

The Novato Historian

Summer 2024

Volume 48 Number 2

Hamilton Army Air Field 1939



President's Corner

July the Fourth—The way it used to be
Growing Up in Novato During the 1940's
Museum Tree Falls

March General Meeting—Ed Ryken
Novatans for Racial Equality
Flying Tigers
Novato—50 Years Ago

General Meeting June 15

The Novato Historian

Published March, June, September and December by the Novato Historical Guild, a California 501(c)3 non – profit corporation formed on November 18, 1976.

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Guild Mission Statement

To collect, preserve, and make reasonably available to the public, exhibits and information related to the history of the Novato area.

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President's Corner

Lynn Dawson

President, Novato Historical Guild

Hello,

I hope that your Spring has been most enjoyable! I love Novato this time of year; in fact, I love Novato all year long. There is so much to see and do. One thing to do is to attend our Membership Meetings where you can hear fantastic speakers. Our March speaker was Ed Ryken, a longtime birder, who found his calling 20 years ago while doing a winter bird count on Alcatraz. When he first visited the island, he did not know that it would lead him to giving tours of Alcatraz and becoming the coordinator of the National Park Service's Alcatraz Bird Docents Program. Ed shared much unknown history of Alcatraz with us.

I am also really looking forward to our June Speaker, Andrew A. Pansini, who is the son of Andrew L Pansini, the man who changed the course of an entire industry with the invention of the world's first automatic swimming pool cleaner in 1957. Andrew A., a 50-year resident of Novato, has written a book about the life of his father entitled "Fathers of Invention" and will share that story with us. Andrew A. is the retired CEO of Jandy Industries and Savoy Corporation, as well as the former Chairman of the Board of Novato Community Hospital and Sutter Health.

I want to update you on the progress we have made with our Relocation Project for the Novato History Museum. As you know, we have been investigating the idea of moving the current Museum from its location across DeLong to what is known as the "Scott House", which is located on Sherman across from City Hall on the Civic Green. The past few months, we have been focused on assessing the feasibility and cost of such a move. We began the assessment with a survey of the existing building. Drawings were developed which served as the basis for a schematic layout for the future museum. The contractor and subcontractors have "walked-through" the Scott House to determine the work needed to be done to bring the building up to code and for use as a new museum. Further, a Historical Resources Evaluation and Design Guidelines Report was completed that outlines the parameters for any restoration. Given the age of the house, a hazardous materials investigation was also conducted. The contractor, with input from the Restoration Committee, will soon develop a cost estimate for the restoration so that fundraising may begin in earnest.



Once again, I would like to truly thank all the current volunteers, docents, and members who support the Guild. It's because of you that we can continue to serve our community!

Lynn

917 Sherman Ave. when it was Novato's Park & Recreation Building. Before that it was the Scott house (built in 1913) then the Busher house in 1945.

JULY THE FOURTH The way it used to be



*THE DECORATIONS INCLUDED PRETTY GIRLS
Patriotic Float In 1913 Parade*

played Uncle Sam. His height made him the logical choice. The Goddess of Liberty was chosen by popular vote. Margot Rudolff Clark, who lived in the mansion on Railroad Avenue built by her father, Judge Herman Rudolff, remembers that on the Fourth an immense flag was hoisted up the flagpole on her father's barn.

She recalls the decorated wagons in the parade – especially a gorgeous wagon covered with golden poppies made of cloth. It won a prize for DeBorba's. She also remembers Katie Nave as queen of one of the floats.

Former Supervisor William Gness, who came to Novato in 1905, recalls the Fourth as one of reminiscing about the parade, he says it went down Grant Avenue from the highway to the railroad depot. There were horses and decorated wagons, bicycles, and the band.

The barbecue was held in a field near Druids Hall. The beef roasted slowly all night in a pit dug in the ground.

The event was enlivened with a baseball game, foot races and games for all ages, and a horse race. The horse race was held down the middle of Grant Avenue.

Novato Advance July 3, 1974 By SUE JOHNSON

Tomorrow's observance of the Fourth of July in Novato will be a far cry from the celebrations of yesteryear, judging from the reminiscences of some of the town's early residents.

The Fourth used to be a big event here. The whole town turned out for the colorful parade.

As in many other communities throughout the country the Fourth was an occasion that called for patriotic speeches and a barbecue.

Looking back on Novato in the World War I period, Francis Bond McGlaulin recalls,

"There were the old Fourth of July celebrations, parades such as you never see any more, with committees toiling for weeks to decorate floats in Louis DeVoto's big barn."

"The speeches lasted for three good hours, followed by a big free barbecue."

The parade was led by "Uncle Sam." Her father, J. H. Bond, publisher of Novato's first newspaper, the Banner, always



*AN ENTRY IN THE 1913 PARADE
Frances Hamilton holds flag aloft as Douglas Bond spurs on goat.*



Parade goes listening to speeches in the open field, which is now Redwood Credit Union. The house, now the location of Westamerica Bank, was Fred Sweetser's house which, was moved to 4th Street. Just to the left of the house is the Presbyterian Church.

Growing Up in Novato During the 1940's

Reprinted from March 1998 Novato Historian

During the 1940's the Almeida family, Mom (Isabel), Dad (Agostinho), my sister Geraldine (Jerri), my brother Ed and I, lived at 745 DeLong Avenue across from the Pini Feed Mill. In those pre-freeway days, DeLong Avenue had a "700" block which ran from Reichert Avenue eastward past the then active and prosperous Feed Mill to the railroad tracks. Our home was sited on a 150' x 178' lot near the intersection where Scott St. met DeLong; in fact, if you drove too fast up Scott, so as to miss the turn onto DeLong, you were in our driveway! The house was one of the oldest in town at that time and can be found in most of the photographs taken of the area after the 1890's. It faced



toward Grant Avenue; the picture shows the side nearest Pini Mill (the east side of the front). It used to have a storefront facade, but Dad removed that when we bought the home in 1942 for the sum of \$1850. The house was demolished when the alignment of DeLong Avenue was changed to accommodate the relocation of Highway 101 in the 1970's. My family had moved to the corner of Seventh and Vallejo by that time, where Mom and Dad lived until their deaths in the 1990's.

There were three other homes in our neighborhood on DeLong in the early 1940's: one was directly across from the Feed Mill office and the other two were up on the hillside opposite the east end of the Mill. The Louis D'Ambrogio family occupied a house on our level and present Novato resident Marie Salmina *(then D'Ambrogio) lived there with her parents. Marie's brother, Arthur D'Ambrogio raised his family in a house that still stands at the corner of Scott and DeLong (900 Scott Ct.) Part of his family is Lorraine Kidder who lives in Novato and her sister, Yvonne Sasse, who lives in San Rafael. The Rhoades and Newman families lived on the hill. The Rhoades family had two daughters, Lorraine, now married to Stan Crandall and living in Petaluma and Billie, who lives in Colorado with her husband. Around the hill to the east where DeLong Avenue ended, over-looking the rail- road tracks

was the Rudolf Cheese Factory, run by Judge Hermann Rudolf, a character worthy of a future article! A few blocks away at the top of the hill was the beautiful old Hayden house with a panoramic view of Novato, built in 1891, leased in the 1940's by the Maison Marin Restaurant (today Ayawaska Hilltop) but we had to go around the hill from our house to reach it.

