

## "Tokens of History"

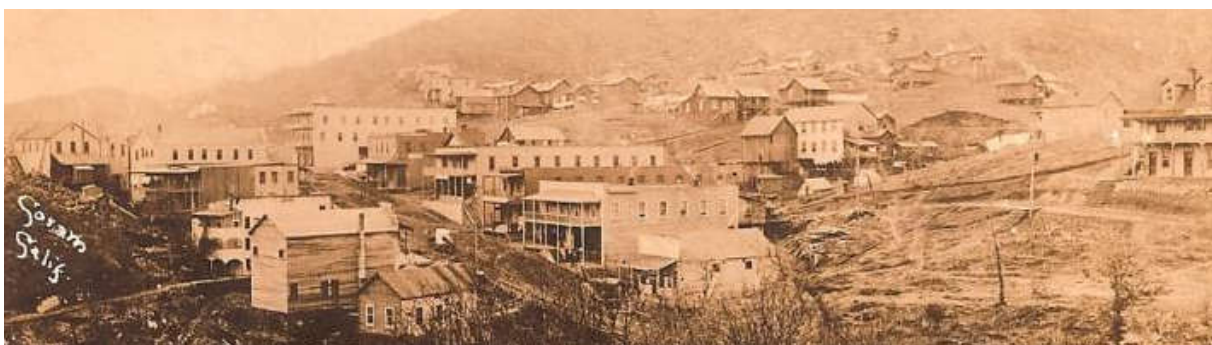
By

Chet Sunde, Psy.D.

My intention for this article was simply to research this O'Grady's Saloon token, but in doing so I found that it is related to several others in my collection from other California towns, including: Anderson, Kennett, Hilt, and Redding.



O'GRADY'S / SALOON / CORAM // GOOD FOR / 5c / IN TRADE



Coram was a copper-mining boom town established by the Balaklala Mine & Smelter Co. in 1906 along Motion Creek, just south of the current Shasta Dam, on the west side of the river. Like a supernova, Coram quickly expanded between 1907 and 1908, but by 1911 it had collapsed back in on itself (and heads would roll), as seen in these excerpts from the Searchlight:

Nov. 8, 1908-

*The Board of Supervisors increased the number of Coram saloons from 21 to 23. They allowed two more saloons at the smelter town because the last two petitions were shown to have been under way before the board passed the ban on more such establishments.*

Dec. 7, 1908-

*A year before, Coram was nearly deserted. A large smelting plant there was almost done being built, but townspeople were struggling along with the rest of the country against economic woes sweeping the land. This year, Coram was the busiest town in the county, money was fairly plentiful, and hundreds of men were employed in and around the works and at the mine.*

March 23, 1909-

*Three pickled human heads rolled out upon the depot floor when an express package tumbled from a truck and burst open as it struck the floor. Passengers were thunderstruck by the ghastly sight. Some shrieked in fright. The sheriff was called and he determined the heads were being shipped legally to Dr. Varian in Coram for dissection as part of a post-graduate course he took the previous winter.*

Nov. 3, 1911-

*The post office at Coram was closed by order of the postmaster general. On account of the enforcement of the law regulating poisonous fumes in smelter smoke, the smelters in the town closed and the population dropped from 1,500 a year ago to less than 100. Coram mail would be sent to Kennett.*

Sometime during this brief explosion in prosperity, brothers George and William O'Grady, both residents of Kennett, opened O'Grady's Saloon in Coram. The 1880 census from Bodega, in Sonoma, California, lists the O'Grady family as follows:

Thomas O'Grady, age 72, farmer from Ireland  
Johanna O'Grady, age 47, keeping house, also from Ireland  
Mary E. O'Grady, age 19, daughter, born in California  
John C. O'Grady, age 18, son, born in California  
William D. (David) O'Grady, age 14, son, born in California  
James T. (Thomas) O'Grady, age 10, son, born in California  
George P. (Pierce) O'Grady, age 6, son, born in California

William O'Grady appears to have lived in Kennett until he died in 1937, listed as a saloon owner in 1910, the Postmaster in 1920, and a farmer in 1930. He also owned a farm near Anderson, and with his brother briefly owned the Anderson Hotel:

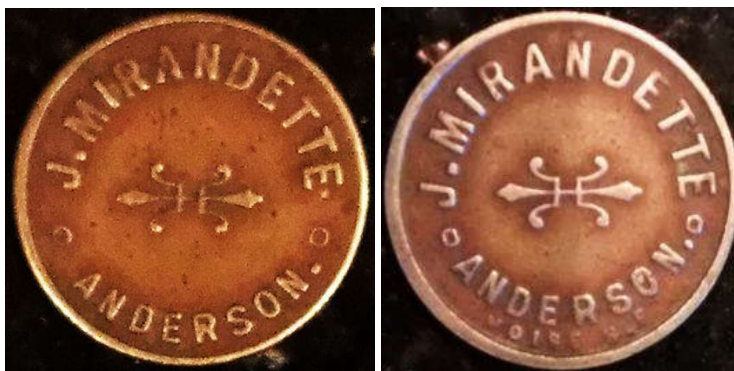
March 29, 1912:

*O'GRADY BROTHERS GO TO ANDERSON  
KENNETT FIRM TAKES A LEASE ON HOTEL ANDERSON FROM  
JACK MIRANDETTE*

*(Special to Courier-Free Press)*

*ANDERSON, March 29—William O'Grady and George O'Grady of Kennett today closed a deal with Jack Mirandette of this place, whereby they by sub-lease will take possession of the Hotel Anderson on the first of April.*

*Mr. Mirandette is the owner of a 50-foot frontage on Main street two blocks north of the hotel, which is partly covered by a saloon building formerly conducted by P. C. Petersen. He will build a two-story building on the unoccupied part of the lot and conduct a saloon and lodging house.*



J. MIRANDETTE / ANDERSON. / MOISE. S.F. // J. MIRANDETTE / ANDERSON.

Sept. 6, 1912-

*HOTEL MAN TURNS PRUNE CULTURIST*

*WILLIAM O'GRADY BUYS WILLIAMS FARM NEAR ANDERSON FOR \$5,500.*

*(Special to Courier-Free Press)*

*Anderson, September 6—William O'Grady, who recently retired from the hotel business, has bought the Williams fruit farm across the river from Anderson. The place contains eighty acres and the price paid was \$5,500. Mr. O'Grady will take possession*

*on October 1, or after all the fruit is gathered. Mr. O'Grady was in the saloon business in Kennett up to the time of the big fire in March. He will now become a farmer.*

Jan. 11, 1937-

*WILLIAM O'GRADY PASSES ON HERE*

*William O'Grady, old time miner of Shasta County, passed on here Monday evening at the age of 67 years. He was a Resident of Kennett.*

*O'Grady was born at Freestone December 9, 1869, and spend his entire life in California, following mining. He is survived by a brother, George O'Grady of Kennett.*

George O'Grady was a saloon keeper in Bodega in 1900; the Chief of the 25-member Kennett Volunteer Firemen when they organized on July 1, 1905; one of three original trustee's when Coram was incorporated in 1910, while also living in Keswick and listed as a liquor merchant operating a saloon; closing the saloon firm of O'Grady and Walker in Kennett in May of 1919 due to the shutting down of the smelter and the approach of prohibition; and living in Dunsmuir in 1930 working as a salesman for a confectionary. He also was involved in mining over the years:

August 17, 1918-

*O'GRADY & SANDHOLT HAVE STRUCK IT RICH*

*George O'Grady and Dr. J. P. Sandholdt of Kennett have struck it rich in the Churntown mining district, judging by the number of claims they have just located there. The mines are call Jumbo Nos. 1 to 6, Big John, Venus, Mollie B. Cooper and William A.*

August 6, 1947-

*Summit City Man Found Dead*

*George O'Grady, 73, died early last night of a heart attack as he sat on the front porch of his home in Summit City. His body was discovered by a neighbor who was driving past the house. O'Grady at one time was a saloon keeper in Kennett. Meininger's mortuary is in charge of arrangements.*

August 13, 1947:

*FORMER KENNETT RESIDENT BURIED*

*George O'Grady was buried in Redding cemetery yesterday afternoon following services in Meininger's mortuary with the Rev. Father John DeAdreis officiating. Casket bearers were Victor Robinson, John Balma, Larry Zipfel, Alvah Cook, Charles Balma and Claude E. Whiteman.*

