

# The Novato Historian

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## The Novato Historian

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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

Happy Holidays!

This is a very busy time of year, so take a quick break and enjoy reading The Historian!

We had two fantastic speakers for our September Membership Meeting. Our first speaker, Laurie Reemsnyder, who worked with the Hamilton Transit Center, shared very interesting and touching stories about how, between 1980 and 1983, more than 180,000 Southeast Asian refugees were brought through the Transit Center at the decommissioned Hamilton Air Force Base before being transported to their final U.S. destinations. Our second speaker, Lauren Vuong, had most of the room in tears, as she shared her very personal story of leaving Viet Nam in a small boat that was eventually rescued by a larger ship, the captain of which she spent many years tracking down to thank for her family's rescue. As a result of hearing these speakers, the Novato Historical Guild and the Hamilton Museum are working with local Rotary clubs to create a memorial to honor the work of the Transit Center and to recognize the important role that it played in the humanitarian response to the need to help Southeast Asian refugees be welcomed to the United States.

In October, we celebrated a very successful Family History Day.

The Novato Historical Guild created Family History Day to celebrate Novato History and the history of various long-time Novato families who have contributed to the culture of our community. Participants this year included the Novato History Museum, the Hamilton Field History Museum, multi-ethnic and multi-generational families, the City of Novato Multicultural Advisory Commission, the Novato Unified School District, School Fuel, and Marin Indian Alliance among others. It was a wonderful day enjoyed by all who attended. There are so many people to thank for the success of this fun family friendly day in Novato, but Barry Smail and Teresa Saltzman deserve special recognition for coordinating this special day!

On October 24th, we launched the second season of the Novato Speaker Series (NSS). The Novato Historical Guild is a sponsor of the NSS along with the Rotary Clubs in Novato. This new season includes four quarterly dynamic speakers who will educate, entertain and enlighten! Speakers include singer Maria Muldaur who sang and discussed her music career with Paul Liberatore, IJ Editor. In January, Professor Alex Filipenko, PH.D., a distinguished professor of astronomy, will share exciting results with NASA's James Webb Space Telescope. Eric Schmitt, a senior correspondent for the NY times covering national security and who shares four Pulitzer Prizes, will talk about America's role in conflicts around the world. The fourth speaker will be 4-time super bowl champion, Keena Turner, who will tell the secret of the 49ers super bowls championship run. The programs will be held at the Bill and Adele Jonas Center. To buy tickets go to:

[www.novatospeakerseries.com](http://www.novatospeakerseries.com).

You also do not want to miss our speaker for our December Membership Meeting! Dewey Livingston, long-time noted Novato historian, will be talking about his new book. See the details on the back page of this Historian.

Once again, I would like to thank all our docents and volunteers for the fantastic job that you did this year! We couldn't have opened the doors without you!!

*Lynn Dawson*

# Mass Breakout At San Quentin Prison In 1882 Startled Novato

HISTORY IN NORTH MARIN

By CHRIS and ED MANNION

February 4, 1957

Nodding Novato, little more than a stage stop that drowsy July 22 afternoon in 1862, awoke with a start when news reached it that the entire population of San Quentin prison had broken out and was marching on San Rafael with small arms and cannon.

Word spread rapidly among the ranches surrounding the settlement and soon a knot of horsemen raised the dust of an even then historic highway as they rode hard toward the Marin County seat.

What were their names? The record seems to be lost, as lost as many of the facts surrounding the prison break. A search through San Francisco, San Rafael, Petaluma and Santa Rosa newspapers files turned up much conflicting information. Neither the Department of Corrections in Sacramento nor Warden H. A. Teets' office at the prison have records for July 1862.

## Warden As Hostage

Warden Teets will be interested especially in a fact agreed upon by all the stories: His early-day counterpart, Lieutenant Governor Chellis (who was the warden when the Legislature wasn't in session) was rudely interrupted during lunch and carried along by the mob as a hostage. To add insult to hunger, a political opposition paper in San Francisco lambasted the lieutenant governor the next day for "being a companion of the robbers."

The Daily Alta Californian's figures of 300 men getting outside the walls and ten of them being killed strike a medium in the differing data. There seem to have been over 500 in the prison at the time, with about half of the original 300 escapees leaving the immediate grounds and making a serious break for freedom.

First rumors throughout Marin that the armed criminals were marching to sack San Rafael proved untrue. Seemingly none of the ringleaders was interviewed to learn the intent, but the path of flight up Corte Madera creek might have indicated a hope to reach the woods of Mt. Tamalpais or eventual capture of boats at Sausalito in order to reach the thicker jungles of San Francisco's back streets and alleys.

## Broken At Ross

The break was broken at the Ross Embarcadero. A pursuing force from San Quentin hung back upon the earnest pleas of Warden Chellis mindful of a pistol at his head. But the escapees found themselves finished near Ross when a San Rafael sheriff's posse swelled by "mercantile men and the yeomanry of Marin" converged on the creek landing.

The worried warden was bundled into a carriage and returned to safety and, presumably, a considerably cold meal.

In the meantime, about twenty prisoners tried to get away aboard the "Pipe County," a boat tied at the San Quentin dock. They made it all right, cut the lines and promptly went aground and were captured.

There were plenty of stragglers at large, however. Novato creek came in for its share of scrutiny as two revenue boats searched the northern by-ways of San Pablo bay. The concern in North Marin can be gauged by the following account:

## Residence Ransacked

"On Thursday evening soon after dark, the residence of Solomon Hesler, residing at Nicasio, was entered by five

of the late escapees, declaring themselves to be highwaymen, turned the house topsy-turvy, stripped Hesler of his clothing, carried away everything that was of any value, amongst which were two rifles, ammunition, etc., and after threatening to tie and gag him, finally left without carrying their threat into execution. Fortunately, the wife of Mr. Hesler was absent at the time."

Five desperadoes, whether they were the same group seen at Nicasio is not known, were cornered on San Antonio creek north of Novato the next day. One was killed, one wounded and captured and three escaped.

A month later north bay newspapers reported that twenty-five of the escapes were still at large and a counterfeiting ring had been discovered within the prison.



*COMPLETED IN 1854, this portion (right) of the first stone construction for San Quentin prison was eight years old when Marin County was startled by a mass escape of prisoners. The old Spanish cell block is soon to be torn down. Previous to the 1852 purchase of 20 acres at Quentin Point for prison grounds, California law-breakers were kept in a "convict ship," the barkentine Euphemia owned by Mariano G. Vallejo. Vallejo and James S. Estell were low bidders for San Quentin's original construction work. Escapes were frequent both from the ship and from the early cell blocks and Marin farmers complained loudly about them, as the escaped convicts roamed the county. In the foreground is San Quentin's noted "Garden Beautiful" which is maintained by prisoners.*



View of prison August 1, 1910

# Harlan Frost—A Most Remarkable Man With Remarkable Novato Memories

By Barry Smail

This past summer, The Historian interviewed 97-year-old Harlan Frost and his daughter Kathrina Frost Novak on the family's Feliz Road property. The four-acre parcel was purchased from the Burdell family in 1914 by William and Ada Ivey, Harlan's grandparents, as a vacation property for them and their three daughters—Ada May Ivey Christie, Estelle West Ivey Frost, and Annie Ivey Krieger.