My uncle, Joe Brazil, operated a dairy on South Novato Blvd. which he owned in partnership with the Connell family. My grandfather, John Brazil, had run this same dairy until his death in 1936, when Uncle Joe took over; my father worked there for many years. During my summer vacation in 1943, I often walked the two miles to my uncle's dairy, usually accompanied by my brother Ed, now a Petaluma resident. I was 14 and Ed was 13 at the time. We found dairy life much more interesting than the 'town life' which held more appeal for my sister Jerri. Ed and I would tag along with the men while they did their chores, sometimes helping and other times making pests of ourselves! If we were lucky Uncle Joe would take us on a trip to Sacramento or Woodland to purchase alfalfa in his mid-30's yellow GMC flatbed truck. To get from our house to the dairy we would head west down DeLong to Diablo Avenue. Right across Redwood Boulevard, Highway 101, was the Druid's softball field, where the Safeway store is now located. I remember the Druid's field had lights and you could tell from across town if there was a night game underway. This was a special place for me because, being a baseball fan, I loved to watch the games from "tightwad hill" created by the raised area through left field near Highway 101. If we were lucky, the vendors, selling bottled soda from wooden trays hung around their necks, would come close enough for Dad to get us a drink. Some of the stars of the Druids were Frank (Mac) Manzoni, his brother "Babe", George Gnos, Frank Baccaglio, Louie Salmina, and his brother Joe. They played teams from all around the area and Novato and because of its good field and weather conditions, was a popular venue with the other teams.

I particularly enjoyed the annual "donkey softball" game that the Druids sponsored. The donkeys would be trucked in, and all players other than the pitcher and the catcher had to play mounted on a donkey! After the ball was hit, the



View of Novato Railroad Depot circa 1890 showing Scott Hall on far right and original Novato Grammar School with steeple in last building on right half-way up page, and Almeida home on far left middle of page (note storefront false front). From Novato History Museum collection

batter would have to mount up to get to first base. This was when the fun usually started since some of the donkeys did not like to be ridden and lost no time throwing their jockeys! There was also a ladies' softball team which had a lot of talent. "Babe" Pronzini was the pitcher and the Dunlap sisters, Karen and Sarah, along with Margaret Johnson (later Anhorn) were the players I remember most clearly. Karen is now Karen Millikin, a past president of the Novato Historical Guild. Some of the male softball players also played in the semi-pro baseball team sponsored by the Fire Department. Manzoni, Sparrow, Connell, Sjoblom, Panfiglio were key members of those teams. "Babe" Silva, whose professional baseball career was cut short by an arm injury, was able to show local fans why he was a highly regarded shortstop. He was a great glove man who could also handle the bat. Babe later served on Novato's first City Council and as Mayor.

I don't remember any buildings across from the ball field but there was a house next to it that was occupied by the Tharsing family. Past the ballfield, we crossed a small bridge over Novato Creek and turned left to head south on Novato Boulevard. The Joe DeBorba home was right there on the SE corner across from where the Alamo Travel building (currently Novato Dermatology) is today. Further down the boulevard, opposite what is now Nave Court, was a house occupied by the Rupprecht family. At this time, Novato Boulevard was a narrow paved two-lane road with no stop signs or signal lights between DeLong and where the boulevard met Highway 101 down by the present Highway 37 intersection. There were no sidewalks, curbs or gutters and pedestrians had to use the edge of the roadway and move off whenever a vehicle approached.

The intersection of Center Road and Novato Boulevard was a busy area. On the SW corner, where Ron Cromwell's Chevron Station now stands, was "Nave's Cabbage Patch", a fruit, vegetable and ice cream stand owned by the Nave family. Just before reaching the "Cabbage Patch" we passed some of the wells the Cain family operated as part of the private, Novato Water Company. These were hand dug wells on the land now called Tresch Triangle. The Nave family stocked their stand with fresh vegetables grown in a large, well cultivated garden where Lauren Avenue is now, in the present day aptly named "Nave Gardens" housing development. The soil was great for vegetables. Mike and Tony were the primary gardeners. These Italian gentlemen, who were not members of the Nave family, were permanently hunched over from working for many years in the fields.

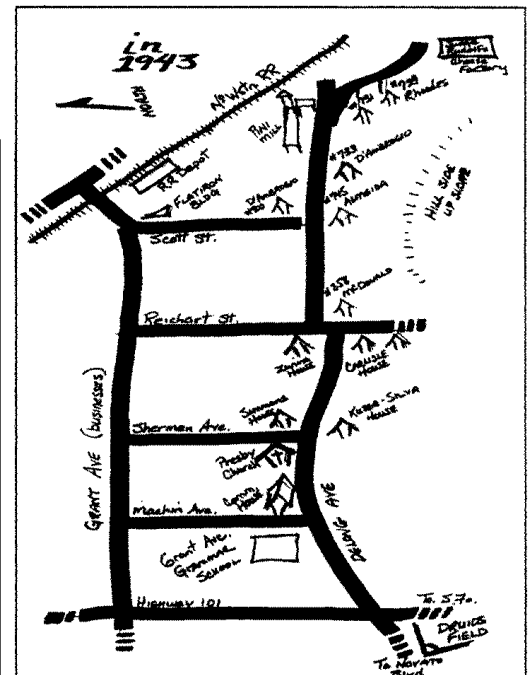
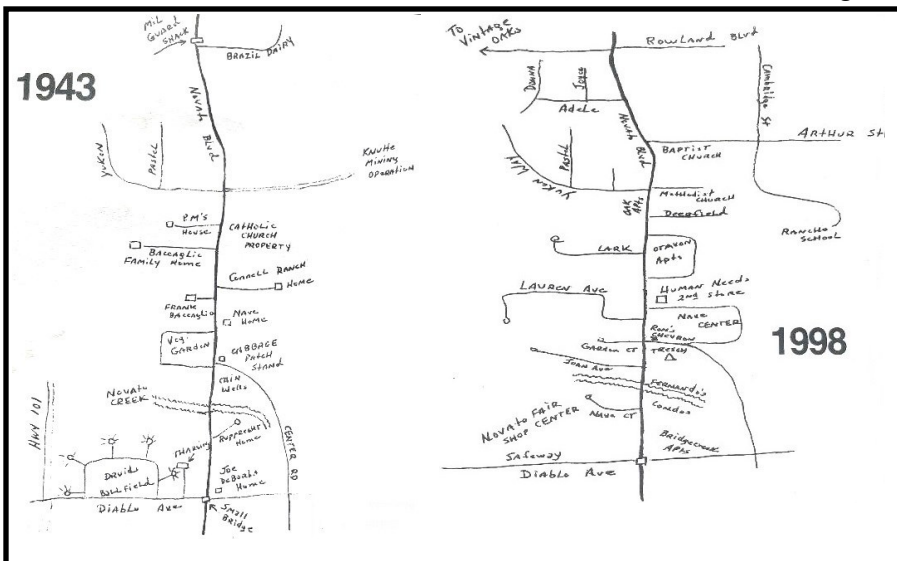
The "Cabbage Patch" was a favorite stop to acquire fresh produce for people driving through Novato to points north. Grandpa Peter

Nave tended the register. His grandsons were Bill, Bob, and Rich, who visited occasionally but lived in San Rafael. Bill is now deceased, but Rich and Bob are still active in the family enterprises and in that famous parade comedy marching unit, "The Nave Patrola." A picture of the fruit and vegetable stand is reproduced on page 346 of Novato Township, the definitive Novato history written by May Rodgers Ungernach. Just south of the "Cabbage Patch" stand on the same side of the little creek running from the present Rancho School was Peter Nave's fruit orchard and his home. Across the creek from the Nave residence was the Connell Ranch, where we now find the Novato Human Needs Center's Thrift Shop (1523 S. Novato Blvd.), the Otavon Apartments and School. This ranch, with its small herd of cows and orchard of fruit trees was operated by sisters Edith and Olive Connell. The ranch was rather small, but the ladies ran it independently by doing the work normally done by men. Richard Connell, the ladies' nephew, also lived on the ranch.

