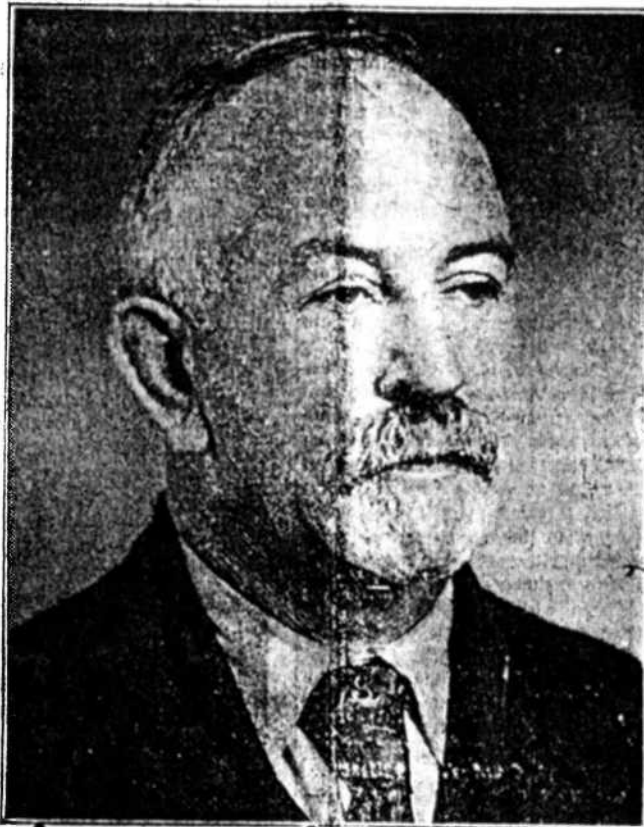


The Willits News

PUBLISHED ON THE REDWOOD HIGHWAY

WILLITS, MENDOCINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, OCTOBER 6, 1922

MEN ALL SHOULD KNOW



WILLIAM HENRY BAECHTEL
Vice-President and Cashier of Bank of Willits

W. H. Baechtel is a native of Willits, having been born one mile south of here at the old Baechtel ranch on the Redwood Highway, March 25, 1866.

Mr. Baechtel's father came from Maryland to California in the year 1855 and settled in Mendocino county.

Will Baechtel has lived practically his whole life in the vicinity of Willits, he, with his two brothers, Gordon and Luther, having received his early education at the old school house which once stood near the Little Lake cemetery not far distant from the old Sawyer home.

In 1884 Mr. Baechtel entered the old Layton Springs College, which is located half way between Healdsburg and Geyserville. In 1886 he completed the prescribed course, having done four years' work in less than three years. He then returned to Willits.

At that time Mr. Baechtel states that there was very little of the modern Willits. There were three stores, a merchandise establishment which was located where the Willits News now stands, one where the present Irvine & Muir store stands, and the other on the vacant lot opposite the Toggery. All of these buildings were destroyed later.

The town had its saloons, too, scattered here and there. One was near the stand of Frank Corbett's place, another where Geo. Thom's place is located and a third across from the present Willits News office. These were the main attractions for the mountaineers who came to town every week-end. In those days, according to Mr. Baechtel, many men held the impression that the more authority one could show in the saloon and the more property he could destroy on Saturday night, the more he was to be respected. This was true mostly of the ranchers and the mountaineers. It was only a little demonstration of manhood for a "buster" to ride his horse into the saloon through the front door, remain as long as he wished, then ride out.

In 1887, Mr. Baechtel went to San Rafael, where he remained until the following year, at which time he returned to Willits. He entered the employment of the then Irvine & Muir Co., in which his father, Sam Baechtel, held an interest. A short time later the Baechtels bought the Muir interest in the store and conducted the business under the name of Standard Commercial Co.

In 1896 the store was sold to Irvine, but Mr. Baechtel continued to work with Irvine, straightening the books, etc., until 1898.

At this time Will Baechtel, along with his brother Luther, and Will Felton, caught the "Klondike fever." The three left for Alaska the same year, remaining there until 1899.

In 1901 the Baechtel brothers leased the Eden Valley ranch which they held until 1903.

On May 2, 1904, the Bank of Willits opened its doors for business with Will Baechtel as cashier and treasurer of that institution. He became secretary of the organization in the year 1910 and vice-president a short time ago.

Mr. Baechtel was town treasurer for a number of years. His other responsibilities, however, were so increased later that he was forced to resign.

At the present time he is vice-president of the First National Bank of Willits.

Mr. Baechtel is one of the foremost men of the town, always assisting in pushing our community along at every opportunity. He is a man whose whole soul and interest have been centered here, and he is loved and respected by all who know him.

Mr. Baechtel states that during the many years which he has spent in Mendocino county he has taken every opportunity to enjoy the good hunting and fishing which our county affords, but in all these years he has not been able to land just the right sort of "Deer."