For 22 years, there were no fulltime residents. "It was just a summer place," says Kathrina. In 1936, Ada moved in on a permanent basis with Estelle and her two children—ten-year-old Harlan Garretson Frost, Jr., and six-year-old Joan Estelle Frost (later Rose). Almost 80 years later, Harlan still calls the place home. He lives there with his wife Marita, their daughter Kathrina Novak, her husband Gary, and their children—Julia Estelle (a sophomore at San Marin), and Garret Paul (before he went off to college).

The Historian would like to thank Guild member Lisa Leduc, Harlan's neighbor, for making the connection. Harlan and Kathrina are also members of the Guild.

## "The Ivey Inn"

Kathrina asked her father: "Did you come up here with your grandparents before you moved here?" "Oh, a lot of times, with my grandfather and Uncle Richie," Harlan replied. "We slept on that front porch which is part of the living room now." ("Uncle Richie" was Richard Christie, Ada May's husband. He owned a 14-acre parcel on nearby Leese Lane.)



*A happy group. William, Ada Ivey and their 3 girls on the Novato property 1916.*

"Originally, there were just wooden platforms for camping tents, and they named it the Ivey Inn," Kathrina said. Harlan added: "All the people from the Ivey family, friends, and everybody else used to come up here. Uncle Henry (Krieger, Auntie Anne's husband), was an advertising guy for Clorox and all those big companies. So, to keep them happy he used to invite them to parties at least once a year, and he had that whole tank house—it used to be a tank house, not too big, twelve-foot square—stacked up with liquor. I had the only key to that. Everyone camped right out here on the lawn. They had tents and sleeping bags. Big, big parties. I can't remember any of the men who came, except Billy Roth." "He was the President of Clorox," Kathrina added. "He was one of my uncle's best friends," Harlan replied.

## Grant Avenue School Days

Lulu Sutton was Harlan's 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Grant Avenue School. "There were only five or six of us in the class

Number one thing I remember is that Miss Sutton was a good teacher, but pretty strict on everything," Harlan said. "She umpired our baseball games. She hid behind the screen calling balls and strikes." Harlan recalls the school's layout: "It was built on a real steep hill. They graded two levels; the first was the school and a small playing yard with circles, slides, and that kind of stuff. And then you go up on the next level, which was the baseball field. It's where the Police Department is now."



The Novato Garden Club (established 1934) paid for the construction of the steps that went from Highway 101 up to the school. "Mom joined in '36, when we moved to Novato. They might have done something small before that, but that's the first big project I think the Garden Club ever did." Walter Louie and Harlan were schoolmates and became friends. Walter went on to become the "Superintendent of Mails" of the Novato Post Office. "The Louies lived over on Atherton Avenue and raised ducks," Harlan said. After 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation, Harlan attended San Rafael High. He caught the bus at Pioneer Park Cemetery. "Back then there were only a few small houses and chicken ranches on this side (west) of the highway," Harlan remembers. "There were about five stores on the other side (Grant Avenue). There was a car store, a drugstore. After the drugstore was Zunino's Shoe Store and after Zunino's was the Meyers Bakery (Quality Bakery). The bakery was there even before the school. The kids used to line up on top of the stone wall on the north side of the school. They had two or three 8<sup>th</sup> grade kids who would take the order, go over to the bakery, and come back. They didn't want all the kids running across the street at once so that was one of the rules."

Harlan remembers swimming in Novato Creek, which forms the southern boundary of his property. "There were two dams, one was Hartman's which was way up the creek, and this one here behind the house. Mrs. Guth had it put in to water her pear orchard. There weren't any swimming pools so all the kids wanted to come here and go swimming and so



Harlan on Novato Creek

we had to kind of restrict that. Anyway, I made two boats. We could ride half way to where San Marin High School is now because of how deep the water was from the dam.”

“What did you do with your friends when you were a teenager,” Kathrina asked. “Well,

I built a sailboat. It was pretty big for the creek. You couldn’t sail because there was no wind, so we got an old horse cart of some kind or another with big wooden wheels and we converted it to a boat carrier pushed it by hand and took it over to the Bugeia ranch (now the cemetery.) We got permission to keep the boat out there. My friends the Dieckmans knew them. We had it tied up at an abandoned duck hunting shack. Henry Dieckman, Leland Hill, Duane Tharp and I used to sail Black John Slough. There was a dock at the end of the slough, which I think it was originally used to load the cobblestones from Burdell for San Francisco. A couple of kids used to come out and throw rocks at us when we were sailing, so I invented a pipe cannon and we used it to shoot tapioca pellets at them. We put them in this piece of pipe and we lit a firecracker to shoot the tapioca.”

A couple of other memories: “We shot a lot of rats in the chicken houses at night and got paid in .22 bullets. Miss Bugeia (Theda) delivered the mail in an old Chevrolet. We had to walk down to Simmons Lane to pick it up.”

**Dr. and Mrs. Charles Stafford**

“They used to come every 4<sup>th</sup> of July, and he’d make powerful punch,” Harlan remembers. “He was a veterinarian and used to go to vaccinate chickens in their chicken houses. We’d go out to a ranch and vaccinate a thousand chickens in a single morning. I held the chicken’s wings apart so he could stick the needle in it. I remember one other thing I did—Dr. Stafford had a sedan car with a big trunk, and so I made him a big box to organize all his veterinary stuff. “Mrs. Stafford served on the School Board. “She was the one who gave me my diploma when I graduated from grammar school. They had the graduation ceremony in the Community House. The Staffords and my Mom moved to Novato in 1936 and became best friends.”

**A House With No Phone**

“We couldn’t afford a regular telephone,” Harlan said. “So, if somebody wanted to talk to us, they’d call up Auntie May on Leese Lane. But how could Mom and Auntie May talk? Well, I had two sound-powered Navy phones left over from the war. I connected a pair of wires from here over to her place along the C-Ranch barbed wire fence. They used to blow their police whistles to let each other know when they wanted to talk. That was interesting,” Harlan chuckled. “I still have the phones.”

**Picking Fruit in the Orchards**

“Didn’t you have to pick prunes,” Kathrina asked. “Oh yeah, I picked prunes. For a whole month, that’s the main thing we did every day. We got ten cents a box for picking those prunes off the ground. And they sold them to some big wholesaler.

“There was a big iron pot, and they had it built into a rock

stove with a chimney. They’d get that going and they had a boom that went from a pole like this and I was on this end of the pole and the prunes were on the other end.

Somebody else dumped the prunes into the basket, but my job was as soon as the prunes got full in the basket to lift them up and walk over so that the basket went right in the hot water pot. I would help, but I didn’t do it all. We’d dump the basket onto big wooden trays. We

had a table with a shaker so it’d shake them out to dry in a big field. And then you had to put those trays back on the truck. I drove an old car which was made into a pickup truck, and for thirty cents an hour I transported the prunes and pears from all around the orchard. Mrs. Guth was the owner.”