Behind the Connell Ranch was a little hill that was part of the Brazil-Connell Ranch with a little dirt road running over to it that went through about where the Novato Methodist Church is now. Mr. Les Knutte leased that land from the Connells and mined manganese, an element used to harden steel, during WW II. The ore was trucked to a smelter in Tracy for processing. Later the hilltop would be flattened off and Hayes Street and Monroe Court were developed on it.

Across the road from the Connell Ranch was the Baccaglio home. The Baccaglios were a locally prominent family. The youngest daughter was Edna, now Edna Kriel, a teacher at Novato Grammar School in the 1930's and early 1940's. Edna presently resides in Chico near her sister, Anita Johnson, but she has attended the "Old Timers" Novato Grammar School 50 Year Reunions most of the past 7 years. I also remember a brother, Egidio (Jid) who worked for the Henry Hess Lumber Yard in Novato for many years before his death. Jid was an early director of the Novato Historical Guild. The other Baccaglio boys were Pio (Pete), Frank and Joe.

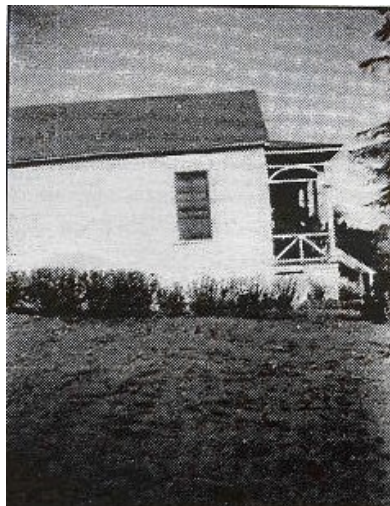
The next building we would pass on the boulevard was the "Postmaster's House", an 1850's vintage house originally occupied by Henry Jones, Novato's first Postmaster between 1856-60; it was moved in the 1970's to 815 DeLong Ave. and is now the building that houses the Novato History Museum. In the 1940's, the Clark family lived there; later the Mangan



and Gaut families also lived in the house. The Gauts sold the building to Fabian "Bud" Bobo, who donated it to the City of Novato in 1972 and moved it to its present location so he could build an apartment complex on the land in 1976.

By the 1940's, the Novato Post Office was located in the Silva Building at 828 Grant Avenue where "Parties and More" can be found today. Later, the Post Office moved to what used to be Frank Valim's building on the SE corner of Machin and Vallejo next to the Novato Advance. In 1956, the Post Office moved to First Street next to the car wash and in 1968 it replaced Harold McAfee's department store at its present location in the Nave Shopping Center, completing a circular route around town. Across the road from the Clark home was the site where the first Our Lady of Loretto Catholic Church, built in 1890, burned down on December 1, 1936. That lot was empty when we were walking past it because the new (second) Our Lady of Loretto Church was built on the corner of Grant Avenue and Second Street and dedicated in 1937. The Cacti Restaurant (currently Village Restaurant) now occupies that building since the Church moved to Grant and Novato Boulevard in 1963. About half a mile beyond the Clark home was the Brazil dairy, our destination. The entrance to the dairy was about 300 feet west of where Rowland Boulevard is today. In the 1940's most of the dairies in Novato were known by the name of the dairymen who ran them although some larger ranches were known by alphabetical designation such as "C" Ranch, which was located where San Marin is now, and the "D" and "F" Ranches located on Vineyard Road. The Brazil dairy covered about 375 acres and supported between 90 and 100 milk cows. The hired hands were known as "milkers" and were mostly men who came to this area directly from Portugal or the Azores. My father, Agostinho Almeida, came to the United States in 1921 and worked as a milker for John Brazil. He met my mother, Isabel, on the Brazil dairy and married the boss' daughter on Christmas Day in 1928. Mom was one of 8 children born to John and Constance Brazil. The only one of my aunts still living is Marie Silveira, a resident of Petaluma. The Brazil dairy was subsequently sold in the early 1950's and replaced by homes and by Novato High School in 1955. Across the street and a little before you got to the Brazil dairy driveway was the first housing development of any size undertaken in Novato. Ernest Kettenhoffen owned several acres and began selling lots for homes. Yukon Way and Pastel Lane became public streets. Later, John Reystead developed "Oakview" which included Adele, Donna, and Joyce Streets. John Novak later built homes in Nave Gardens on Lauren, Joan, Nave, and Garden Courts. He also developed an extensive area around the Trumbull mansion near Wilson and Novato Blvd. He and his wife Maria later owned the Trumbull Mansion. The Manuel Pimentel family also ran a dairy on the inside of the bend in South Novato Boulevard across from where present-day St. Anthony's Church is now located. The Pimentel dairy was actually owned by the Cheda family, and it was bigger in both acreage and herd size than the Brazil dairy. Both dairies sold milk to the Marin Dell processing plant in San Francisco, which was shipped in 10-gallon metal cans by enclosed milk truck, since today's stainless steel milk tank trucks had not yet arrived. The Cowbarn Apartments and Cheda Ranch condominiums now occupy the former Pimentel dairy site. Later the Pimentel's moved their dairy operation to Ignacio; the home and barns were located just west of the present Marin Humane Society headquarters. There were 3 Pimentel girls: Mary, Isabel, and Irene, who all married dairymen, and one son, Manuel Jr., who is now deceased.

In 1943, Hamilton Field was an important and busy Army Air Corps installation under full military readiness during World War II. One of the local results was that Novato Blvd., between the Brazil and Pimentel dairies, was closed to through traffic with barricades and guard shacks with armed guards at each end of that one-mile section of roadway. The military appropriated this open land to store military supplies, including, we were told, bombs and munitions. Civilian traffic was permitted only up to the entrance to each dairy with through traffic required to use Highway 101, which in those days ran in a straight line across the marsh generally along the line of the present Redwood Boulevard. Many years and millions of cars have passed since Ed and I walked that friendly road. I have seen many changes take place: the road has been widened, the gardens and dairy land have been replaced by homes and schools and people move in and out. Still, Novato has retained a warm and friendly character that I really appreciate. I hope these recollections will help new Novato residents recognize and appreciate those echoes of the "old days" that still can be found in some of our local place names, in some of our preserved buildings, and because of the efforts of the Novato Historical Guild and the City of Novato, in the collections of the Novato History Museum.



Almeida family home from 1942-67 at 745 DeLong Ave. at end of Scott St. (now Court) with east side facing Pini Feed Mill.



