

CA_KONOCTI_STNK-NAME-KELSEY_REBUT_V3.pdf submitted by Alan Fletcher / C4H

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

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

V3 : Edited May 9, 2025.

[A couple of links have rotted -- some sites require free registration, others are subscription only.]

Summary

This document was originally on Save Kelseyville's (SK) web page, [The Name Kelsey](#), and was included in their Dec 2024 proposal to the BGN.

They claim 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. (This opinion has appeared in various articles and letters.)

They suggest as alternative honorees 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. But William Kelsay lobbied for his distant cousin, Andy, and apparently won. The name 'Kelseyville' was chosen by the early settlers.

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.

There is a recorded use of the name Kelsey Creek in 1863. And 'Kelseyville' was first used in 1865. 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. The renaming of the Post Office was not the 'federal stamp of approval' -- it simply reflects the fact that 'Uncle Sam' was never (well, hardly ever) used as the town name, and that 'Mount Uncle Sam' had reverted to 'Konocti'.

The town of Kelseyville was in fact 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, eponyms of 'Andy Kelsey' have been used continuously, no other name such as 'Uncle Sam' was used locally, and there were no other viable 'Kelsey' candidates for the town name. Their favorite, William Kelsay, lobbied for naming the town after his distant cousin Andy. 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".

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, but we show later than the USPS was just catching up with local and official usage. 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, 'Kelsey Creek Division' in the 1870 Census. and "Kelseyville Precinct Lakeport Township" in the 1880 Census.

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.

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

The Kelsey name was notorious from San Francisco, to Sacramento, and up to Oregon.

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.

William Kelsey arrived in 1861,

William KelsAy lobbied for naming the town after his cousin. Or 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 1865 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).

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

Interesting. They originally miscalculated Twenty-two years, and have updated it to include my rebuttal.

But counting from the death of Kelsey to the first use of 'Kelseyville' in 1865, is Sixteen 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 toponym '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 refer to 'Kelseyville'.)

The only other source for the name would be one of the three minor Kelsey families in Clear Lake between 1861 and 1865. 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.

The name of the post office called Uncle Sam, in Lake county, Cal., is changed to Kelseyville.

[Commentary: The Weekly Calistogian Wed, Oct 11, 1882](#) (Paywalled)

When the officials in Washington concluded to name the post office at Kelseyville Uncle Sam, we are told that the citizens of the town did not take kindly to the name, and have persistently refused to call the place after the post-office name, generally dating their letters, etc., at Kelseyville. Now, after several years, the order has been made at Washington that the name be change [sic] to Kelseyville, which fact is no doubt pleasing to the people there.

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 they 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	• 1852	California's special census of 1852 has no records for the Clear Lake area. Ben Kelsey and family are listed as living in Napa.	
15	• 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. Copsey, in 1853, and was a log cabin.	Palmer 63
16	• 1854	Mary (Reeves) Nobles 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
17	• 1854	Mary (Reeves) 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.	
18	• 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. No other Kelesys are mentioned.	Palmer 63
19	• 1858	Uncle Sam post office is established in what is now Kelseyville, the oldest town in Lake County	
20		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
21	• 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
22		Misleading: Towns and addresses 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'.	
23	• 1861	Lake County Formed	
24	• 1861	William 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.	
25	• 1861	William Kelsey arrived in the area	
26		William Kelsay shows up first in the 1870 census in the Big Valley (not Kelsey Creek) division under Uncle Sam PO. 1850: Barthena https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M65M-SRQ https://www.geni.com/people/William-Kelsay/6000000001504499788	
27	• 1861	KELSEY vs KELSAY IN THE ANNALS OF LAKE COUNTY by Roy M. Sylar [undated, but added in 1976] Seldom does the substitution of a single letter present the opportunity to upset the record as does the 'a' and 'e' in the names of Kelsey and Kelsay, both prominent in the early Lake County history The KELSAY name was introduced when William and Barthena Harmon Kelsay ... permanently settled in Lake County in 1861. It was through the influence of the Kelsays that the growing village of Uncle Sam was renamed 'Kelseyville' in honor of their Kelsey cousins. Mauldin 8301-41 'widow' Permilia Kelsay was also in the Harriman party.	Rootsweb

		William and Barthena Kelsay (1850), become W & Paichena KelsEy (1860) and W & Parthencia (1870)	
28	• 1861-1865	US Civil War. Lake county was probably not heavily involved.	
29	• 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, 1863
30	• 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
31	• 1864	(Election) For county seat - Kelsey Creek	Statutes of California, 1863-1864 p97
32	• 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
33	• 1865	Kelsey creek becoming furiously rampant	Sacramento Daily Union 11 December, 1865
34	• 1865	Stagecoaches listed for Upper Lake to Napa: Upper Lake, Lakeport, Kelsey Creek, Lower Lake	Guide Book to the Pacific
35	• 1866	Lake County. — The Clear Lake Journal has the following : .. We understand that the citizens of Kelsey Creek intend presenting the claims of that town for the county seat to the Legislature ... The two names are used interchangeably.	Sacramento Daily Union, Volume 30, Number 4632, 26 January 1866
36	• 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
37	• 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.	Russian River Flag, 14 March, 1866

		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'	
38	• 1866	First recorded land deed to Burton Kelsey	Deed
39		Wrong. The deed is clearly dated October 16, 1874.	
		Issuing of 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.	
40	• 1867	The courthouse burned, and all county records were lost.	
41	• 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
42	• 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
43	• 1868	four miles beyond Kelseyville	
44	• 1868	Kelsey Creek appeared on a U.S. map	
45		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'.	
46	• 1870	U.S. census for Lake County listed 9 Kelseys: 4 in the Big Valley area and 5 in the Kelsey Creek division	
47		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)	
48	• 1870	Census shows Burton Kelsey as living in Upper Lake.	
49	• 1871	First map for the Town of Kelsey was filed with the county recorder	
50		They provide no link - but see the next sections. Was the map actually labelled the Town of Kelseyville?	

51	• 1871	<p>J. H. Goldsmith .. Editor</p> <p>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.</p> <hr/> <p>Palmer, pp 179-180 is not aware of this paper.</p>	Lakeport Avalanche May 13, 1871
52	• 1871	<p>Notice to Property Owners</p> <hr/> <p>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.</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.</p> <p>(ap13-4w.) [Transcribed by AF]</p>	Lakeport Avalanche May 13, 1871
53		<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>	
54	• 1871	<p>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>	
55	• 1873	<p>This refers to Kelseyville throughout.</p>	Menefee Historical and Descriptive Sketchbook of Napa, Sonoma, Lake 1873
56	• 1873	<p>'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</p>	Lake County Bee 19 April, 1873

		house about a mile or less from where the town of Kelseyville stands. ... Subsequently Kelsey was killed by the Indians. '.	
		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.	
57	• 1874	Burton Kelsey patented land	
58		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.	CA Land Records 14 Mar 1874
59	• 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. Note that this is now listed as 'Supervisors Ditriect 3rd', rather than 'Big Valley Township', so a local government change has also happened.	1880 Census
60	• 1880	An 'Indian' Augustine, wife Jessie, and several children are listed under 'Lakeport' - which might be the 'Big Valley Mission'	1880 Census
61	• 1882	Area Designated Kelseyville	
62		Wrong: The Uncle Sam Post Office was renamed to Kelseyville, to reflect then-current local and official usage.	
63	• 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](#)