



The Novato Historian

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FEATURE SECTION

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Preserving Novato's History

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The Pacheco Ranch—A Brief History

by Lin Hines



Ignacio Pachero
From Novato History
Museum collection

Drive anywhere in southern Novato and you see the street and place names that remind us of the historic importance of the Pacheco family: first, the area called

Ignacio after Ignacio Pacheco, Ignacio Blvd. and Rowland Blvd., San Jose Drive in Hamilton, Pacheco Valle and the streets therein named after relatives —Duarte, Josefa, Maria Loreto and Velasco Court. And Pacheco Creek, Ignacio Creek, Arroyo de San Jose, Rowland Way and Court, Pacheco Creek Dr. Pacheco Pond and Pacheco Plaza Shopping Center.

Juan Ygnacio Antonio Pacheco was born at Pueblo de San Jose in 1808, the son of the alcalde. His father was born in Sonora and came to California with the De Anza expedition of 1776, being some of the first settlers in the Bay Area. Ygnacio enlisted in the Mexican Army at age 19 and served at the Presidio of San Francisco for his entire service. By 1837 he had been promoted to Sergeant and soon after retired from the

Mexican Army. He had requested a land grant for his faithful service and was given today's Kenwood area, north of the town of Sonoma— Rancho Aqua Caliente, which after inspecting, he did not find suitable for agriculture! He traveled through Marin County and liked the area's climate and agricultural possibilities and he applied to Governor Alvarado for a larger grant here and in 1834 was given Rancho San Jose with a league and a half or 6, 660 acres, on which he built an adobe house and lived with his wife Maria and son Salvador. On this land he had thousands of head of cattle, orchards and he raised race-horses. He also planted grapevines on the property. He had 9 children by 3 wives. He valued education and had a schoolroom in the adobe for his children and his neighbor's children.

He had seen enormous changes: California changed from being a Spanish province to being part of the Mexican Republic in 1822. Ignacio was second alcalde in San Rafael in 1844 under Timateo Murphy. The missions in California were secularized and auctioned off by Governor Pico in 1845. In 1846, Mexico's rule over California ended with the coming of American navy ships to the Pueblo of Yerba Buena (San Francisco.) In 1849, gold was discovered. The U.S. Land Commission confirmed his land grant in 1849. Shortly thereafter in 1850, California became the 31st state of the United States and both San

Francisco and Marin County were incorporated in the same year. Throughout all these changes Ignacio not only survived, but thrived! Ignacio died in 1864 at the age of 56 and is buried with many others of his family at Mt. Olivet cemetery in San Rafael.