“And the pears all went to the wholesaler in bushel baskets. For the pears you got six cents a box which was a lot better, you could make money quicker. It doesn’t take that many pears compared to how many prunes it took. I can remember whole families sitting around under a prune tree—they’d all come, little kids, big kids, and they’re all trying to fight for the right tree.”

“Depending on what time you got there is what tree you got. Pear trees went from the creek to Novato Boulevard. Once you start on one tree you worked it until all the ripe ones were picked. Because I don’t think you’d get paid if you only half-filled it; you had to take it to the next tree and fill it.”

“There was another ranch where the Presbyterian Church is now (on Wilson Avenue). It belonged to Captain Clarkson who was a sea captain. The guy who took care of this orchard, Mr. Priest, came up from San Francisco looking for a job and he went to work for Mrs. Guth, and I guess when Mrs. Guth didn’t have that much work, he used to go over and work for Captain Clarkson. Mrs. Guth’s orchards were half prunes and half pears, I don’t think Clarkson had plum trees. Mr. Priest loved to hike. He would come across the creek to our property Saturday or Sunday mornings and ask if anyone wanted to go to the top of Mount Burdell. I hiked with him many times. He knew where every spring was and a lot of the history of the mountain.”

**December 7, 1941**

Richard Christie, Harlan’s uncle, lived on Leese Lane, just north of Feliz. “I used to clean his pigeon and rabbit cages and other chores, whatever he had, for 50 cents. I walked over there by cutting across Feliz Road northeast of our property and went through Gus Stensel’s place. The Kidders lived in that first house up there. One day when I was walking by they said ‘hey did you know we’re at war?’ I said



Grandpa Ivey and Harlan Frost Jr. 1927

*Continued on next page*

no, I didn't know it. They said they blew up Pearl Harbor. I remember that."

"During the war, Mom belonged to the airplane spotters. At the corner of what's now San Marin and Simmons there was a shack and they had a telephone that connected directly to Hamilton Field and she had to sit in that shack. You could do what you want but you couldn't have any lights. Whenever an airplane would come, she'd say there's an airplane, and if she could see it or knew how big it was, she would say, but if she couldn't she'd just say an airplane just went north or south or east or west from here. There were five or six of those shacks around west Marin."

In 1945, Harlan reached draft age. "I knew I was going to get drafted, so I joined the Navy. They sent me to electrical school in Jacksonville, Florida to learn aviation electronics. Then I was stationed at the Santa Rosa Naval Air Station and fixed planes." After that he was transferred to San Diego and later served on the USS Currituck, a seaplane tender. After the war, he enrolled in Heald's Engineering College under the GI Bill and got a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering in 1949.

### **More Novato Memories**

Kathrina asked: "So, what was Novato like, Dad, when you came back after the war?" "Well, for one thing you could always find a place to park on Grant Avenue," Harlan replied. "The Ashermans had a store like Pini's and they were competitors. Asherman's was down where the pool hall used to be, I think. When I was working for the City that's where my office was. The Ashermans (grocery store) and Pini (with a meat counter, groceries, work clothes, hardware and bullets) competed all the time. They were on the same street. One was at one end, and one was at the other end. Asherman's was right across the street from where Carlile's store was. Old Carlile. Well, I only know that he had that store there and he sold mostly hardware. He lived up the street there at the Carlile House. And he had an old hand-cranked phone that he talked back and forth to his wife on. He used to just sit there and read books and then if somebody would come in, he'd get up off the chair say 'well, what can I help you with?' But he was the only one that sold stuff like pipe and heavy hardware (ranch supplies)."



*Harlan and Marita at their 60th wedding anniversary with family*

everybody, but to make money most of the people belonged to the poultry producers and had 2,000 or 3,000 chickens. People used to grow lots of kale and stuff in their backyards to feed the chickens."

### **The McNerns**

Kathrina asked "What about the McNerns? Margaret Keena McNern, didn't she get married in the Catholic Church on Grant Avenue (now the Village Restaurant)?" "It was on Grant Avenue, I remember that," Harlan replied. Barry Smail asked if Harlan knew Jim McNern (former Guild President). "He was just a kid when I knew him," Harlan replied. "I haven't seen him since he was ten. We went over there all the time. They had a horse, and we used to go over and ride. We had to be careful because the horse liked to knock people off by walking underneath a tree." "Grandma was a hairdresser and used to cut his hair," Kathrina added. "She also set Jim's mother's hair (Margaret McNern)."

### **Novato Fire Department**

In the late 1940s, while attending college, Harlan worked part time for the Novato Fire Department. "There was four people in the Department, the rest were volunteers when I worked there. The Chief worked all the time and Frank Manzoni, the Assistant Chief, would work on and off when the Chief wasn't there. Then there was always a nightman-- Paul or whoever Scheller was one and I was the other. I think every other week we'd change off. I took the Greyhound bus from Heald's College to the corner of Grant and 101, right where the fire department was. We worked from about 5:00 in the afternoon until 7:00 or 8:00 the next morning. Had lots of time for studying or making bullets." Harlan continued. "The only phones the Fire Department had rang in the firehouse on the south wall and in the Chief's house, which was by the old chicken sack factory on Railroad Avenue. I can't remember the Chief's name. When they called fire, the operator would ring the Fire Department and we'd answer and they'd tell us where the fire was and then get in the engine, whichever one seemed appropriate, whether it was a grass fire or a house fire or a barn fire. We'd turn on the siren and drive out, and in the meantime the Chief would come out and direct everything. By that time theoretically we had gotten started. I remember when the radio store on Grant Avenue caught on fire. This time the phone didn't even ring, somebody was pounding on the door. I opened the door and he said 'hey, there's a fire down there on the end of Grant Avenue.' It was further down than Sherman, nearer the train station. I hooked up the truck to the hydrant but when I saw no water was flowing, I went to see what the problem was. The man said he hadn't turned on the hose yet because the store door was locked. I took the hose from him and blew out the door with the water."

### **The Bakery and the Fireplace**

"After the bakery burned down on Grant Avenue, (Pini Fire 1945) Dad purchased all the bricks, and the fireplace in this house is made of all those old bricks," Kathrina said. "Meyer's Bakery was the name, I think," said Harlan. "It was a guy and a lady and I don't know which one was Meyer. They're the ones that started the Novato Boys Club out on Wilson Avenue. It wasn't there then but that's what it evolved from." "Dad's very unusual," Kathrina said proudly. "Everything you see here he built by hand—the cement-work, the gardens, the house." "Not only this house," Harlan interjected, "I built the next house up there. Had only one



helper when I couldn't do it alone. Paid him \$20 a day, he thought he was rich. I built all the cabinets in both houses and the ones in Kathrina's house in Hayward, and some in your new house here."

### After the Korean War

In 1950, the Korean War broke out. "I got hooked in because when I got out of World War II, they said well, if we ever have another war, you can go back at the same rate if you join the Reserves. And unfortunately, I joined the Reserves and that's why I got recalled." Harlan was based at the Lwakuni Marine Corps Naval Air Station, near Hiroshima. "I repaired PEM and PBY planes that patrolled waters off Korea."