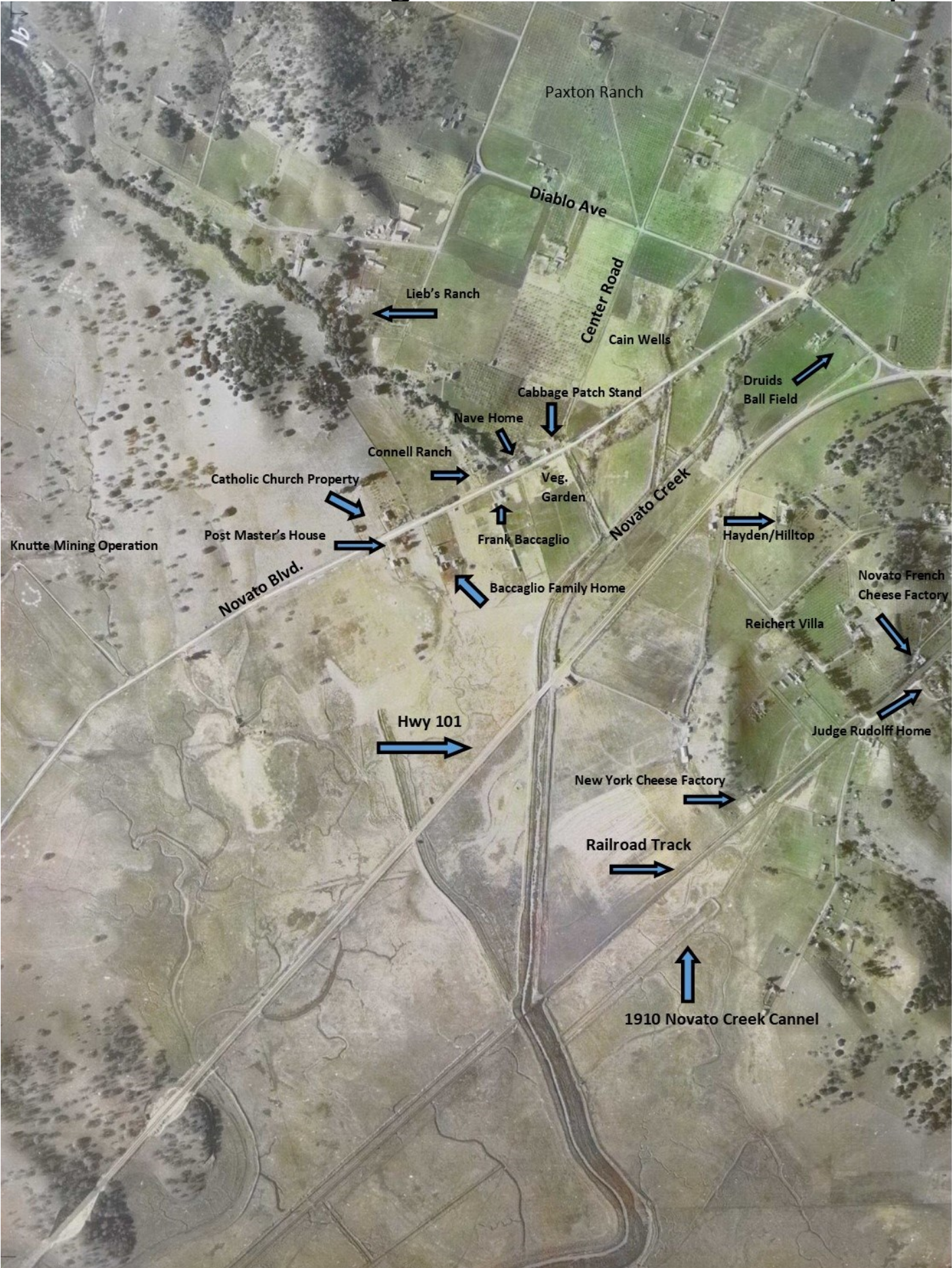
Geraldine (now Jerri), 13 years old, circa 1945 at 745 DeLong Ave.



Almeida kids in 1941—left Bill (12 years), center Geraldine now Jerri (9 years) and right, Ed (11 years) taken at 115 2nd St.

(All Almeida family photos courtesy of Bill Almeida)

Bill's 1943 drawing's on an 1938 aerial map



Museum Tree Falls

By Barry Smail

On the evening of February 3, 2024, it was raining hard amidst high winds. Elayne Miller, past President of the Novato Historical Guild (NHG), was on the phone with her good friend and NHG member Diane Campbell. "I was looking out the window and said 'Oh, the tree is falling!'" Elayne lives in the historic Silva-Kuser House (1890), which she lovingly restored while scrupulously adhering to California's strict Historical Building Code.



The sprawling Monterey pine sat on the adjoining City-owned property (815 DeLong Avenue), site of the Old Postmaster's House and occupied by the Novato History Museum. It is thought to be the town's oldest wooden structure still standing. "I told Diane I

would call 911," Elayne continued. "The dispatcher said they already knew about it and crews were on their way. They arrived within two minutes." First responders were Novato Police and Novato Fire District. The fallen tree was draped over DeLong Avenue, blocking both eastbound and westbound lanes. A crew from Public Works arrived soon thereafter and began chopping up the tree to clear the roadway.

"I feel a tremendous sense of gratitude that somehow the tree fell northward," museum manager Susan Magnone declared. "If it had fallen the other way, our roof would have been crushed and our archives ruined."

A few days later, City workers returned with an excavator and pulled out the root ball. "It was a major operation," Susan said. "Public Works deserves a shout out for having extracted it without damaging the retaining wall on DeLong Avenue."

That wasn't the only tree to topple on the property that night. Another was situated about 25 feet from the museum entrance, but it fell across Carlile Lane. "Another crew arrived and worked until 10:30 that night to clear the road," Elayne said.

History of the "Postmaster's House"

According to the "Novato Historian" (Summer, 2014), "The building was a small house of New England architecture prefabricated and brought around the Horn of Africa in pieces." It was thought to have been erected by Ramon Pacheco, whose father Ygnacio Pacheco had received a Mexican land grant in 1840 named Rancho de Novato. It is believed the house was intended to be a wedding gift for Ramon's son, Augusto Pacheco."

The house was erected in Novato's original Old Town, which was near the present Nave Shopping Center. It was originally known as the "Pacheco House." The earliest known occupant was Henry "Harry" Jones; he started Novato's first postal service in 1856. In 1894, the

65-acre property was deeded to Corinna Pacheco, wife of Augusto. In 1917, her brother Valentine D. Clark moved in with his family, and resided there until he died in 1942. Harrison and Viola Hoes, Valentine's son and daughter-in-law, acquired the property in 1942 and operated it as a dairy farm. In 1949, they sold it to Ernest Kettenhofen. Kettenhofen raised mink there and named his business Marin Fur Farm. In 1953, Robert Gaut purchased and occupied the house. In 1964, Gaut offered to sell the historic old house to the City for use as a museum. A group of citizens, led by Downtown Improvement Association President Al Bowman and longtime resident Mrs. Gordon Anderson, urged the City to accept the offer,



but the deal didn't go through. Gaut sold the property to Fabian Bobo. According to May Rodgers Ungemach, author of Novato Township: "In 1972, Mr. Bobo agreed to give the house to the

City of Novato if they would move it so he could build apartments. The City accepted his proposal and the house was towed up Redwood Boulevard to its present site at 815 DeLong Avenue. The Novato Civic Foundation volunteered funds and hundreds of hours to restore the building."

