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Novato Historical Guild and the Novato History Museum

*Preserving Novato's History*

**Feature Section**

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## Pacheco Home and Winery Tour

*By Mike Clancy and Jim McNern*

These notes on the Pacheco family are excerpts from the book *Novato Township* by May Rodgers Ungemach. The notes are good background for the very nice tour Debbie Rowland conducted for the Novato Historical Guild.

Juan Ygnacio Pacheco, the son of Bartolome Ygnacio Pacheco and Maria Francisca Soto, was born March 8, 1808, at Pueblo de San Jose where his father was Alcalde (Mayor). The elder Pacheco had come to California with the DeAnza Expedition in 1776. His son enlisted in the Mexican Army at the age of 19 and served at the San Francisco Presidio.

At the time California was under Mexican rule, it was not uncommon for large tracts of land to be granted to one who served faithfully in the army or had been useful to the Governor in some way. The Pacheco family had proven their loyalty and young Ignacio was rewarded with the Agua Caliente Rancho in Sonoma.

Ygnacio (or Ignacio) Pacheco married Maria Josefa Timotea Victoria Higuera around 1833. Josefa was born at Mission Dolores on May 21, 1813. They had one surviving child, Salvador Pacheco.

About 1834, while visiting what is now Marin County, Ignacio discovered Rancho de San Jose and asked to trade it for his Agua Caliente Rancho. The request was granted. Ignacio built an adobe home on

the property where he lived with his wife and child.

Josefa Pacheco died in 1838, two years before Governor Juan B. Alvarado made her husband's San Jose Rancho grant final.

In the year 1840, Ignacio married Maria Guadalupe Duarte at Mission Santa Clara. He had to enlarge the adobe when she bore him a son, Jose Ramon, and a daughter, Maria Antonia. Once again Ignacio became a widower when

Guadalupe died, so he married her sister, Maria Antonia Expectacion Loreto Duarte on September



*Thirty two members of the Novato Historical Guild gathered for a tour of the Pacheco Ranch and Winery. Here we are in front of the Victorian style house built in 1886 for \$6,000.*



27, 1851. By this marriage there were six children: Gumesindo, Maria Teodora, Catalina, Augusto, Juan and Benjamin. The increase in family members required Ignacio to add more rooms onto the adobe home.

Although there are stories of Ignacio riding about his Rancho on a gold and silver saddle and challenging Fremont to a duel around the time of the Bear Flag Rebellion, he proved himself to be a responsible member of the community, serving as Alcalde and Judge for the County after California was acquired by the United States. These and other



*Guild members examine the adjoining dining rooms in the Pacheco house, now the home of Herb and Debbie Rowland.*

civic duties may have influenced the U.S. Land Commission to confirm his land grant in 1849.

Education and religion were important to Ignacio. All of the Pacheco children, as well as neighboring youngsters, were educated in a schoolroom at the rear of the adobe hacienda. On Sundays, the whole family went to St. Vincent's for mass.

Ignacio Pacheco died in 1864, at the age of 56, leaving one-third of his estate (6,600 acres of land) to his widow, Maria, and the remaining two-thirds to his children in equal shares. The following year, Maria Loreto Duarte Pacheco, became Mrs. James Black.

Black, a widower, had been a neighbor of the Pacheco family for many years. (He was godfather and his deceased wife, Augustina Sais, had been godmother to one of the Pacheco children.) By all reports, the marriage was not a happy one. When James Black died in 1870, he left his very large estate to Maria. Black's daughter, Mary, took her stepmother to court in an attempt to break the will.

Maria took a third husband—"handsome

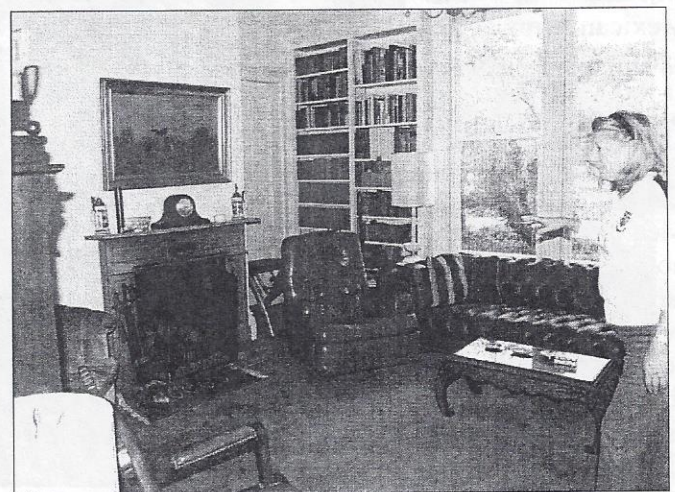
Spaniard Vicente Velasco," but that marriage, too, was soon over. Vicente returned to Spain with what was thought to be a generous portion of his wife's fortune.