Harlan continued: "When I got out of the service I didn't want to go to work. I didn't want to do anything. But to please my mother, I kept going to San Francisco looking for a job. One day when I got home, Mom said oh, you got a telephone message, this guy wants you to come back, he's going to hire you." The call was from the Robert Dollar steamship company. "I designed radios for them and helped do all that kind of stuff. I worked there, I don't know, four or five years." Harlan commuted by bus from Novato to San Francisco. On the bus one day, he met Earl Marshall, who lived on Marion Avenue. Marshall was an engineer for Pacific Bell. "He talked me into going to work for the phone company," which Harlan did for the next 27 years. That was where he met Marita, his future wife.

### The Co-op Just Around the Corner

Kathrina Novak said "Please talk about the co-op down the street." Harlan replied: "It was the first house on Simmons near Virginia. That was the original konzum (German for co-op). Mrs. Baltz had a small shed out there. Had all sorts of canned vegetables. I think she had bread too. You had to belong, you paid so much. It wasn't very much. You could walk there with a cart or something and wheel it home. You didn't have to go downtown, which was a two-mile walk."

### Marita

Marita Brockmanns was born in Germany. Kathrina tells the story of how her mother came to the U.S.: "Mom's cousin Anne, who married Henry Silva, an American soldier, lived in Oakland and invited her to visit." Not long after she arrived in 1958, Marita found employment as an administrative assistant at Pacific Bell in San Francisco. "That's where she met and started dating Dad. On a visit home during Christmas of 1962, she wasn't quite sure if she would stay in Germany or go back to California. Dad surprised her by showing up on her parents' doorstep

completely unannounced. She moved back and married Dad in September of 1963. They made their first home in a brand-new apartment complex in Terra Linda. By the time I was born (1969), Dad had built a second house on the Feliz property for his mother to live in. He remodeled the original house, and we moved in there." "Mom made many lifelong friends in Novato. Most were actually from Germany, too. Grandma and Marie Stafford were best friends and Mrs. Stafford was like a second mother to my Mom." Marita went on to become President of the Novato Garden Club, was known for planning many bus trips as well as creating and selling holiday wreaths at the annual Holiday Fair. She also was a member of the Novato Chapter of the American Fuchsia Society and worked their annual showing at the Sonoma County Fair. She participated for many years in the Novato Music Association chorus and helped with set design for operas held at the Novato Community House.

### Working for the City of Novato

"When Pac Bell moved to the East Bay in 1983, I retired. I wasn't really looking for a job. I was more worried about our road getting flooded by that street that's across from us, Ruhlman Lane. I went down to the City and talked with the guy who did the roads." Novato City Engineer Tom Nolan was standing nearby and overheard the conversation. "About the time I got home, they called and asked if I would be interested in working for the City. They said it would only be for six months, but it ended up being what, 15 or 20 years. I oversaw the paving of half the streets in Novato. Also bridges and streetlights."

### The Present Day

When Harlan feels up to it, he continues to putter in his workshop. "I used to be able to go in my shop and work every day. Yesterday I got quite a bit done, but the rest of the week I haven't done nothing." Harlan's hobby is to build what he calls "monsters or robots" out of various materials.

Novato Fire Chief Bill Tyler invited Harlan and Kathrina to attend NFD's annual Pancake Breakfast October 13 at Station 62 on Atherton Ave. A private tour of the Jeffrey A. Meston Fire Museum at Fire Station 61 on Redwood Blvd occurred on October 18th.

On October 26, Harlan and Kathrina put their history on display at Novato Family History Day.



*Kathrina Frost Novak, Harlan Frost, and Jeff Keena at Station 62*

# “Cabbage Patch” Location

Novato Advabce: Aug 18, 1950—Old Town Novato To Be Site Of 80 New Homes; Novak Subdivider  
 On or near that part of Novato marked on the county maps as "Old Town" and Naves' will rise two new subdivisions. The Old Town site will have 80 to 90 homes.

The one on the site where Peter Nave grew his wonderful vegetable garden, will have 18 homes, according to John Novak, the subdivider. All these homes are designed for the growing, general issue family, with 2 or 3 bedrooms. Old Town Novato died with the coming of the Northwestern Pacific railroad. Novato moved up on the railroad tracks, and the ranches shipped their supplies to and from the docks at Sausalito. The place boomed. Hides, meat, cheese, and train loads of Gravenstein apples went out of Novato to England. And tradition has it that there were 18 saloons.

But, a man from Genoa by way of San Francisco, Peter Nave, bought the flat lands near Old Town in 1898. They blossomed into a great vegetable garden. He sold vegetables by the way-side to travelers by team and horse back on the old Petaluma road. He made the rounds of the great ranches with a light rig, selling his vegetables and fruit. He made everything grow and thrive, and the people in Marin-Sonoma counties always stopped at his gardens as they came down or went up the old highway. In recent years the gardens were called the "Cabbage Patch."

Peter Nave brought up his five children in Novato: Louis, William, Fred, Molly and Catherine. He lived in the flats and cultivated his gardens until a few years ago. He is now 86 years of age.

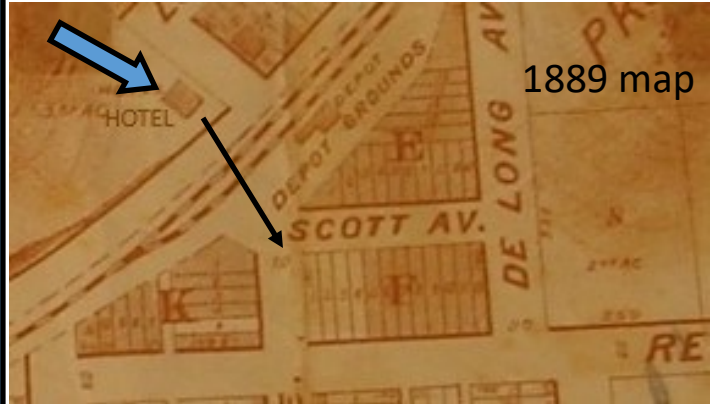
He sold his garden spot to John Novak for a subdivision of modern homes. The 18 home subdivision is to be called **Nave Court**.



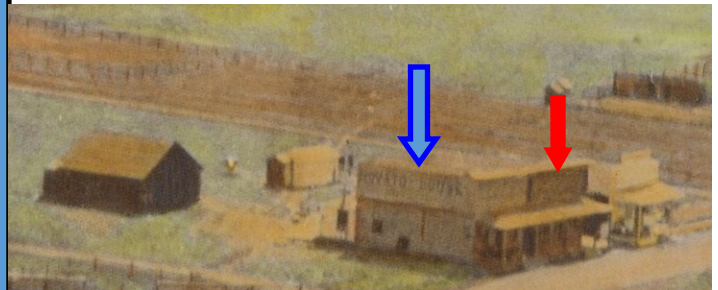
Peter Nave purchased his first piece of land in Novato. It was a small section of the best bottom land from the estate of Jose Ramon Pacheco. From a small garden, it grew into the major produce garden in the North Bay. He and his sons delivered produce throughout Marin by horse and wagon teams. William Nave is the young boy on the right. His mother, Mrs. Kitty Nave, is kneeling, foreground, next to the scooter. Novato Town constable, Louis DeVoto, is bearded man. Left. #1 is Hana Mary Nave #2 is Molly Nave.