On May 21, 1975, the Novato Advance reported: "Some 250 people, including former residents of the old Carlile and Postmaster's House, witnessed the formal dedication of those two restoration projects. Co-sponsors of the event were the Novato Civic Foundation which is restoring the Postmaster's House and the Novato Chamber of Commerce, which is now housed in the Carlile House, along with Landmark Associates which restored it."

"Among those present was Mrs. Victor Clark (Margaret) of Berkeley, the daughter-in-law of the late Valentine D. Clark who lived in the Postmaster's House from 1917-1949. Believed to be the oldest house in Novato, the Postmaster's home was moved from South Novato Boulevard to the civic center complex several years ago. With Mrs. Clark were her daughters, Margorie Brumbeloe, of Moraga, and Shirley Clark (Mrs. John) Ertola of San Francisco, Mrs. Ertola's daughter, Corinna Monoguerra who was named for another Novato pioneer, her great-great aunt, Corinna Pacheco."



On June 9, 1976, the Novato History Museum opened.

The following year, Valentine Clark's descendants planted the Monterey pine. At its feet a bronze plaque was placed which reads "This tree planted in loving memory of

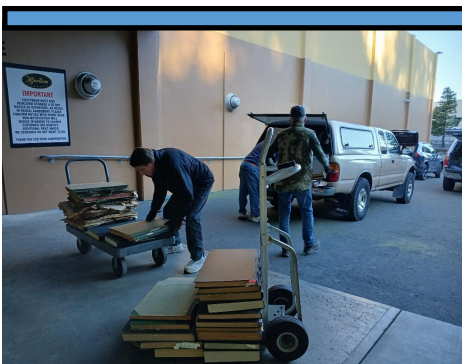
Valentine Doub Clark and his wife Anna E. Schuchard Clark, residents of this home 1917-1942 by their family 1977.”

Victor Clark, Jr. remembers visiting his aunt and uncle, Viola and Harrison "Hatz" Hoes. They operated a dairy ranch on the property. "I was five or six years old at the time. Mainly I remember it looking whitewashed, old, and weathered. There was a barn or garage that my brother, sister, cousins, and I played in. The Museum house is significant to me because my grandparents, my father and his sisters Viola and Isabel lived there. Both of my aunts taught grade school in Novato."

"This is why I volunteer as a docent at the Museum on the third Wednesday of the month. My grandfather died a year before I was born, so spending time in the house as a docent gives me the feeling of being connected to him. I enjoy welcoming visitors and occasionally have met people who knew some of my family here in Novato," Victor said.



It was old home week for a number of former Novatans, when they joined in the dedication of the old Carlile House and Postmaster's House as part of Novato's Bicentennial celebration. Pictured (L-R) are Ben Young, Mayor Dorothy Young, Peg Coady, Dr. Carlile, David Monoguerro (holding Corina Marie) and his wife, Jill, Majorie Brumeloe, Shirley Clark Ertola, and her mother Margaret West Clark.



One Saturday morning, an amazing group of Novato history lovers showed up at the Heirloom storage facility to move 171 bound volumes of the Novato Advance to Building 500. It was very impressive how everyone pitched in and got the job done.

March General Meeting—Ed Ryken

Fifty-seven-year Novato resident Ed Ryken was the featured speaker at the Quarterly Membership Meeting on March 16. His topic: "This Old Rock: The 500-year Story of Alcatraz." He related many intriguing stories:

1772: Captain Pedro Fages spotted the island from the Berkeley hills. It was named Isla de los Alcatrazes ("Isle of the Pelicans").

1846: Julian Workman petitioned Pio Pico, last Mexican Governor of California, for a grant of title to Alcatraz Island. Pico approved on condition that Workman erect a lighthouse.

1863: A group of Southern sympathizers purchased a 90-ton schooner for use as a privateer. Their plan was to commandeer Alcatraz's arms and ammunition. But there was a problem which spoiled their plans. Some of these men were in a bar and spilled the beans. As soon as they set sail, they were captured and guess where they were taken? Alcatraz.

1865: News came of President Lincoln's assassination. Confederate sympathizers in California who celebrated Lincoln's death were imprisoned on Alcatraz.

1895: 14 Hopi Indians were sent to Alcatraz. They requested all sorts of amenities, including agave plants. They're still on the island today, some of them 14' high.

1899: Jerge Okokudekr, son of the King of the Zulus, enlisted in the U.S. Army as a private, changing his name to Tom Taylor. He and his fellow "Buffalo Soldiers" built the roads which now constitute the island's trails.

1906 earthquake: San Francisco's jail collapsed. Its 250 prisoners were transferred to Alcatraz.

1917-18: 30 conscientious objectors were imprisoned in Alcatraz's dungeons. They were considered worse than murderers.

Gardens were an important part of everyday life for officers, families, and prisoners confined to Alcatraz by sentence or duty. Today, some 400 volunteer gardeners tend them.



Novatans for Racial Equality

December 3, 1964, Daily Independent Journal,

By Theron A. Newell

"Every card in the deck was stacked against us," said Karen Duncan, Novato High School graduate who has been a civil rights worker in Mississippi for the past six months.



KAREN DUNCAN
Disillusioned

"You could feel the hatred in their eyes," she said of the white residents in Mississippi. She told of youths and adults swearing, glaring and making catcalls at the civil rights workers on the street. She returned to Novato somewhat disillusioned.

"I didn't have any idea what civil rights were when I left for Mississippi," she said.

"It isn't just a case of education or voter registration; the whole system down south must go."

Karen was not sure whether she would return to Mississippi or stay in California and work for the Congress of Racial Equality.

July 10, 1968, Page B 8 Novato Advance

By SUE: JOHNSON

"I am sure many of you share my concern for the future of our country ..." wrote Elizabeth Smith, a young Novato housewife, in an Advance "Letters to the Editor" column last April, following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King.

Stressing her concern about white racism, she wrote, "I would like to help but don't know how." She invited others who feel the same way to contact her.

Several did, and in the succeeding weeks the group set up an organization - Novatans for Racial Equality - and elected Mrs. Smith's husband, Charles Smith, as its president. Questioned by the Advance last week on the new organization, Liz explained what prompted her to write her letter: "For the past six months I had been reading books on the subject - "Black Power," by Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton; "Crisis In Black and White," by Charles Silberman; "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," "The Fire Next Time," by James Baldwin; "Soul On Ice," by Eldridge Cleaver.

"I hadn't realized fully until then how much the Negroes have to be angry about. I was angry at myself for not paying attention to what was happening. Then came Dr. King's death. "I knew then that I wanted my voice out there with everybody else's. If we can sit back now as comfortable white people and ignore the realities that he fought against there's no hope left for us."

STRONG COMMITMENT

Her husband also has a strong commitment. A graduate of San Francisco Theological Seminary, he took part in the Selma march, a landmark in the civil rights struggle. He is now a group counselor at juvenile hall.

Smith sees Novatans for Racial Equality as an organization that will focus attention on "problems in important areas - jobs, education, housing." The group plans to examine discrimination in housing and hopes to find friendly realtors who will help Negroes find homes.

The group will coordinate its efforts with the Marin Committee for Fair Play.

The group is also interested in the school curriculum - whether it offers an accurate portrayal of Negro history and Negro contributions. The group would like to see more Negro teachers in Novato schools.

"We're also thinking of meetings with a film or speaker in which we would try to reach a larger audience. We want to bridge the gap in understanding - make it clear, for instance, what it means to be black. Novato is a white ghetto - we're culturally deprived. Many of us don't realize how the white power structure affects those who are poor or black - don't understand why the power structure needs changing."