Having given matrimony several trials and finding it wanting, Maria decided to concentrate on other things. Her time and energy were diverted to education - an area in which she and her first husband had a great interest. Among other things, she donated land to the San Jose School District and paid to have the District's first schoolhouse built. She also contributed money to help build the Catholic Church in Novato.

On December 26, 1891, Maria Loreto Duarte Pacheco Black Velasco died of pneumonia in San Francisco. Vicente Velasco received \$10,000 and the rest of her estate was left to her children. Mrs. Velasco is buried beside her husband, Ygnacio Pacheco, in Mount Olivet Cemetery.

The Pacheco house burned down in 1916. The adobe burned in 1925. Parts that remained were gradually removed from the site. The last portion was removed in 1936.

Santiago Gumesindo Pacheco was born in Novato in 1852. He graduated from Santa Clara University. Gumesindo lived in one of James Black's Nicasio houses and operated a dairy. In 1876, he married Rosa Tanforan (the Tanforan race track bears her family's name). The Nicasio house burned in 1880, so Gumesindo's mother gave him 75 acres of the San Jose ranch. He contracted with George W. Bond to build, for \$6,000, the two story, twelve room home

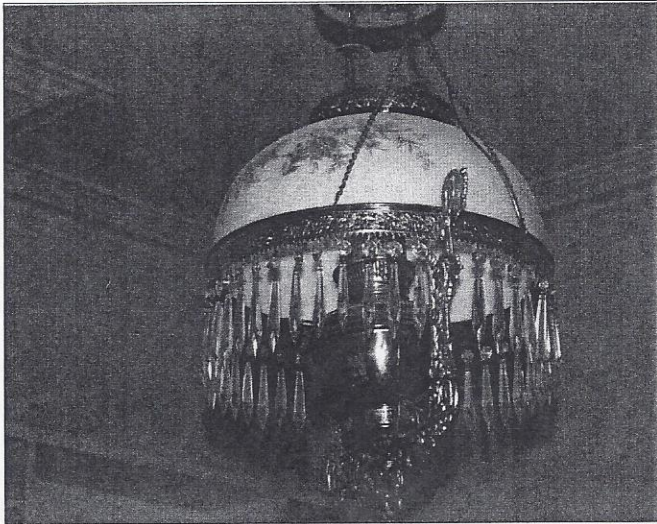


*Pictured is the library. The furnishings in the home are not all original, but an effort has been made to furnish the house with period pieces. All the existing fireplaces still function.*



that still stands across from Hamilton Field. The house had six bedrooms and two bathrooms - the latter was a real luxury at that time. Gumesindo had a racing stable of 20 horses and an exercise track where Meadow Park School is today

In 1902, Gumesindo was elected as county supervisor and served for the next 14 years. He won his final election in 1914 by one vote, but was challenged by opponent Fred Sweetser who accused him of ballot box stuffing. Gumesindo was unseated by order of State Supreme Court in March 1916. He died three months later, leaving a \$75,000 estate including the mansion and 1,000 acres. Mrs. Rosa (Tanforan) Pacheco died in 1921.



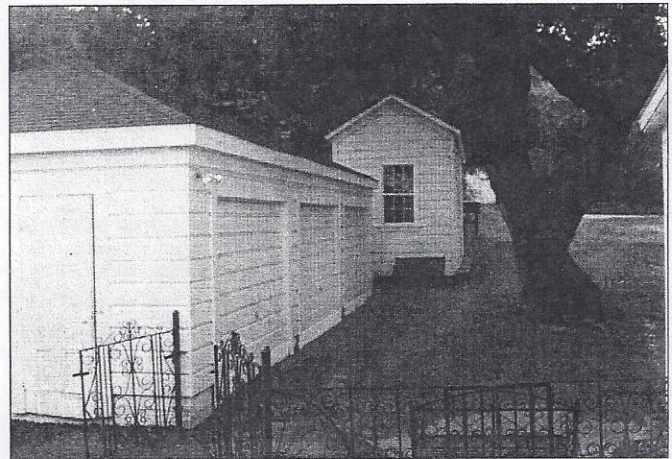
*This lamp is a typical example of many that were originally gas fired. Found in storage, they were converted to electricity and re-installed in the home.*



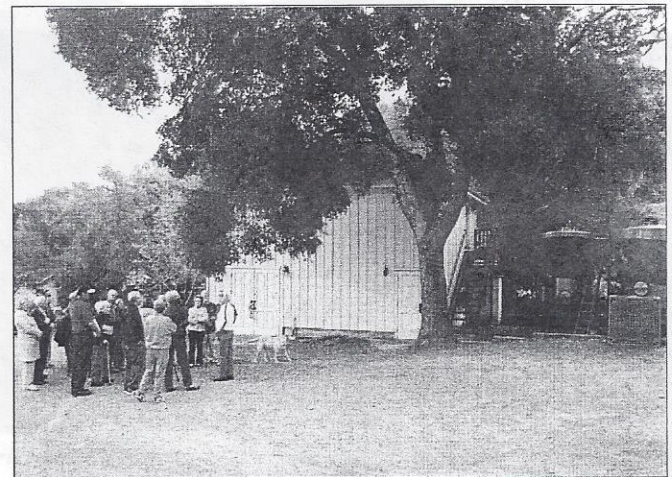
*This is the current dining room. It was originally a large kitchen. The modern kitchen is smaller and is just through the door in the background.*