# Novato House

The Home and Farm Company would erect a Hotel opposite the train depot in March 1889, with Gustva Walters, of the Orpheum theatre, as the manager. In June they added a big sign to the Hotel. By September the Novato House was flourishing under the new host ship of Albert Eicke. In November, Novato House would be moved between Scott and Reichert on Grant Avenue, and would receive an addition.



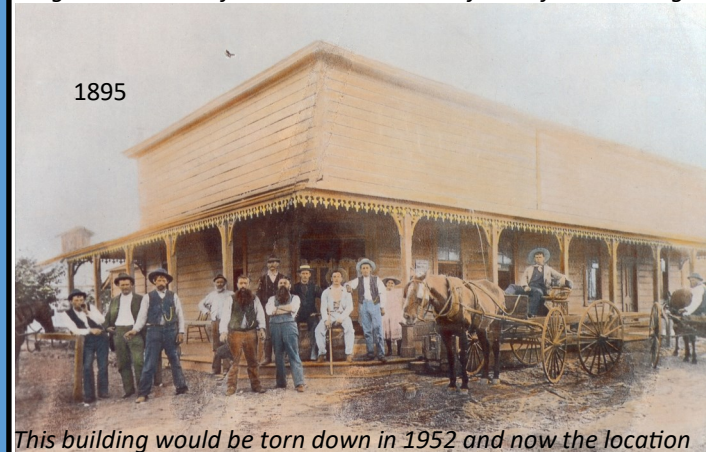
1890 Dr. H. Conrardt purchased the hotel and in November 1891 sold it to Mathias Essner.



Novato House at its new location. Blue arrow shows new sign and red arrow shows the addition



Sign on the side of the Hotel now on the front of the building



This building would be torn down in 1952 and now the location of Marin Color



# Escape and Arrest of a Desperate Criminal

Aug 15, 1878 IJ

On Saturday last, Henry Norton, known as 'Liverpool,' and by several other aliases, escaped from the State Prison. He was serving his second term, and under sentence for fifteen years for robbery, from Yuba County.

On Monday morning J. B. Faggiano, of Novato, who had seen a description of the man and the Warden's offer of reward, saw the man approach his store. He recognized him at once, and offered him a job, which he at first accepted, but afterwards declined, saying he would go to Petaluma, and get a job there. He started up Sweetser's Lane, and Faggiano went into the store and got a pistol, told Francois Cure to get his gun, and they both sprang to the horse and after him.

Liverpool took to the field as soon as he saw them, but Faggiano intercepted him, and with his pistol raised on him, told him to halt. He told Faggiano he was mistaken, but Bob thought not; he had the right scar on his face, and was asked to show his aim, which Bob examined.

Cure was holding his gun pointed on him meanwhile. He was proved to be the right man. and they took him back to the store, hitched up a team, and drove him straight to the prison, where the "bird" was thankfully received, and the State reward of \$50 promptly paid.

"Liverpool" is one of the most desperate characters in the criminal population of the State, and Faggiano had to be clear grit to take him.

He told his captors that he would have robbed a stage again very soon, and that they were doing a good job; but he would get out again the first chance, and then he would not be retaken.

Faggiano has done the State some service of this kind before and deserves remembrance. Wells, Fargo & Co. will no doubt remember him handsomely, because the scoundrel was sure to prey upon them if he had not been recaptured; and it was an act of great bravery to arrest him as Faggiano and Cure did.

If he had had a pistol, he would likely have killed them both, and he told them he would.

\*\*\*\*\*

Aug 22, 1878 IJ

Arrest of Liverpool.—The bold taking of this ruffian by Faggiano, at the imminent risk of his life, was an act for which the people of this county have a high appreciation, and we have several times heard the wish expressed that the daring act might be more suitably rewarded. We believe it is a fact that if the arrest had been delayed one day, the reward would have been twelve times the paltry \$50 which was paid. Would it be any more than simple justice for the State authorities and Wells Fargo & Co. to make a special payment to Faggiano?

## Joseph Baptiste "Bob" Faggiano II & Henry T. Jones House

"J.B. Faggiano was born in Italy, June 1, 1830. When four years of age his parents moved to France, where he resided until he attained the age of ten years. He then went with his father to the Society Islands, and there remained seven years, being for a portion of the time engaged as interpreter to the Government. He next came to California, arriving in San Francisco September 25, 1849, and went direct to Murphy's Camp, Calaveras County, where he mined for four years. We next find Mr. Faggiano following the occupation of a butcher in Amador County for seven years, after which he returned to San Francisco, purchased a sloop and established what is known as the "Novato Line," plying between Novato and San Francisco. Having continued this enterprise for fourteen years, he sold out and bought a store at Novato, which he has since managed." (From "History of Marin County" 1888)

### What we know By Michael Read

J.R. Pacheco would convey thirteen and eighty-one hundredths of land to Henry T. Jones on December 15, 1868. Henry would be murdered in March 1872.

Faggiano would take over this land sometime after this. J.R. Pacheco would also convey property (1 & 39/100 acre) to J.B. Faggiano dated April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1870. He would lose these two properties in foreclosure April 29, 1895, at a public auction in San Rafael.

May 2, 1878, IJ – "Dissolved - Faggiano & Mazeas, of Novato, have dissolved partnership, and the store will hereafter be conducted by J. B. Faggiano. He has also a hotel, with good accommodation for guests, and a livery stable."

Capt. J. M. Mazeas of the sloop Solferino made weekly trips to San Francisco from Novato. Mazeas would pass away in March 1893, it was the estate that foreclosed on Faggiano.

Probate records of Henry T. Jones will, show that J.B. on July 26, 1872, would buy some merchandize valued at \$99.29.

Sept 6, 1877 IJ - New Proprietor.—J. B. Faggiano has bought A. Johnson's store, and will hereafter conduct the two stores (Our House and the store that would become known as the McDonald/Scott Store in Old Town.)

June 7, 1888, IJ "Roadmaster Sutton is at work straightening the county road between Scown's and McDonald & Scott's store. When this work is completed the distance from San Rafael to Petaluma will be shortened an eighth of a mile." This way the house is no longer alongside the road.

Sometime during the time that Faggiano owned Jones house, he would move it back behind the new two-story house that he would build.

Sept. 10, 1908 Petaluma Courier - "J. Baptiste Faggiano, known among his friends as "Bob" died at



Henry T. Jones and Faggiano house

Novato. The deceased was a pioneer merchant of Novato. He was the father of J.B. Faggiano and Mrs. R. Connell of Novato. He was 75 years old."

J.B. "Joe" Faggiano III would go on and became a well-known carpenter in Novato. Some of his buildings were the Druids Hall and Judge Rudolff home.