Editorial cartoon by Paul Miller in November 1, 1978 Novato Advance. "This is the thanks we get for putting Novato on the map."

The group has already had a turnover in membership because of disagreement over methods. Explained Liz: "Some of our members felt that you shouldn't do anything too public, lest it polarize the community - make everybody take extreme positions on this question. They felt you should try to get your ideas across on a person-to-person basis, mainly by being a good example."

Liz doesn't agree: "I'm distressed by people of goodwill who say we can't take any action. That's a way of finking out. It's a vote for the enemy if you don't try to influence others. We've got to make bigots social outcasts. This has got to be fought for the sake of the whole country."

Smith is concerned that too few whites understand the depth of the problem faced by Negroes, and "if they don't understand they'll respond inadequately." He says, "It's hard for us to see ourselves being so frustrated and angry, that we'd be ready to loot or burn to express our feelings. We must try to put ourselves in their shoes."

Liz Smith recommends the books of the black militants as one way of bridging the gap. "When I read the autobiography of Malcolm X I came to know someone very different from myself. It was shocking to learn that my values are not shared by so many people. I had to learn more."

learn more."

Asked for his opinion on the role the church has taken in the struggle for racial justice and equality of opportunity, seminary graduate Smith said, "The church needs to be involved in what is the most pressing social issue of our time. To remain uninvolved would be at the price of being untrue to its own character."

POLITICAL ARENA

"We're missing an important element of the gospel when we segregate ourselves from the poor and from blacks. The church should get into the political arena on this problem. That's where the decisions are made."

What has been the reaction to Novatans for Racial Equality?

No rocks thrown through the window, according to the Smiths. Mainly friendly telephone calls and letters. However, someone apparently placed the Smiths on a mailing list for rightwing literature. They have received a brochure calling the Civil Rights bill a power grab for federal control of private property and another on the

National Negro Congress of Racial Pride, which has as one of its goals "to make clear that provocateurs and merchants of unrest, be they imported West Indians, white liberals, black separatists . . . are entirely unwelcome." The group has attracted mainly professional people - teachers, clergymen, a lawyer, a former social worker, a probation officer. Several Negroes have attended

1. Louise + Richard Aldrich
2. Carol + Raleigh Floyd
3. Ernie + Mary Gray 12 Ue
4. Dick + Nancy Kuhn 363
5. Ruth + Bill Mordecai 440
6. Ernie + Shirley Selberg 133
7. Chuck + Liz Smith 6 Jun
8. Terry Salnit 7 Carmel
9. Jeanne Struck 590 Tne
10. Jeanette + Ed Tobin 212 x
11. Leo + Ellen Hagier 646 T.
12. Jan Murray 93 Estrella
13. Howard + Jean Mc Connell
14. James + Margit Pettipas
15. Connie Coleman 4 Caro
16. Sue Stompe 110 San
17. Nancy + Irving Hauke 10
18. Roberta Boyd 96 Last

Early list of members of the NRE (In Diane Ryken's handwriting)

the meetings.

According to Smith, Novatans for Racial Equality is continuing to seek new members and a role to play in the fight against racism.

Daily Independent Journal November 26, 1968

I-J Reporters Notebook - By Theron Newell
WE HAVE ALWAYS felt that the Novato area was about as free of racial prejudice as any we have ever seen. We attributed part of this to the influence of Hamilton Air Force Base.

That is not the only reason. Novato was the only city in Marin County which had a negro police officer until he quit to go elsewhere for more money. Novato has a Negro on its parks and recreation commission. Negroes and Orientals are in business here. People of minority groups live all over the city and are not confined to any "ghetto"

area.

A group, Novatans for Racial Equality, wants the city council to do more for the minority races. It has held two meetings with the Novato City Council to further the cause.

The council has responded by declaring Novato an open city for housing and also hiring of its 70 employees. One point which the Novatans for Racial Equality made was that unless something drastic is done, America will be a two-culture society by 1984.

The morning after the council met with the racial equality group. I saw a car with a sticker on its back bumper which read: "Love America or leave it." The driver of the car was a Negro. It helped restore my confidence in this community and country.

The Sacramento Bee November 17, 1981,

By Carol Pearson

... Sue Oliver of Novato, her voice wavering, recalled a wave of cross-burnings, vandalism, shootings, and attacks against minority families in her Marin County community. The violence touched her family. Assailants in a pickup truck rammed her car as she drove home. Her husband was shot at by the occupant of a passing truck with blanks as he left a bus in downtown Novato. Oliver quit her job to be home when her daughter, taunted by racial epithets, returned from school.

Checking with neighbors, she discovered other families were facing similar incidents. Novatans for Racial Equality was formed and subsequently instituted a neighborhood watch, raised reward money for informers, established a hotline to receive reports of racial incidents and organized a police-community taskforce. "We were able to at least force them to go underground," she said.

She said fear and embarrassment had kept people from talking about bigotry in the affluent community. "People were ashamed and didn't want people to know," she said later.



Ed and Diane Ryken were members of the Novatans for Racial Equality. Ed was the guest speaker at the Guilds General Meeting in March, and Diane was named Novato Citizen of the Year in 1991.

The Flying Tigers

By Michael Corlett

The First American Volunteer Group ("AVG") who later became known as The Flying Tigers, was a group of American volunteer military pilots who aided Nationalist China in the initial stages of WWII before the United States became involved.

In April of 1937, China and Japan were on the verge of war. Madame Chiang Kai Shek, the Chinese premier's wife, hired Claire L. Chennault, a retired United States Army Air Corps Captain, for a three-month mission to China to make a confidential survey of the military preparedness of the Chinese Air Force. What he found was frightening. In his diary, he noted, "I am appalled by the situation here, and would go home if I did not want to serve China... The Airforce is terribly unprepared for war."

Three months after Chennault arrived, Japan began bombing raids in China, first Shanghai, then Nanking. As Chennault had feared, the Chinese pilots and their aircraft were no match for the Japanese.



By late 1939, China was desperate. Over the previous two years, the Japanese had captured large areas of China. In his effort to push back and prevent further Japanese territorial aggression, Chinese Premier Chaing Kai Shek sought to buy one hundred P-40 Warhawk fighter planes from the US. He also needed to hire pilots to fly them and ground personnel to maintain the aircraft.

Chennault, fully committed to helping the Chinese, went to Washington to help lobby for the aid. President Roosevelt was sympathetic because he wanted to help China keep the Japanese empire from expanding farther into the Western Pacific. However, the US Congress was isolationist and wanted no part of another war. Also, selling the aircraft to China would violate US neutrality acts.

Roosevelt was walking a fine line. He wanted to hurt the Japanese, but he didn't want to start a war with them. Roosevelt used the recently passed Lend-Lease Act to help China. The act authorized the president to lend war supplies to nations whose defense he deemed vital to American security. Roosevelt was able to extend credits to China to allow them to purchase military supplies. These actions were kept relatively secret from the American public.

Once the money matters were taken care of, recruiting began for U.S. pilots and ground support personnel. Chennault's representatives fanned out to various Army, Navy, and Marine military bases throughout the country, looking for volunteers. Volunteers would resign from their services and be on a one-year contract with Central Aircraft Manufacturing Company (CAMCO), an American company doing business in China. Some pilots signed up because the money was three times their current salary, but the majority volunteered for the adventure of going to China to fight the Japanese. Premier

Chaing Kai Shek sweetened the deal by promising the pilots a five-hundred-dollar bonus for each Japanese Aircraft they destroyed.