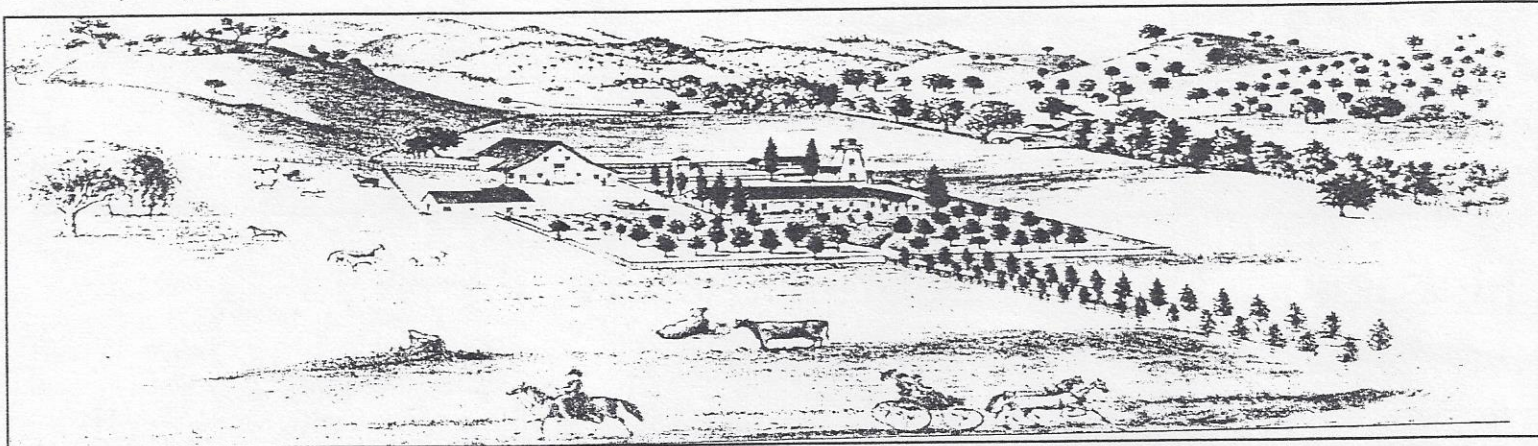
Ignacio's son, Gumesindo, is also an important character. He was born in 1852 on the ranch and graduated from Santa Clara University. He married Rosa Tanforan in 1876 and had 6 children. In 1880 his house in Nicasio burned and his mother gave him 75 acres on Rancho San Jose to build a new house. The new house, which still stands on the ranch, was a 2 story, 12 room, 6 bedroom, 2 bath mansion that cost \$6,000 to build in 1876. The house was the setting for much entertaining and their barbeques were legendary. Gumesindo also raised cattle and had a stable of 20 race horses. He was a county supervisor from 1902-16. He died in 1916 leaving an estate of \$75,000 including the mansion and 1000 acres of the ranch.

Over the years the original 6,660 acre ranch has been sold off and converted into some of Novato's prime areas. The original ranch was vast and ran south to the top of St. Vincent's hill, east to the Bay, north of Ignacio Blvd. and east to Indian Valley Road. Ten acres, the land Galli's Restaurant had occupied since 1925, was sold to Salvador Galli in 1945. Loma Verde was sold in the 40's, Marin Meadows, part of the land for Hamilton Field sold in 1932 and more again in 1955.

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Pacheco

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Sketch of Rancho de San Jose looking toward the hills from the Bay
from Novato History Museum collection

The land for IVC was sold in the 70's, Pacheco Valle in the 60's, the Station Ranch, now Bel Marin Keys, was lost in the Depression in the 30's, the Country Club area sold in the 50's. Today the ranch is 75 acres of tranquility adjacent to the busy Highway 101.

One of Gumesindo's children, Abigail, who was born in San Francisco in 1889, married Clarence Rowland in 1909 and had a son, Herbert. Herbert had a long career, including much time overseas, with the Dollar Line. Abigail continued to live in the mansion until her death in 1966. Herbert and his wife Frances then moved into the house. In 1970 Herbert and his son, Herb Jr. began planting vineyards on the ranch with cabernet sauvignon and chardonnay grapes. When Herbert died in 1977, Herb Jr. and his wife Debbie along with his mother, Frances Rowland continued working the vineyards, Marin County's pioneer commercial vineyard. They now grow Cabernet Sauvignon and a small amount of Cabernet Franc grapes with the crushing, fermenting, aging and bottling all done right on the ranch in the winery building which is the former coach house. They produce about 800 cases a year of Pacheco Ranch Winery Cabernet, a highly respected product. Although Herb Jr.'s day job is as a trial attorney, he obviously loves the ranch and the vineyards. So Herb, Jr., a seventh generation Californian is following the family traditions of agriculture on the ranch and is bringing up his two children, the eighth generation in California, to respect and cultivate the land. What an incredible heritage in this modern age!

Ed. Note — It was a pleasure getting to know the Rowlands and learning more about their family history. The Novato History Museum contains few photographs but many newspaper clippings about the Pachecos. Please join me in welcoming Herb as our guest speaker at the Guild's March 13 General Meeting in the Community House at 2 PM. ♦



Pacheco Family Reunion picnic in area of Marin Golf & Country Club area ca. 1890. Ignacio's wife Maria with shawl and her sons on either side, Gumesindo standing in same row to right with 2 women in white dresses on either side.

Photo from Novato History Museum collection