Amelia J. Faggiano would marry Richard R. Connell. They were the first couple married in Our Lady of Loretto.



*House moved behind the new Faggiano's two-story house.*

### **Baccaglio**

"Giacomo (James) Baccaglio came to the United States in 1885 from a northern province in Italy called Piemonte (Piedmont). He was born in a little town in the Italian Alps called Tappia in 1856, which is now deserted with only a few buildings standing. There are no vehicle roads to the town on the steep mountainside and the only way to get there would be to walk.

James came to Novato at the bidding of his uncle Antonio Baccaglio (old Uncle Antone). They worked for the old Novato Land Company.

The Faggiano family home in Old Town Novato consisted of 13 acres of land with a big two-story house surrounded by some ancient Mission grapevines 5 to 6 feet tall that were old, gnarly and beautiful. It was up for sale or being auctioned. My great uncle and my father bid on this place and got it. Uncle Antone never married. Now they needed a woman to make it a home. My father often said he had many chances to marry some of the young immigrant Irish maidens, but he elected to return to Italy for his bride, which he did indeed, picking Maria Funicula Carolina Baccaglio, who was born in 1877 in the little town of Tappia.

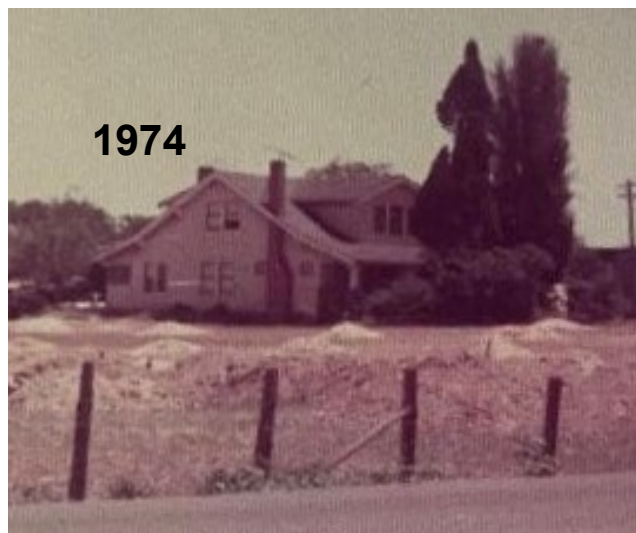
The Bugeias lived next door. Their father was sort of a country gentleman-elderly, short, always wore a high-

country gentleman-elderly, short, always wore a high-topped tan hat and tan suit with tails when he went to town. Mrs. Bugeia was a college graduate. She wrote books, painted and above all, made doll clothes for our dolls. She loved to call us over and present us with these presents, though I think Edna and I made pests of ourselves, always over there. Especially Edna, she never knew when to come home. They had two marble fireplaces in their house and a piano.

### **New House**

With our family growing up, our folks began thinking of a new house and since everyone was getting electricity in their homes, it seemed foolish to put all the new things in our old home.

My brother Joe was working in Petaluma. Said he knew of an architect who could draw some plans for us. Well, the plans came, and the house was a beautiful stucco house with outside French doors, etc., that would have cost us about \$15,000 to build. That was too rich for our blood and the family said no, even though we had to pay \$200 to have the plans drawn. We were then put in touch with Joe Faggiano from San Rafael, a relative of the Faggianos that lost their place in the olden days and old Uncle Antone and papa bid on and got. Our new home was built for about \$7,000 and while we had to borrow a little to finish it, it was soon paid off with the help of the boys working and farm income." (Novato Historian December 1999 "My Forebears and Our Family, by Anita Baccaglio Johnson)



Looking at the pictures you can see that Joe Faggiano would add to both sides and the rear of the old two-story house and remove the Henry T. Jones one story house. Dec 14, 1895 Tocsin - Giacomo Baccaglio to Antonio Baccaglio, 15.19 acres, part of Rancho San Jose. Nov 23, 1912 Tocsin "Antonio Baccaglio died at the home of his nephew, James Baccaglio, at Oldtown. He was a native of Italy and came to California when 38 years old. After living in San Francisco for five years he came to Novato where he was employed on the DeLong ranch. He was 89 years and 8 months of age at the time of his death and although he had been feeble for a number of years he was only confined to his bed for a few days. He was a man of fine character and beloved by all who knew him." Nov 28, 1912 IJ - "Mr. and Mrs. James Baccaglio of Novato lost their little three-year-old daughter on Sunday last, who succumbed to an attack of spinal meningitis. The baby died just one week after her great uncle."

Oct 1, 1925 Petaluma Argus

“Rev, Father Batesti conducted the funeral services for James Baccaglio, 69, one of the oldest settlers in Novato, at St. Mary’s Catholic church, Old Town, Novato.

The pallbearers were members of the Novato Grove of Druids of which Mr. Baccaglio was a member.

The deceased is survived by a widow and two boys. Miss Anita Baccaglio is assistant in the farm advisor’s office in San Rafael. The church was filled with friends to pay their last respect to Mr. Baccaglio who had many friends.

A son of Mr. Baccaglio formerly resided here, where he filled a position in the Sonoma County National bank and is now with one of the leading banks in Sonoma.”

**April 1933** - Louis Bormolini has been given the contract to build a new house on the Baccaglio ranch, which will be in readiness for one of the boys (Frank) when he becomes a benedict. (Look at the Historian Summer 2024 for the location of Baccaglio Family home and Frank’s home) This house is still on South Novato Blvd.

November 1965—The Baccaglio property on South Novato Boulevard is at present being eyed as the most likely spot for a future civic center site. Interest appears to be focusing on this 13-acre piece as the place to locate Novato’s future complex of city offices, a county library branch, and administration quarters for the Novato Unified School District.

Lark Court is the location of the Baccaglio Ranch. Hill Road was going to go through their property to Redwood Blvd.

The Bugeia property is the north side of Yukon Way. The Novato Museum was moved from Yukon Way (Oak Apartment's) in 1976.

## September General Meeting

At the September 14 Quarterly Meeting, held at the Hamilton History Museum, Guild members heard presentations by Laurie Reemsnyder and Lauren Vuong. Introductory remarks were given by Jim Gildea, who served as Director of Operations at the Hamilton Transit Center from 1980-1983,

Laurie spoke about the thousands of Vietnamese and other refugees who were processed through the Center, and of her career with the Intergovernmental Organization for Migration.

In 1980, seven-year-old Lauren fled Vietnam with her family by boat, which foundered at sea for ten days.

Lauren told the remarkable story of her family’s survival and ultimate rescue, her emotional arrival in the United States, and subsequent search find her rescuer, the captain of the Virgo.

Sitting in the audience as special guests of the Guild were Novatans Vinh Luu, Larry Lieu and Judy Hong Nga. Vinh is Project Director of Marin Asian Advocacy Project (MAAP), an organization that has been supporting and organizing the Vietnamese community for almost 30 years.. Larry worked as a staff member at the Hamilton Transit Center, and Judy’s family was processed there.