Ninety-nine pilots, along with nearly two hundred support personnel, left San Francisco for training in Burma on July 10, 1941, aboard a Dutch cruise ship. CAMCO issued new passports that did not list the volunteers as flyers. Fake occupations were shown to disguise their purpose when the cruise ship made a routine stop in Japan.

Training took place in Toungoo Burma. Most of the pilots had never flown a P-40 nor had any air combat training. The training was intense. There were several accidents in which the pilots survived, but their planes were beyond repair. During the training, two pilots were killed. After years of watching Japanese Tactics in China, Chennault knew the heavier and slower P-40s could not win a traditional dogfight with a Japanese Zero. The AVG pilots were taught to climb into the sun and then dive down on the Japanese planes. As one pilot put it: "Hit and run, hit and run, dive, come back to altitude."

In November of 1941, one of the AVG pilots picked up a copy of an English-language newspaper, the *Illustrated Weekly of India*, which had a photo of an Australian P-40 on the front page. The nose of the aircraft had been painted to look like the face of a shark. The next day AVG pilots began painting the image on their P-40s. This image, which would soon become world famous, became the iconic symbol of the AVG.

After six months of intensive training, the first combat mission flown by the AVG took place on December 20, 1941. Ten Japanese bombers, on their way to bomb Kunming, China, were intercepted by the AVG. Four bombers were destroyed and several others were damaged. No bombs fell on Kunming that day. It was the first of over fifty air battles that would make the AVG famous.

When the P-40s first arrived in Kunming, someone in the cheering Chinese crowd yelled, "Fei Hu" (Flying Tiger). An American journalist, Spenser Moosa, heard the term and included it in his report and the name stuck. From then on, the American Volunteer Group became known as the Flying Tigers. Over the next seven months, the Flying Tigers delayed the Japanese advances on Burma and Southeast China. The strafing and bombing of the Japanese columns in the Salween River Gorge by the Tigers prevented the Japanese from invading China from the west and India from the east. In June 1942, the end of all the volunteers' one-year



Chennault with Madam & General Chiang Kai-Shek



commitment was on the horizon, and the U.S. 10th Army Air Corps would soon assume responsibility for flight operations in China.

Before the Army took over, Chennault apologized to T.V. Soon, Premier Chaing Kai-shek's personal representative, about the total cost of the AVG operation, about eight million dollars. Soon replied, "The AVG was the soundest investment China ever made. I am ashamed that you should even consider the cost."

The AVG Flying Tigers were disbanded on July 4, 1942.

Chennault rejoined the US Army as a Brigadier General. Some of his pilots also stayed on because of their loyalty to Chennault. Many of the pilots, however, elected to go home and rejoin their previous military services or get involved in other aviation-related pursuits.

Early on, military experts predicted that the AVG would not last three weeks in combat. However, during their short seven-month tenure, the Flying Tigers, under the command of Claire Lee Chennault, attained one of the finest air combat records in history. The group destroyed 299 enemy aircraft with 153 more probably destroyed. Eighteen U.S. pilots died by strafing, accidents, or enemy bombs. Only four pilots died in air-to-air combat. Although always outnumbered, the Flying Tigers never lost an air battle.

Much to the chagrin of the former AVG pilots, after the disbandment of the AVG, the Army Air Corps units fighting in China continued using the name and insignia of the Flying Tigers until the end of the war. In the dark days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, there was very little good news on the US home front. The Japanese looked invincible. The highly publicized exploits of the Flying Tigers provided a much-needed morale boost for the nation.

The Hamilton Field History Museum features a display and a video highlighting the history of the Flying Tigers.

Welcome New Guild Members

Novato Historical Guild
Membership Report
June 2024

Individual Membership

Norman Askim
Gayle Davis
Gerrod Herndon
Andrew Potter
Virginia Schultz
Lisa Smith

Family Membership

Rich & Kathy Ronsheimer

Life Membership

New Business
Creekside Bakery
Novato Chamber of
Commerce

If you have questions about
membership, call or email

Lorne Magnone
415-897-4320

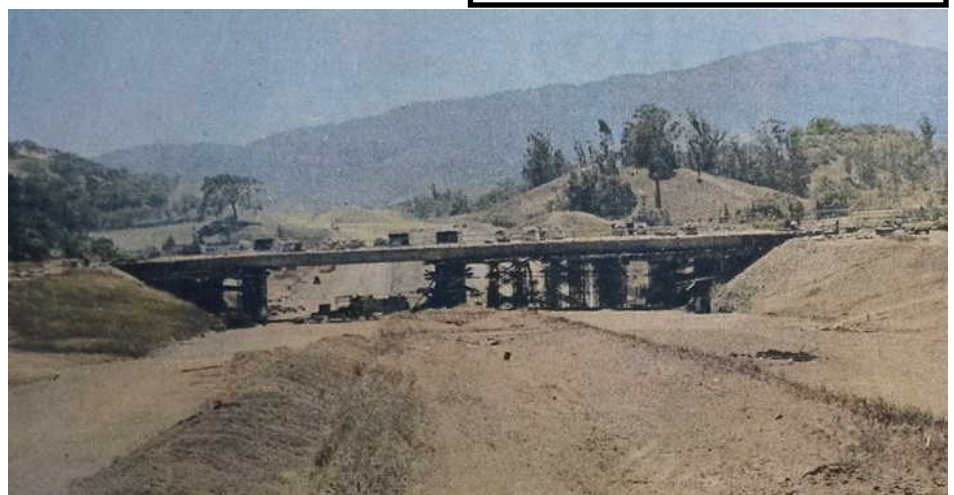
lornemagnone@peoplepc.com

Volunteer Opportunities:

The Novato Historian has an opening on the Editorial Board. If you like writing and/or editing this is the position for you. Please contact the Guild at info@novatohistory.org or ask for Michael Read at 415-717-1412.

Please Support Our Guild Business Members:

Aaero Heating & Sheet Metal, Inc
A.D. Scott Building
Alders Financial Solutions
Andrew McAghon Landscaping
Anixter & Oser Insurance
Bank of Marin
Cameron, Coffey & Kaye
Christman Chiropractic
Creekside Bakery
Empathy Estate Planning
H & J Tire
Indian Valley Golf Club
Las Guitarras Restaurant
Novato Chamber of Commerce
Marianne's Painting
Marin Color Service
Marin Landscape Materials
Mclsaac Dairy
NARA Aesthetics LLC
Nave Enterprises
Novato Builders Supply, Inc.
Novato Grove Druids #113
Pini Hardware
Red Barn Productions
The Bluffs at Hamilton Hill
Trumbull Manor Inc.
Valley Oak Wealth Management
Valley Memorial Park Cemetery
& Funeral Home