August 15, 1947:

*O'Grady's Heir Can't Be Found*

*George O'Grady's heir, Miss Angie Burns of San Francisco, cannot be located, according to Public Administrator Claude E. Whiteman. Whiteman has asked the superior court to make him administrator of the estate. O'Grady died August 5, leaving papers purporting to be a will giving all his property to Miss Burns. Whiteman said O'Grady left \$290 in cash, \$1,260 in notes, a car, a lot in Summit City, household furnishings and clothing. Frank Shuman prepared the petition.*

In a Record Searchlight article from May of 1968, O'Grady's saloon in Kennett was remembered, although it took a back seat to the Kennett Diamond Saloon:

*A Bar That's Something To Drink To*

*When old-timers gather to toast the past glories of bygone mining towns flooded by Shasta Lake, some may drink to O'Gradys. But most will wet their throats in misty recollection of the great Diamond Bar... But the saloon is gone and its site lies deep beneath the casual boating of fisherman and water skiers on Shasta Lake.*

*And O'Grady's? It was one of the 23 other saloons.*

It is well known that Victor E. Warrens owned the most famous saloon in Kennett, indeed in all of Shasta County history, the Kennett Diamond. What's not so well known is that he eventually opened another saloon in Hilt, California, also called The Diamond.

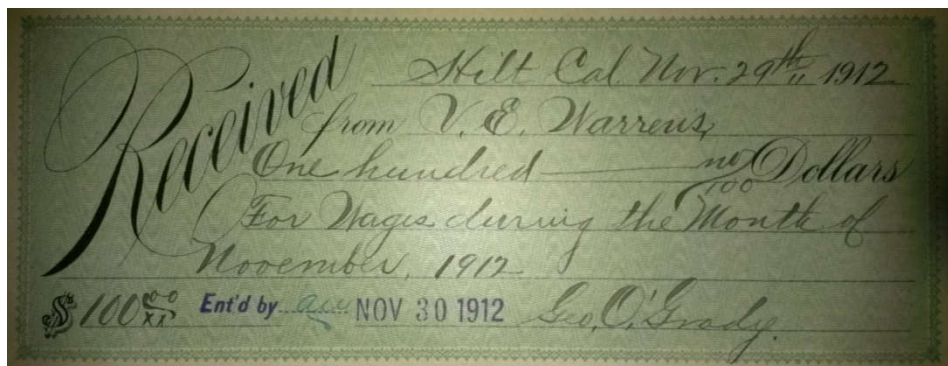


Warrens had tokens made up for his Kennett Diamond saloon, and after opening the Hilt Diamond, he had tokens produced that were good for trade in either establishment:



THE / DIAMONDS / KENNETT & HILT / CALIFORNIA / V. E. WARRENS, / \*PROP.\*  
// GOOD FOR / 5c / IN TRADE

This token is included in this article because it appears that George O'Grady worked at the Hilt Diamond Saloon for a period of time. I have two receipts in my collection signed by Geo. O'Grady indicating \$100 payment each month for wages at the Hilt Diamond, right at one-hundred years ago, dated November 1912 and December 1912.



I have a collection of these signed by various employees of the Hilt Diamond that span a few years, and these are the only two signed by O'Grady. I don't know if those are the only months he was employed there, but it appears that he was involved in an incident that may have encouraged him to move on:



November 18, 1912:

**SEVEN SHOTS FIRED IN HOLD-UP OF HILT SALOON**

*Victor E. Warrens, Proprietor, fires four times at bandit, who fire thrice in return. -- Warrens and fifteen customers finally submit to bandits, who receive plunder worth \$2,500 and escape -- hold-up lasted between twenty and thirty minutes, -- no one hit and there is no clew...Mr. Warrens was sitting in his office in the front of the saloon when the masked bandits entered the front door and ordered all hands up. Mr. Warrens' hands came up shooting...*

Now I know that just because George was working there that month, doesn't mean he was involved in the incident. But I also found this in the same collection of receipts I purchased several years ago:

*Hilt Cal. Nov. 29<sup>th</sup> 1912*  
*Loss by hold up Saturday Night Nov 16<sup>th</sup> 1912*

<i>Nov 16</i>	<i>To Cash taken from Register</i>	<i>\$88.00</i>
<i>"</i>	<i>" Left by E.C. Fisher</i>	<i>2.00</i>
<i>"</i>	<i>" Taken from safe</i>	<i>11.75</i>
	<i>Total</i>	<i>\$101.75</i>
<i>"</i>	<i>" Loss by V.E. Warrens Personal</i>	<i>50.00</i>
		<i>\$151.75</i>

*This is the amount I lost.*  
*Geo O'Grady.*

Ent'd by *Nov 30 1912*

Also in the collection were two letters written to Warrens regarding the incident:

From the manager of the Yreka Journal Publishing Company, dated Nov. 30, 1912:

*You will please be advised that your communication of the 28<sup>th</sup>, relative to the write-up, in the Journal, of the Hilt Hold-up on the 16<sup>th</sup>, by Brownlee and Lewis, has been received, and in reply to the same, I beg to inform you that in writing up the story, I got the facts and was very careful to adhere to them, and am pleased to not that you, as well as others that were in the hold-up, think well of the write-up...*

*In regard to mailing you 2 dozen copies, I will say that if we can dig up that many, we will forward them to you...We would like very much to enter your name on our subscription list for the coming year, may we do so?*

From the Circulation Dept. of the S. F. Examiner, dated Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>, 1912:

*...There was a big story in the paper about you a while ago...We mean the shooting scrape in your place, in which you and the hold-up men paid each other your compliments with six shooters. It really was a remarkable thing that someone was not killed.*

*Werner has often mentioned you in his letters, and we assure you that your interest in the San Francisco Examiner in the past and present, is very much appreciated.*

*Werner did not say whether you got the big diamond back, or not. (Warrens always wore a large diamond pendant on his vest, from which he named his saloons, which was taken in the hold-up)*

Back to the O'Grady's Saloon in Coram. They sold it to Nicholas Lopez Rodriguez sometime in the "early days" of the boom. Rodriguez renamed it the Coram Saloon, and issued tokens in four different denominations (inflation?):



THE CORAM / SALOON / N. RODRIGUEZ / PROP. / CORAM, CAL.  
 // GOOD FOR / (various amounts) / IN TRADE

Feb. 28, 1919-

*THE LAST SALOON IN CORAM IS BURNED*

*CORAM, February 27 -- Nick Rodriguez' two-story lodging house and saloon burned in middle of last night. The origin of the fire is unknown. The loss is total, and there was little or no insurance. Rodriguez was really retiring from business, as his place was not kept open regularly. He is preparing to go farming. The building cost \$2000 or more and was put up for O'Grady Brothers, who operated the place in the early days when Coram had twenty-four saloons. Coram is now left without a saloon or a store.*

Rodriguez was another enterprising business man in Shasta County, owning saloons in Kennett and Redding as well:



N. RODRIGUEZ / THE / KENNETT / CLUB / KENNETT, CAL. // GOOD FOR / 5¢ / IN TRADE



THE CALIFORNIA / SALOON / N. RODRIGUEZ PROP. / REDDING, CAL.  
 // GOOD FOR / 10¢ IN TRADE

The California Saloon was located at 420 California street, and operating as early as 1914:

January 1923-

*Rodriguez Sells to Y. Lorenzo*

*Nicholas Rodriguez, has deeded to Y. Lorenzo lots 8 and 9 of block 19 in the town of Redding. This property is in California street, north of Butte.*

Rodriguez died in 1935:

*Nicholas Lopez Rodriguez, 49, passed on Monday night at the county hospital. He had been ill for several months. Funeral services will be held Wednesday afternoon at 2:30 in the McDonald & Scott chapel with burial to be made in the Redding cemetery. Rodriguez was born in Spain on April 19, 1886, and came to Shasta County 30 years ago.*

*He engaged in ranching near this city since that time. Surviving are his wife, Mrs. Carmen Rodriguez; two sons and a daughter, Nicholas and Anthony, and Mrs. Carmen Rice all of Redding; two brothers, John and Frank, and a sister, all residing in Spain. There is one grandchild.*