*Guild members in a modern family room addition to the house. Two of the existing exterior walls were left intact.*

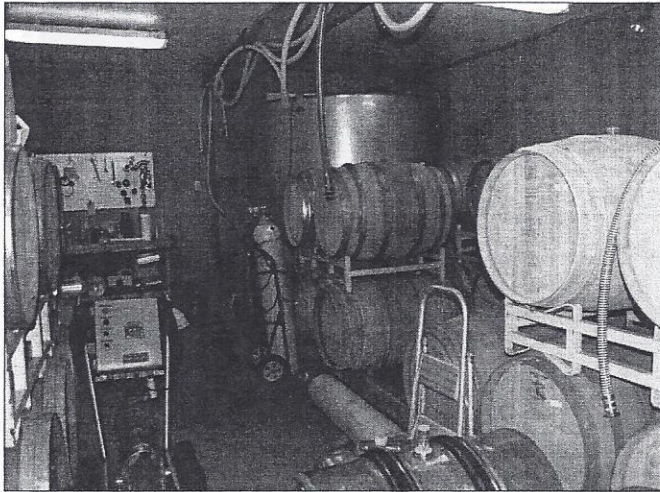


*The detached garage and other outbuilding. The grounds and vineyard are well maintained.*

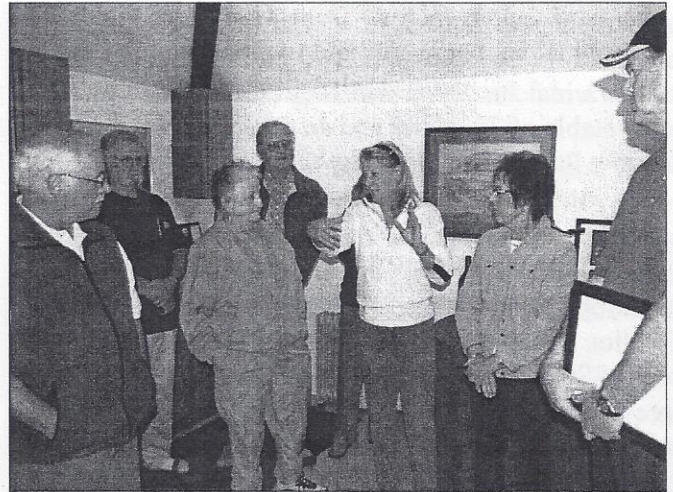


*Guild members gather in front of the winery. This small facility produces from 500 to 800 cases of wine per year. Pacheco Winery grows and uses all their own grapes on the property, which is about 70 sq. acres. In the French manner, they do not irrigate their vines—very unusual in California.*





Interior of the winery with its limited but modern wine making equipment. Cabernet Sauvignon is their prime product.



Debbie Rowland giving a history lesson in the tasting room located just over the winery.



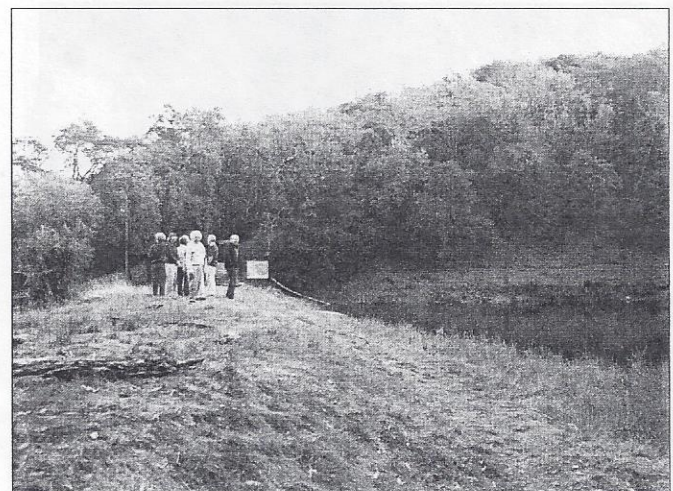
Guild members Cindy Motsinger, Ron Vela, Bob Wilkinson and Bob Manzoni make their way through the winery. The aromas within were incredible.



President Jim McNern, Samantha Kemple, Pat Johnstone and Debbie Rowland at the door of the tasting room.



Jim McNern presents Debbie Rowland with a small gift from the Guild in thanks for her generous sharing of her home. It is a framed photo of a young Herb Rowland showing Pacheco's sword (earlier on the tour Debbie showed us the actual sword).



Guild members stand on an earth dam located above the winery. This was the ranch's water supply before modern piping appeared.