Laurie Reemsnyder and

Lauren Vuong



This picture taken about 1915 shows the vineyard-covered hillside where the Baccaglio home was built. Shown in the photo at right center are brothers Egidio “Jid” (1903-89) and Frank (1906-83) Baccaglio.

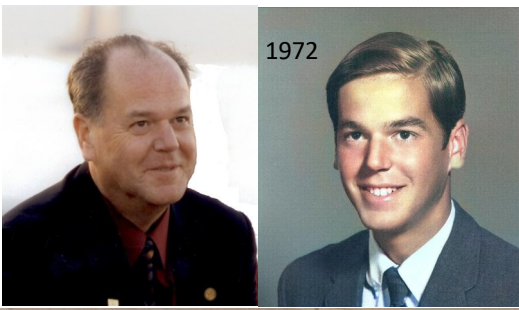


Baccaglio Home— Shows the two tall, stately Italian Cypress. In 1986 apartments were built on this property, on the east side of Novato Boulevard, across the street from the old Novato Human Needs Center.

(Story on this house in the next issue of the Historian.)



1523 South Novato Blvd.



# Novato – 50 Years Ago

(October, November & December 1974)

By Michael Read



December 14, 1974 - Dedication ceremonies held Saturday at the DeLong Avenue overpass marked the official opening of the new Highway 101 bypass. The cutting of the red-white-and- blue ribbon concluded a 15-year local effort to get the highway traffic out of town. Novato's new Junior Miss, Meg Shields, is assisted by: from the left, Supervisor Arnold Baptiste, Chamber of Commerce president Ben Young, Mayor David Price Jones and Tom Lammers, district director of Caltrans.

No longer a dream — or a nightmare at the case may be. — the northbound lanes of the new freeway bypass opened to traffic for the first time. Novatan Raymond Ryle led the vanguard here as traffic moved onto the bypass at 1:16 p.m. on October 15, 1974.

December 18, 1974—Advance—Some four months behind schedule, all six lanes of the new freeway bypass through Novato were opened Yesterday. This morning old Redwood Boulevard (Highway 101 through Novato looked like a ghost town.) The dedication Saturday and the opening yesterday culminated almost 20 years of planning. Controversy over the freeway route helped to lead to the incorporation of Novato in 1960 — citizens wanted more local control through their own city over the route. It will take the rest of the week to complete some left-over details to finish the project, and probably a month to remove the whole construction operation.



Only 12 years in the making -- our new city seal

The city council officially adopted a city seal (shown at right) last week after periodic arguments that began about 1962. At one time (March, 1964) the council adopted the mish-mosh shown at left as the city seal. It had everything but the kitchen sink, including Mount Burdell, the city hall, Indian tee-pees and tomahawks. One of the problems with it was that California Indians didn't live in tee-pees but in mud and grass huts. Fortunately that seal was never implemented. The seal at right was submitted three years ago by artist Carl Ranged and accepted in concept by the council in November, 1971. However the original showed the flag hanging limp rather than blowing in the breeze. Last week the council decided the flag should be blowing and it was so ordered.

### Novato's History Goes World Wide

Three years ago, the Novato History Museum manager, Susan Magnone and a team of volunteers started a project to make our history more accessible to the public. It started with researching, cataloging and digitizing photographs and documents. You can now see the results of their work at these online sites.

- NovatoHistory.pastperfectonline.com. Click on a picture to see more information
- Californiarevealed.org: Enter Novato History Museum into the search box. Click on a picture.
- Internet Archive: [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org)
- Novato Advance on Newspapers.com

The project is ongoing and the team is continuing the work to make the history of Novato accessible to our community and the world.

### Nominations Novato Historical Guild Board for 2025-2026

The candidates listed below are recommended by the nominating committee to serve on the Board of Directors of the Novato Historical Guild for the years of 2025-2026. The election will be held at the Guild's membership meeting on December 14<sup>th</sup>

Leslie Baird  
Lynn Dawson  
John Dowden  
Ray Dwelly  
Susan Magnone  
Steve Ussery

Docent  
Board President  
Volunteer  
Manager HFHM  
Manager NHM  
Docent

## Join the Novato Speaker

### Series at the Jonas Center!

The Novato Speaker Series is an ongoing program that brings together a diverse range of speakers from various fields and backgrounds to share their knowledge, experiences, and perspectives with the community.

We have an incredible lineup of speakers planned for the upcoming months:

#### Thursday, January 23, 2024:

Alex Filippenko is an elected member of both the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, is one of the world's most highly cited astrophysicists. His scientific accomplishments, documented in nearly 1200 research papers, have been recognized with numerous prizes. He was the only person to have been a member of both teams that revealed the accelerating expansion of the Universe, a discovery that was honored with the 2011 Nobel Prize in Physics to the teams' leaders. He is a frequent user of the Hubble Space Telescope and JWST. Winner of the highest teaching awards at UC Berkeley and voted the "Best Professor" on campus a record 9 times, in 2006 he was named the Case/Carnegie National Professor of the Year among doctoral institutions. He has produced 5 video courses with The Great Courses, coauthored an award-winning astronomy textbook, and appears in more than 120 television documentaries.

Mark your calendars! Each event will be held on a Thursday evening, with doors opening at 6:30 PM. The speaker presentations will begin promptly at 7:00 PM and conclude at 8:30 PM. Tickets can be purchased on our website. See below.

We invite you to opt into our newsletter to stay connected with our community and receive regular updates on our speakers. Join us as we explore inspiring and thought-provoking topics together. We look forward to seeing you at the Novato Speaker Series!

## Welcome New Guild Members

### Novato Historical Guild Membership Report December 2024

#### Individual Membership

John Broughton

Erin Hankins

#### Family Membership

Janet & Jeff Conley

Sylvia & Michael Barry

Grant & Robin Branstator

The 2025 annual Novato Historical Guild membership payment is due in January. An envelope to send your payment is enclosed with the Winter 2024 Historian for all affected members. Please make your payment by the end of January.

If you have questions about membership, call or email

Lorne Magnone

415-897-4320

[lornemagnone@peoplepc.com](mailto: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](mailto:info@novatohistory.org) or ask for Michael Read at 415-717-1412.

### Please Support Our Guild Business Members:

A.D. Scott Building

Andrew McAgnon Landscaping

Bank of Marin

Creekside Bakery

H & J Tire

Indian Valley Golf Club

Novato Chamber of Commerce

Marin Color Service

Marin Landscape Materials

Mclsaac Dairy

Nave Enterprises

Novato Builders Supply

Novato Grove Druids #113

Pini Hardware

Red Barn Productions

Steve Ussery, Realtor

The Bluffs at Hamilton Hill

Valley Oak Wealth Management

Valley Memorial Park Cemetery & Funeral Home

## Novato Advance now on line at Newspapers.com

Bill and Adele Jonas Center, 1800 Ignacio Blvd. #19 Novato

[Novatospeakerseries.com](http://Novatospeakerseries.com)

Thursday 6:30pm Doors Open & Socialize— 7:00 Speaker

January 23rd—Prof. Alex Filippenko, Ph.D.—Exciting results with NASA's James Webb Space Telescope

April 24th—Eric Schmitt—America's role in conflicts around the world

July 24th— Keena Turner—Secret behind the 49ers Super Bowl championship run

# Cheese Factory Disappears From Local Scene

**November 15, 1949**, W.H. Rudolff would petitioned the county planning commission for permission to move his factory to land he owns two blocks away at Davidson and Railroad Avenue. Part of the petition was to rezone the area from agricultural to heavy industrial.

