jamison's The reference is to Kelsey Creek, and the 'widow Kelsey' is presumably the 'Mrs P.' in the 1870 census	Napa County Reporter 3 January 1863
29	• 1865	.. in Kelseyville, in front of Leech's building, over Uncle Sam's Post Office This is the first use of 'Kelseyville' that I have found. This gathering marked the end of the civil war: 'The rebel portion of the community stood off at a proper distance with lowering countenances, which plainly indicated a hopeless cause.'	Sacramento Daily Union 18, April 1865
30	• 1865	Kelsey creek becoming furiously rampant	Sacramento Daily Union 11 December, 1865
31	• 1865	(Election) For county seat - Kelsey Creek	Statutes of California, 1863 p97
32	• 1865	Stagecoaches listed for Upper Lake to Napa: Upper Lake, Lakeport, Kelsey Creek, Lower Lake	Guide Book to the Pacific
33	• 1866	we came to the little town of Kelseyville ... There is a hotel. and a law office, a doctor's office, a public square, and a good place to ford Kelsey creek ..	Russian River Flag 31 January, 1866
34	• 1866	until I arrived at the banks of Kelsey creek. Having no means of crossing I took dog ferriage by wading it; and being near a town of the same name-- I entered it, a perfect stranger to the inhabitants thereof-- ... The little town of Kelsey is situated on the Napa road, and contains ten or twelve houses. The places of business being closed, my efforts to obtain information on the subject which had so engrossed my attention proved fruitless; This is an early description of the newly-forming town of 'Kelsey Creek' or 'Kelsey' - or possibly 'Kelseyville'	Russian River Flag, 14 March, 1866
35	• 1866	First recorded land deed to Burton Kelsey	Deed
36		Wrong. The deed is clearly dated October 16, 1874. Deeds were suspended due both to the McKee Treaty, and Vallejos's claim to Lup Yomi. Palmer: L 45 After many and vexatious delays, the matter came up for final hearing before Judge Ogden Hoflman, in September, 1866, who rendered the decision quoted above. This gave eminent	

		satisfaction to the settlers, who met at Lakeport October 6, 1866, for the purpose of having a good jollification over the triumph of their cause. The land was surveyed, and entered up in the regular way, and each man secured his home ; and the work of the former years had not gone for naught, nor been charged up against them as so much added value to their places, for which they must pay or leave.	
37	• 1867	The courthouse burned, and all county records were lost.	
38	• 1867	Burton Kelsey is shown as a registered voter in 'Lakeport'. Several other Kelseys in Lakeport, Kelsey and Lower Lake are registered with the same date, 25 April, 1867	Great Register of Lake County p10
39	• 1867	Pacific Business Directory. Mentions 'Kelseytown' and 'Kelseyville', but identifies three businesses as '(Kelsey Creek)', implying that the town and creek names had started to be individuated.	Directory
40	• 1868	four miles beyond Kelseyville	
41	• 1868	Kelsey Creek appeared on a U.S. map	
42		The river, or the populated place? That is not remarkable for the river. When did Adobe Creek appear? Morse's 1845 map doesn't know of Lake County at all. Vallejo's map shows only 'Rio de Lup Yomi' for Kelsey Creek, 'Rio' for Middle Creek, and 'Discharge from the Lake' for Cache Creek. Colton's 1856 shows the position of the lake and of Cache and Putah creeks. Details emerge slowly: one shows Cache and Putah both draining from the Lake. Weber's 1918 map shows Kelsey and Cache creek emerging into separate mouths, which they did not between 1820 and about 1960. Road maps alternate between 'Uncle Sam' and 'Kelseyville'.	
43	• 1870	U.S. census for Lake County listed 9 Kelseys: 4 in the Big Valley area and 5 in the Kelsey Creek division	
44		There were 279 dwellings in 'Kelsey Creek' and 406 in 'Big Valley' - all under the Uncle Sam PO. That's 684 total. There was one Kelsey family in Kelsey Creek (Mrs P, probably Permilia) and one in Big Valley (William)	
45	• 1870	Census shows Burton Kelsey as living in Upper Lake.	
46	• 1871	First map for the Town of Kelsey was filed with the county recorder	
47		Close, but no cigar. SK historians fail to understand its significance ----	
48	• 1871	J. H. Goldsmith .. Editor Judge W, C, Wallace has appointed the LAKEPORT AVALANCHE as the paper in which all the legal and official advertising in and for Lake county shall be published, in accordance with an 'Act to Protect Litigants.' All advertisements required by law to be published must appear in the AVALANCHE. Palmer, pp 179-180 is not aware of this paper.	Lakeport Avalanche May 13, 1871
49	• 1871	Notice to Property Owners 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, and all persons, companies,	Lakeport Avalanche May 13, 1871

