

GUIDE TO THE BALE GRIST MILL STATE HISTORIC PARK  
PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION

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## BALE GRIST MILL STATE HISTORIC PARK PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION

### Park History

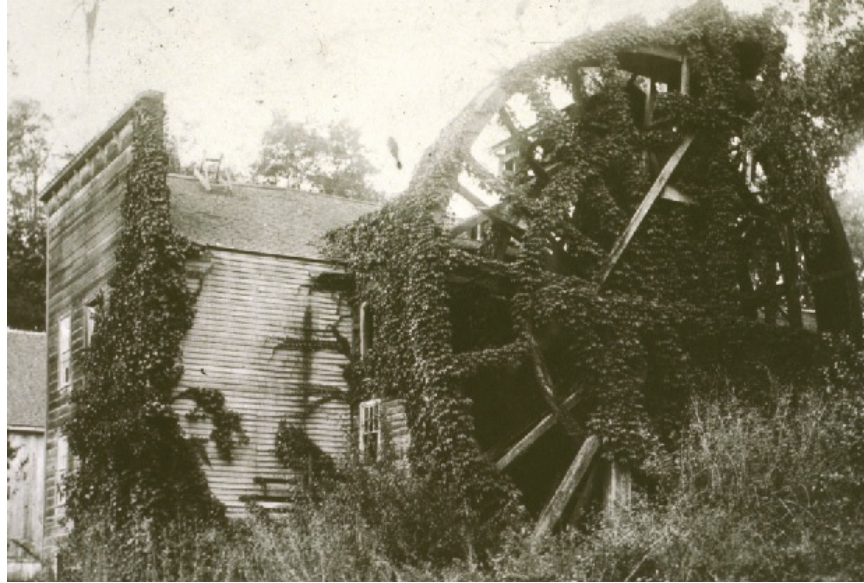
Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park contains less than one acre of historical resources. Located in northwestern Napa County, the park is bordered to the east by California State Highway 29 and to the south by Mill Creek; it is roughly four miles north of the city of St. Helena. The park is accessible by car via California State Highway 29 and by foot via the Bothe-Napa Valley State Park History Trail.

Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park derives its name from the English-born pioneer Dr. Edward Turner Bale, who acquired the present-day park as part of a Mexican land grant in 1843. But human presence in the area dates back to approximately 6000 BCE. The Koliholmanok tribe called the upper Napa Valley *Mutistul* and used the area's resources to make obsidian tools in addition to baskets and other ceremonial items.

Europeans first encountered the area in 1823, when Spanish overland explorers traveled north from San Francisco Bay to build what ultimately became the Sonoma Mission. Impressed by their bravery and good looks, the Spanish referred to the Koliholmanok as *guapo*, a name which eventually became Anglicized to "Wappo," as they are known today.

Under Mexican rule, officials transferred large tracts of land throughout California to private ownership. Arriving in Monterey in 1834, within a decade, English surgeon Edward Bale became a Mexican citizen, married General Mariano Vallejo's niece—Dona Maria Ygnacia Soberanes—and received Rancho Carne Humana, which included the area where the park sits today. In 1845, Bale sold a portion of his property to construct the water-powered flour and grist mill, which stands there at present. Later that year, he offered Florentine E. Kellogg 600 acres in exchange for performing iron work on the mill. For the next half century, Bale's grist mill ground grain for settlers in the upper Napa Valley as they cultivated the region. In 1849, along with scores of other fortune-seekers, Bale set out for the gold fields. He soon contracted fever and died, leaving his wife with six children, debts, and his estate.

Dr. Bale's daughter Isadora inherited the mill and the surrounding acreage and sold it around the time of her marriage to Louis Bruck. Ownership changed hands a few times until 1871, when Reverend Theodore B. Lyman, rector of the Trinity Episcopal Church in San Francisco, purchased the mill with 30 adjacent acres and entrusted its operation to his son W.W. Lyman, Sr. In 1879, Lyman replaced the original water wheel, used since 1845, with a water-run turbine engine (**Figure 1**). The mill's final commercial use occurred around 1905, and it stopped running altogether in 1910.



**Figure 1.** Bale's grist mill, ca. 1890. Catalog # 090-S3054.

When W.W. Lyman died in 1921, Bismark Bruck, Isadora's son, persuaded Lyman's widow to deed the mill to the Napa County Parlor of the Native Sons of the Golden West as a public monument. The mill was dedicated in 1925, registered as a California State Historical Landmark in 1939, deeded to Napa County in 1941, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972, and finally conveyed to the State of California in 1974 via Assembly Bill 1431. That same year, the State Park and Recreation Commission named and classified the park unit.

California State Parks, coordinating with the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District, maintains historical resources at Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park. Visitors are welcome to explore the historic, non-operational mill and granary, restored to their period of significance, 1845-1879, when the mill was first built until the water-turbine was added (**Figure 2**). Visitors may also access adjacent Bothe-Napa State Park via the History Trail. The park is day-use only.



**Figure 2.** Bale's grist mill, August 1, 2011. Catalog # 090-P73773.

## Scope and Content

The Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park Photographic Collection spans the years 1800-2011 with the bulk of the collection covering the years 1965-1966, 1978-1981, 1989, 2000, and 2009-2011. There is a total of 564 cataloged images including 476 photographic prints, scans, and negatives, 47 35mm slides, and 41 born-digital images. Photographs originated primarily from California State Parks staff.

The collection mainly depicts the park unit's historic properties—the mill, water wheel, and granary—from various vantages over a number of years, the oldest dating back to 1865. Imagery includes numerous exterior and a few aerial views which feature neighboring vegetation, ivy growth, visitors, and park personnel as well as several views from the buildings' interiors which include the grinding wheel, mill stones, grinding stones, flour sifter, gears, interpretive displays, commemorative plaques, and miscellaneous park signage.

The collection also documents important twentieth-century events at the historic mill. Events include the Native Sons of the Golden West's dedication ceremony in the 1920s, Napa County's deeding ceremony in the 1940s, and historic restoration projects from 1966 and 1979-1981.

The collection also includes historic portraits of important people in the property's lifespan. Individuals include: Dr. Edward T. Bale, the mill's founder and namesake; his wife, Maria Soberanes Bale; their daughters Isadora Bale Bruck and Carolina Bale Krug; their daughters' respective husbands, Louis Bruck and Charles Krug; the Bales' son, Edward Bale, Jr., his wife, Francisca Juarez Bale, and her prominent father, Cayetano Juarez; and craftspeople and employees, Leonard G. Lillie, Louis Haggin, Joseph Mecklenberg, Jehu Scott, and John Enos York. Also included are a few letters from Dr. E. T. Bale to his colleagues regarding mill business.

## **Related Collections**

Bale Family Papers, UC Berkeley: Bancroft Library.

Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park Collection, California State Parks Archives.

## **Catalog Subject Search Terms**

Aerial view  
Cayetano Juarez  
Dedication ceremony  
Document  
Edward Bale, Jr.  
Edward T. Bale  
Exterior view  
Francisca Juarez Bale  
Granary  
Grinding wheel  
Interior view  
Interpretive displays  
Isadora Bale Bruck  
Jehu Scott  
John Enos York  
Joseph Mecklenberg  
Leonard G. Lillie  
Louis Bruck  
Louis Haggin  
Maria Soberanes Bale  
Mill  
Mill Creek  
Native Sons of the Golden West  
Portrait  
Reservoir  
Restoration  
Water wheel