

This is Lieutenant Roger McCort from The Salvation Army in Eureka with today's Community Comment.

Somewhere around her eighteenth birthday, Rosina Pauli, whose family had recently immigrated from Switzerland, filed a land patent on two parcels of timberland in Humboldt County. She had hoped to make her fortune as a lumber baron, but trees were plentiful and over time there was another call on her life.

She'd been born and raised in the Lutheran church, but a new group in Eureka had caught her attention with their daily service to the community and their welcoming style of worship. It was the 1880's and The Salvation Army had just opened up a permanent presence inside the Redwood Empire. Rosina said that she wanted an "Every-day-in-the-week" religion and that she'd found such in The Salvation Army. In 1889 she left her home and timber dreams behind, dedicating her life to providing daily service to those in need as an officer in The Salvation Army. She was instrumental in bringing aid to thousands of men and women all along the California coast.

Another early Salvationist in this area was Captain Jonas Mathison, who, sadly, drowned in an accident on Mad River in April of 1896. During his time on the North Coast he had participated in a revival and all-night prayer vigil which was coming to a close at 5 am as a fire alarm sounded through the town. Led by a fireman who had been present at the meeting, the uniformed Salvationists rushed to Company Number Two's fire house and had the hose cart pulled out and deployed before any of the regular fire crew had time to turn out. A woodshed had blazed up in those early hours and the Sally's arrived just as the main house began to burn. They quickly and calmly got it under control and then extinguished. One passer-by who had stopped to watch took note of who was fighting the fire and shouted out, "Number Two's got a new uniform!" In those days, where a small fire could quickly turn even large cities like Chicago or Seattle into ashen disaster scenes, the quick response of the group of volunteers was greatly appreciated.

Why bring up these stories from over a century ago today? Because this is National Salvation Army Week (May 15-21), and I wanted to pay tribute to those hardy souls who came to serve the people of Northern California and establish some of the services that we are privileged to still carry on here today. Daily we provide food to the hungry and help clothe those in need. Our caseworker helps with energy assistance and referrals to get people to the aid they

require. We offer youth programs and summer camp opportunities. And we stand ready to roll in support of first responders and survivors at the scene of disasters. And, yes, we continue to hold church services, including Sunday worship services and Wednesday prayer meetings and Bible studies. Like Rosina Pauli, we want to be an every-day-in-the-week religion who presents our faith to our community by serving the needs of those around us daily and without discrimination.

If you have a story about The Salvation Army, I'd love to hear it. Shoot me an e-mail or give me a call or stop me on the street and add your experience to my collection of history.

And while I can't guarantee you'll enjoy every moment of its 168 hours, I do wish you the best during National Salvation Army Week.

Grace and peace to you. This has been Lt. Roger McCort with today's KINS Community Comment.