**July 28, 1950 Advance**—'Perishable, this side up with care.' Packages labelled thus have been going out of Novato for 55 years for the Novato French Cheese Company sent cheese to every country in the world. Breakfast cheese. Neufchatel, Schloss, Hand cheese and assorted cheeses, and during the lifetime of the late Judge Hermann Rudolff, who founded it in 1895, the firm did a large business with English firms in China. "Sierra cheese" was Judge Rudolff's specialty, made from his own registered formula. Fred Harvey served it on the Santa Fe diners and in the Harvey House dining rooms for 50 years. It is a fresh cheese.

The very ripe, very high, very old cheeses made by the Novato cheese company were its Fromage De Brie and Camembert. They smell, and the modern urban neighbors don't like it. So, when the old factory building was due to come down and be replaced by a modern one, W. H. Rudolff, the judge's son, who now owns and manages the factory, could not get a permit to build on the same site, within stone's throw of the main line of the Northwestern Pacific railroad.

Mr. Rudolff said "If property on a railroad and between two main highways isn't industrial, I don't know what is. I give up, I am tired of fighting with the Planning Commission." And so, the Novato French Cheese Factory, after operating successfully for 55 years, is being torn down and the lumber carted off.

The demise of the institution began in 1949 when the state

health department condemned the old factory building. When Rudolff asked for a permit to construct a new building in the same spot he met with protests of nearby residents who claimed the factory emitted unpleasant smells.

## September 1950

The Ryan Ranch ended nearly a century of dairying. Miss Agatha Ryan, the owner of the place which her grandfather, Dan Redman founded, (his first dairy herd were Red Durhams) was reluctant to give up her home, but being convinced that there was no alternative, sold a large portion of the choice pastureland to the North Marin Water District as a damsite.

The Novato Cheese factory, which has now gone out of business, was started on the premises of the Ryan Ranch, for the very good reason that in that day, cans could not be bought in California with which to transport milk to the factory. The late Judge Rudolff and his partners took the factory to the dairy, but moved to the railroad when the milk cans were available the following year.



The factory was demolished and the site remained vacant until it was bought by Sunset Hills. In April 1989, Sunset Hills partners Paul Scheller and Roger Kaehler raised the site 12 feet and began constructing a condominium complex off DeLong Avenue.



1. Judge Rudolff house—2. Novato French Cheese factory—3. At the time Dr. Conradt home better know has the Hilltop Restaurant - 4.Reichert Villa—5. Old town Novato

### 2025 Board Meetings

Second Tuesday of the Month  
Margaret Todd Senior Center  
1560 Hill Road

Time: 1:30 – 3:00 PM

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

#### Membership Meetings

March 15	10 – 12
June 21	10 – 12
Sept. 13 (at Hamilton)	10 – 12
Dec. 13	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

Kim Marie Potter  
Charmaine Burdell Martinelli  
George Paladini  
Worth "Skip" Fenner Jr.  
Karl Hale  
Jody Stroeh Hunter  
John Kingsley

### THE GUILD EXTENDS SYMPATHY TO

Andrew Potter and family on the loss of Kim Marie Potter

The Burdell-Martinelli family on the loss of Charmaine Burdell Martinelli

The Paladini family on the loss of George Paladini

The Fenner family on the loss of Skip Fener

The Hale family on the loss of Karl Hale

The Hunter & Stroeh family on the loss Jody Stroeh Hunter

The Kingsley family on the loss of John Kingsley

## Contact Us

### Hamilton Field History Museum

Manager: Ray Dwelly  
Museum phone: 415-382-8614  
Email: [Hamilton\\_museum@att.net](mailto:Hamilton_museum@att.net)  
<https://www.facebook.com/HamiltonFieldHistoryMuseum/>

### Novato History Museum

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

### April 4, 1852 Daily Alta RANCHO DE NOVATO FOR SALE. THE RANCHO IN CALIFORNIA!

This splendid property, containing about 10,000 acres of the most desirable land, is now offered at private sale. It is situated about 20 miles from San Francisco and has all the conveniences that could be desired for farming purposes. Titles believed to be the best in California. Map of the same can be seen at our office. ap4

## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

# Charmaine Burdell 1928 –2024

Charmaine Burdell was born September 18, 1928, in San Francisco. She was the only child of James Black Burdell Jr. and the great great granddaughter of James Black who came to northern California in 1832. Her ancestors were the Burdell, Sweetser and Black families who have live continually in Marin and southern Sonoma County for 5 generations. Charmaine and her parents lived with her grandparents, James Black Burdell, Sr, at Rancho Olompali until she was school age. She had vivid memories of the fabled mansion, which was built over a Miwok adobe and later burned to the ground in 1969 under different ownership.

"While the mansion was a big, lovely home, my grandmother, Marie Sweetser Burdell, lived a quiet life," Charmaine recalled in a 1984 story in the Argus. "As a child, I mostly played with the animals and rode horseback – common things on a ranch."



Charmaine attended school in Petaluma and went to Santa Rosa Junior College. Afterward, she worked as a long-distance operator at the telephone company on Kentucky Street, a few blocks from her parents; home on Liberty Street, Petaluma.

She has been married three times and has lived in Petaluma area, Monterey and Massachusetts. First husband, Nathan Thompson Feb. 9, 1950. Second husband, James Findley Jan. 14, 1956, a Captain in the Army.

Up until 1974, she and her third husband (Veronda, were married April 25, 1961) operated a cattle ranch on the 1,200-acre Black Mountain Ranch that had been in her family since 1844. She would be married a fourth time to Elmer Leroy Martinelli from Point Reyes, and he would pass away in 1993.

Charmaine had no children but was active in several historical and genealogical societies. She was living on approximately 350 acres of the original land grant when she passed away August 1, 2024.

Charmaine contributed many artifacts to the Novato Historical Guild at the Guilds early beginnings, and had written many stories about Olompali, she will be greatly missed.

## 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](mailto:info@novatohistory.org), or call the Novato History Museum at 415-897-4320.

## ✦ YOU ARE INVITED ✦

General Membership Meeting ~ Novato Historical Guild

**Saturday, December 14, 10:00 to Noon**  
**Novato City Hall, Novato**

**"Billboards, Bars, and Motels: 1950s Roadside Marin."**

*Dewey Livingston presents a visual feast of post-war Marin highway attractions.*

*Traveling north along Highway 101, visit the Marvel Mar, The Meadows, Club Rio, and other long-gone places—all doomed by freeway widening.*

Anyone interested in Novato History is welcome to attend.

We look forward to seeing you there.

**Novato History Museum**

**815 DeLong Avenue**

**(415) 897-4320**

**Hamilton Field History Museum**

**555 Hangar Avenue**

**(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