



**Clío**

## **Why Do Dogs Tilt Their Heads?**

*According to Ryan Llera, BSc, DVM; and Lynn Buzhardt, DVM*

*"Head and face shape may interfere with what a dog can see. To grasp how a long snout interferes with*

*vision, hold a fist to your nose and look around. You have to turn your head to see an object directly in front of you. Dogs do the same thing. They tilt their heads to work around their interfering muzzles and improve their visual perspective. That cute head tilt actually broadens the range of vision and allows a dog to more clearly see a person's face. Seeing our facial expressions improves communication"*

*Dr. Nicholas Dodman, a veterinary behaviorist and professor emeritus at the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University speculates that, "head-tilting dogs tend to be more sensitive than other pups, are highly attuned to sounds, and have a close emotional bond with their owners. Of all the many possible explanations for this behavior, Dodman's top theory is that head tilting is simply a dog's response to a puzzling or curious human statement."*

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# Uncovering California History

## Locating the Lost Mark West Family Cemetery

I asked Carol Eber to help me write this story as she has been at the center of the Mark West history. The process for many of our projects is very similar, as described below. Solving lost history involves many facets, family oral history, the use of archives, old letters and maps, data bases for genealogy, archaeologists using remote sensing like GPS and trained dogs. If we are lucky, combining techniques sometimes helps bring the facts together to solve the mystery.

The following is a very brief timeline of Sonoma County and California history.

1542: It is believed that the Spanish sailing expedition, led by Portuguese captain Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, brought the first Europeans to explore the California coast.

1579: Sir Francis Drake lands on the coast of California and claims it for England.

1769 -70: The Portola expedition, led by Junipero Serra, began developing the mission system.

1769-1823: Missions are established in California, the last one was in (now) Sonoma County and was called San Francisco Solano.

1821: Mexico wins independence from Spain, becoming California's new ruler. The California territory was called Alta California.

1830's: Mark West (see family cemetery below) immigrated from England to Monterey. He and his wife, Guadalupe Vasquez, received a Mexican land grant of 6,700 acres, Rancho

San Miguel, in Sonoma County.

1846: The Bear Flag Revolt, settlers in the Sonoma area rebelled against the Mexican rule and proclaimed California as an independent republic.

1848: Gold is discovered starting a large immigration of people from all over the world to seek their fortunes in California.

1850: California was admitted into the Union as the 31st state.

### **Family Cemetery**

Interest in the Mark West Family Cemetery began when Carol Eber, the great great granddaughter of Mark West, discovered an 1862 map in the Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library, drawn by the U.S Surveyor General. This map showed the location of the Mark West Family Burying Ground in Rancho San Miguel. Carol remembered a story told by her great grandmother, Maria West. In the 1940s Maria directed Carol's mother to the cemetery location and listed thirteen people buried there, including her husband, the son of Mark West. The property owners had told Maria that they had tipped over the grave markers to plant their garden. Carol had no idea where this property was, but stories of her California roots had been passed down through the family.

In 2017 the Tubbs Fire swept through the county and burned the land that included parts of Rancho San Miguel. The property owners at the time had the tombstone of Mark West, which had been in their yard and was the only indication of a cemetery there, moved to the Museum of Sonoma County for safe keeping. Thus, began the gathering of a team of local historians – Jeremy Nichols, Ray Johnson, and Bill Northcroft. The search was on!

"We met with the new owners of the property, the Adventist Church, to discuss the possible location of the family cemetery. The team walked the 25 acres of land. We measured the boundaries, using the 1862 map. We contacted two anthropology professors at Sonoma State University - Alexis Boutin, department chair, and Thomas Whitley, director of the Anthropological Studies Center, who help private companies and government agencies with archaeological sites, Native American concerns and historic buildings. Whitley came out with interns to conduct ground penetrating radar. Students of the adjacent Adventist school came out to watch and learn a bit of California history. The suspected site was rocky and nothing was confirmed. The team agreed there was one more step to take in the search. Call in the dogs!"

### **Mark West Family Cemetery**

ICF was contacted by Carol Eber to see if we could help find the lost cemetery.

Unfortunately it's not unusual that small family historic cemeteries have been lost. Our plan was to work the high priority areas that Carol and the team of local historians had identified and expand the search if needed. Each area would be worked by at least two dog teams for better coverage. Because it was July we wanted to start early in the morning to take advantage of the cooler part of the day. We also requested that they cut down as much of the dry grasses as possible before the search.

On July 6th, ICF surveyed the priority areas and found what we believe is the cemetery. It was not where the headstone had been found but close by on a knoll. Carol, Ray and Bill, an assistant to County Supervisor Gore, and three school administrators observed the work of the dogs throughout the morning.

On July 12 Carol's team, along with the two anthropology professors, will visit the site identified by the dogs and, if the property owner gives permission, they will move forward with ground-truthing, using a metal detector to search for coffin hardware. This strategy could validate the findings of the canines. Student interns from the university will take part in this effort, learning another technique of archaeology.

What happens to this historical place remains to be determined. There are many factors to be considered and decisions to be made. Finding a piece of local history is thrilling. Honoring it is another matter.

Adela Morris and Carol Eber



*Jasper alerts among the rocks on top of a knoll.*



*Echo and Piper are brought in to do a blind search of the same area where Jasper alerted. All the dogs alerted in very close proximity. After all the dogs worked the area we flagged the alerts to make it easier to visualize the possible graves.*



*Currently the headstone is being held at the Museum of Sonoma in Santa Rosa for safe keeping.*

## Remote Sensing.... Dowsing

After we identified what we believe is the location of the cemetery, local historian Bill Northcroft brought his dowsing rods and walked around the area where the dogs alerted. He claims he does not understand if or how it works but dowsing has been done for thousands of years. Science claims there are no facts that support it but many claim it works. People who do dowsing claim some people have the ability while others do not. Strangely we observed the rods moving at they approached the

flagged areas. As hard as some of us tried not to move or influence the rods, we watched as they appeared to move on their own.



*Bill Northcroft using metal rods as he dowses over the area the dogs identified as the cemetery.*



Adela's new puppy has arrived from Oklahoma. Please meet ...  
Zia



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(650) 503-4473 | [info@ICFK9.org](mailto:info@ICFK9.org) | [www.ICFK9.org](http://www.ICFK9.org)

We are happy to talk with you about your project and  
how our dogs might help locate human remains or burials.

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**Our mailing address is:**

Institute for Canine Forensics

P.O. Box 620699

Woodside, CA 94062-0699

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