	<p>corporations and other claimants claiming land in said town are hereby notified to apply to the County Judge of said county, and file their application for said land, and pay the amounts of assessments as required by law within 6 months from the date of this notice. All lands not applied for, and assessments not paid in the time above required, will be entered by said county judge as delinquent, and, after thirty days notice, shall be sold at public auction.</p> <p>Witness my hand at Chambers, in the town of Lakeport, this the 6th day of May A.D. 1871 J. B. HOLLAWAY, County Judge. (ap13-4w.) [Transcribed by AF]</p>	
50	<p>So there you have it. The legal founding of the Town of Kelseyville, 6th May, 1871: 'the Plat and Field notes of the Town of KELSEYVILLE, was this day filed in the office of the County Recorder'. And according to the 1870 census, there are only three minor Kelseys in the county, none of whom merit being honored with a town name.</p>	
51	<p>• 1871 Josiah Smith, of Kelseyville, (Uncle Sam Post Office)</p> <hr/> <p>Another reference indicating that nobody local used the post office name for the town.</p> <hr/> <p>As a general comment, having searched the Lakeport Avalanche (April-August 1871) and the Lakeport Bee (1873-1882), the town is almost always referred to as 'Kelseyville'. Most stagecoach companies continue to identify the stop as 'Kelsey Creek'. Otherwise, the use of 'Kelsey' or 'Kelsey Creek' is mostly in the context of the 'Kelsey Creek Precinct' or 'Kelsey Creek Division'. None of these mention 'Uncle Sam' at all.</p>	
52	<p>• 1873 This refers to Kelseyville throughout.</p>	<p>Menefee Historical and Descriptive Sketchbook of Napa, Sonoma, Lake 1873</p>
53	<p>• 1873 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. '</p> <hr/> <p>This is the earliest record I have found that specifically identifies [Andy] Kelsey as the honoree. Interestingly, the owner of the copy saw fit to highlight it as important.</p>	<p>Lake County Bee 19 April, 1873</p>
54	<p>• 1874 Burton Kelsey patented land</p>	
55	<p>This is the actual date of the patent quoted above as 1866. It also appears in the California Land Records. And there are many earlier patents such as R. Hammach in 1871.</p>	<p>CA Land Records 14 Mar 1874</p>
56	<p>• 1880 Census pages are headed "Kelseyville Precinct Lakeport Township". The 'KV' section I examined is interleaved with 'Lakeport', and only shows 35 dwellings. There are probably other interleaved sections.</p>	<p>1880 Census</p>

		Note that this is now listed as 'Supervisors Ditriect 3rd', rather than 'Big Valley Township', so a local government change has also happened.	
57	• 1880	An 'Indian' Augustine, wife Jessie, and several children are listed under 'Lakeport' - which might be the 'Big Valley Mission'	1880 Census
58	• 1882	Area Designated Kelseyville	
59		Wrong: The Uncle Sam Post Office was renamed to Kelseyville. This has no direct effect on the name used by the Census, of local government or even residents. Since the town name had been evolving to 'Kelseyville' over 17 years the USPS was rather tardy. The name 'Town of Kelseyville' was used legally by the county in 1871. In this same timeframe the mountain had also reverted to 'Konocti' (with various spellings such as 'Co noke ti'), so nobody was using 'Uncle Sam'.	
60	•	... Flocks of Kelseys omitted : they all came after the first uses of 'Kelseyville' in 1865/6 and are therefore unlikely candidates as a town-name honoree.	
61	• 1888	The residents of 'District 5' voted to incorporate 'Kelseyville'.	

Sources and Comments

To ensure that my comments reflect the web page at the time of writing, I have archived it at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20240615200934/https://www.savekelseyville.com/> (June 14/15 2024")

Sources

In addition to our main [Sources](#) this document draws mostly from:

[Center for Bibliographical Studies and Research \(CBSR\)](#) (Free registration required). Many California papers, particularly Napa, but none from Lake County.

<https://www.genealogybank.com> (Pay site) has a selection of early Lake County newspapers, including the Lakeport Avalanche and Lakeport Bee.

<https://www.familysearch.org/> (Free registration required) In addition to genealogical and census data, it has the California Great Register and Land Records

[Palmer](#) (This online copy has a good search capability)

Note that in this document we are using very long URL's, so that search terms are highlighted. The print version does not show the links.

Some maps are listed in [Map Index](#)