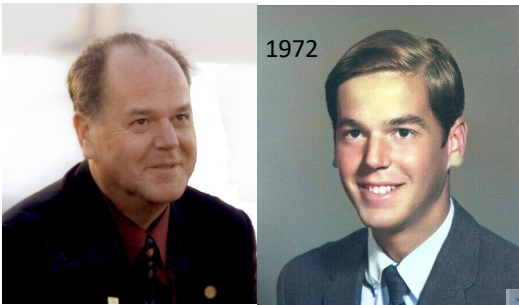


DeLong overpass—May 29, 1974

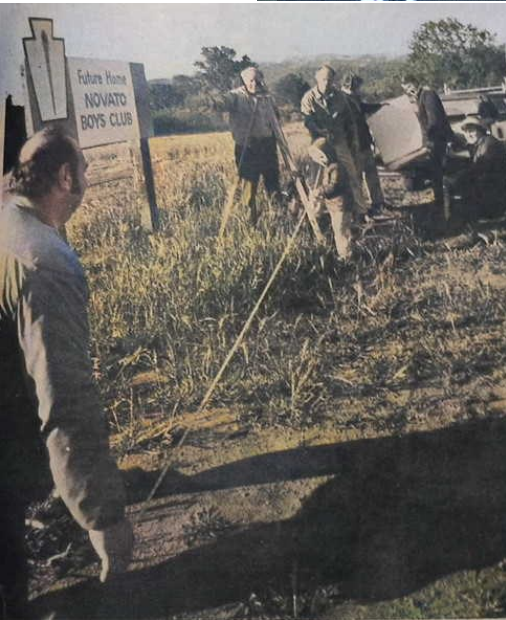
Novato – 50 Years Ago

(April, May & June 1974)

by Michael Read



1972



Volunteers begin work on Boys' Club. Pictured here are Gino Westcott (back to camera), two-year-old Lisa Ghirardo, Sam Harkleroad at the sextant, Edward Ghirado, Paul Scheller, Dave Milano and Al Globe.



This will be the first view of Novato for motorists taking the DeLong Avenue off-ramp from the new freeway when it opens in late September. The deep channel slicing by the old postmaster's house at left is the excavation for the footing for a concrete block retaining wall which will be faced with Boston ivy.



New City manager Phillip Brown and wife, Jean. Phillip J. Brown, 42, former city manager of Madera, will begin his new \$27,000 per year job on May 20.



The national Guard is poised to demolish and remove the burnt out Burdell mansion at Rancho Olompali about the first of April. The Guard brought in big cats to start the demolition work at the beginning of March but rain precluded the work start. Demolition will demand much care as the old adobe inside the mansion is to be preserved as a state historical landmark.

2024 Board Meetings

Second Tuesday of the Month
Margaret Todd Senior Center
1560 Hill Road
Time: 1:30 – 3:00 PM

Jan. 9	July 9 (field trip)
Feb. 13	Aug. 13
March 12	Sept. 10
April 9	Oct. 8
May 14	Nov. 12
June 11	Dec. 10

Membership Meetings

March 16	10 – 12
June 15	10 – 12
Sept. 14	12 – 2 (at Hamilton)
Dec. 14	10 – 12

Guild members are welcome to attend the Board meetings. Please check with the President, Lynn Dawson at (303) 888-5922, in case a meeting has been changed.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

You may make a gift of appreciated securities (stocks, bonds, mutual funds) to the Novato Historical Guild. Your gift is not only tax deductible, but if you have held the shares for more than one year, your tax deduction will equal the full value of the securities on the date of the gift.

MEMORIAL PLAQUE GIFTS

You may honor a friend or loved one by having their name engraved on an individual brass plate on the Memorial Plaque in the Novato History Museum. Please call the Museum at (415) 897-4320. Each plaque costs \$250 per person named and is tax deductible.

In Memoriam

David Paul Williams

Fred Loebenstein

William "Bill" Hovis

THE GUILD EXTENDS SYMPATHY TO

David Paul Williams and family on the loss of David Paul Williams

The Loebenstein family and to the hundreds of Novato students Fred taught at Rancho School

The Hovis family on the loss of Bill Hovis

Contact Us

Hamilton Field History Museum

Manager: Ray Dwelly
Museum phone: 415-382-8614
Email: Hamilton_museum@att.net
<https://www.facebook.com/HamiltonFieldHistoryMuseum/>

Novato History Museum

Manager: Susan Magnone
Museum phone: 415-897-4320
Email: info@novatohistory.org
<https://www.facebook.com/NovatoHistoryMuseum/>

Membership Form

Please mail checks to Novato Historical Guild. P.O. Box 1296, Novato, CA 94948.

Yes, I want to join the Novato Historical Guild and help preserve Novato history!

New Renewal

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual membership | \$30 year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family membership | \$40 year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life membership, individual | \$350 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life membership, joint | \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business membership | \$75 year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Free for 90+ | |

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Additional donations? _____

Interested in volunteering? _____

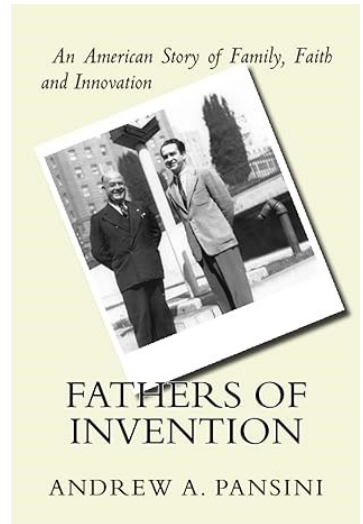
Email address: _____

June 15th Speaker Andrew A. Pansini

“Fathers of Invention” is the story of how a Marin inventor changed the course of an entire industry with the invention of the world’s first automatic swimming pool cleaner. Talk by Andrew A Pansini – Retired CEO of Jandy Industries and Savoy Corporation as well as the former Chairman of the Board of Novato Community Hospital and Sutter Health.



Andrew Pansini, a 50-year resident of Novato will share this engaging success story of a family that embodies the American values of hard work, innovation and entrepreneurial spirit. It is a story of the life of his father, Andrew L. Pansini, the inventor of the world’s first automatic pool cleaner in 1957. This was the first of many of his inventions spanning over his lifetime. He founded Jandy Industries and developed and manufactured products at the Novato headquarters that helped to change the future direction of an entire swimming pool industry. It is a story of the success of 2 Marin business and the journey that started with a garden hose falling into the inventor’s San Rafael swimming pool. Mr. Pansini will have signed copies of his book, “Fathers of Invention” for all in attendance.



Volunteer opportunity

The hospitality committee is looking for volunteers to assist with set-up and refreshments at the Historical Guild's general meetings. The Guild hosts four general meetings a year which offer a great opportunity for members to gather and enjoy presentations from some very interesting speakers. Assistance is needed from 9:00 a.m. until noon for each of these meetings. If interested please email info@novatohistory.org, or call the Novato History Museum at 415-897-4320.

◆ YOU ARE INVITED ◆

General Membership Meeting ~ Novato Historical Guild

Saturday, June 15, 10:00 to noon

Novato City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue, Novato

“Fathers of Invention”

Fifty-year Novato resident Andrew A. Pansini, retired CEO of Jandy Industries and Savoy Corporation, and former Chairman of the Boards of Novato Community Hospital and Sutter Health, will tell the compelling story of how his father, Marin resident Andrew L. Pansini, Jr. transformed an industry by inventing the world’s first automatic swimming pool cleaner. The Pansini story embodies the American values of hard work, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit.

Anyone interested in Novato History is welcome to attend.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Novato History Museum

Hamilton Field History Museum

815 Delong Avenue

555 Hangar Avenue

(415) 897-4320

(415) 382-8614

COME VISIT AND BRING A FRIEND!

The Museums are open three days a week -- Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday - Noon to 4 p.m.
Closed Major Holidays