

The Novato Historian

The Quarterly Publication of the Novato Historical Guild, the Novato History Museum, and the Hamilton Field History Museum

Preserving Novato's History
News Section

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April – June 2019

The Novato Historian

Volume 43, Number 2

March Member Meeting



Members enjoyed a presentation by Greg Sarris, Chairman of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria and notable author, who discussed his latest book "How a Mountain Was Made."



Third Grade Tours



Laurie O'Mara, Susan Trumbull, and Mary Bicknell.



Laurie O'Mara and Susan Trumbull at the start of the Third Grade student tour of the museum and downtown Novato.

The Novato Historical Guild's annual "Third Grade Tours" program commenced with the first student tour on April 15th. Third grade classes from all of Novato's elementary schools participate in the program and learn about Novato's beginning, visit the history museum and see the landmark buildings in downtown Novato.

Once again, Laurie O'Mara is running the volunteer program. The tours will last until June 7. This year's history docent volunteers include: Sharon Azevedo, Mary Bicknell, Celinda Current, Laurie O'Mara, Stan Palmear, Anne Russell, Tina Thomatos, Susan Trumbull, and Lane Yee.

The Novato Historian

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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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The Novato Historian is mailed by bulk mail and will not be forwarded by the Postal Service. Please notify us promptly of your address change at Novato Historical Guild, P.O. Box 1296, Novato, CA 94948.



President's Corner

Jim Crumpler

President, Novato Historical Guild

What's New at the Guild

Hope you all enjoyed the talk by Greg Sarris, at the March Members Meeting, as much as I did. Greg not only discussed his new book, "How a Mountain Was Made", but also told us about what has been going on with the Federated Indians of the Graton Rancheria and their casino in Rohnert Park.

The Guild's new monthly speaker program is underway. Kate Johnston is putting together a monthly speaker series on the SECOND WEDNESDAY of each month at Novato City Hall, commencing at 7 P.M. and free to all.

The first of the series was on March 13 and featured Bob Canepa talking about the history and his visit to North Korea. The Second talk was on April 10 and featured Fred Runner, discussing the "Mt. Tamalpais Scenic Railway." In the coming months the schedule will be:

May 8: Lou Leal "The Controversies Surrounding Jack London."

June 12: Daniel Bacon "1934 Waterfront Strike in San Francisco."

Stay tuned for upcoming talks.

The Guild's summer "Walk and Talk" series will begin in June and continue through October.

The Walks will include two "Downtown", two "Hamilton" and one "Pioneer Park" Walk.

The Walks are free to the public, occur on Saturday mornings and last about an hour or so.

These Walks are a wonderful and entertaining way to learn about our local history.

The annual Art, Wine and Music Festival is June 8 and 9. If you would like to have some fun, see friends you haven't seen in years, and talk about Novato History, you can sign up for a two-hour shift at our booth by giving me a call.

A big "thank you" to all our wonderful volunteers, you are the reason the Guild exists.



Mary Bicknell ringing the the school bell at the museum.



Novato – 50 Years Ago

(April, May, June 1969)

by Yvette Borloz Jackson

It's time to take another trip down memory lane. The spring of 1969 was a busy time in Novato and the Novato Advance was full of articles, so many in fact that I had a hard time deciding what to include in this article. I hope you all remember some of these events that occurred annually in Novato.

Yvette Borloz Jackson

- The Ladies Auxiliary of the Novato Volunteer Firemen's Association announced the winner of its benefit raffle. Mrs. Reno Pronzini held the winning ticket drawn at the annual Fireman's Ball.
 - There was an estimated 3000 that dropped by the Village Fair bazaar Saturday. The Alpha Lambda Chapter of Kappa Phi Sigma had a booth, which featured crepe paper flowers and decorative wastebaskets, the bazaar was held at the Community House.
 - A Bel-Marín Keyes work party consisting of 16 men and six boys, worked Saturday from early morning until late afternoon moving broken concrete to Pleasure Island in the middle of the Bel-Marín Keyes lagoon. The windward side of the island has been eroding and the concrete material was placed as rip-rap to protect the banks from any further erosion. The team of boys and men were fed hamburgers, french fries, soft drinks and coffee during the day. The refreshments were furnished by the Bel-Marín Keyes Community Services District.
 - Wayne Sartain, last year's president and the San Marin Improvement Association, is heading a large committee planning the fifth annual San Marin Easter egg hunt. The homeowner will color and hide a total of 840 eggs, to be sought by San Marin youngsters Saturday at 1 PM.
- The event will be held in the fields at the end of San Mateo way on the north side of San Marin Drive.
- The two local high school varsity baseball teams, who will meet next Tuesday for the first time, both have 9-3 records after yesterday's action. But, the unexpected is that the San Marin Mustangs, winners of their last nine games, are front-runners in the league title race, while the Hornets who dropped three straight, are in the middle of the pack. (04/09/69) The veteran Novato Hornets had to overcome a deficit for a 6-2 victory over the first year San Marin Mustangs yesterday afternoon on the Novato diamond in the varsity baseball showdown between the two high schools. (04/16/69)
 - "Homeowners, please look at your own homes and yard with the eye of a stranger." The request comes from William Olsen, chairman of the citizens beautification advisory committee, as the city begins rolling up at sleeves for the spring cleanup, paint-up, plant-up and fix up campaign, April 12 - May 4.
 - Mrs. Doris M. Roberts has become the sole owner of the Mode O'Day dress shop at 1417 Grant Ave., after buying out her partner Mrs. Mary Lou Stephenson. Mrs. Roberts became a principal in the store last July. Mrs. Anita Madis has been named manager.
 - Harley Mc Askill was re-elected last night as mayor of Novato. Babe Silva was reelected mayor pro tem the council selects two of its number to fill these post each April.
 - The Cancer Drive in Novato this year will feature Crusaders on horseback. They are members of Novato Junior horseman who will ride in twos and threes to call at the homes in Black Point not easily accessible by foot. This will be their civic project Mrs. Lloyd Loftus, who with her husband is advisor for the Novato Junior Horsemen, will serve as area chairman for the Cancer Drive in Black point. Dates set for the drive are April 18-21. Proceeds will be used for cancer research.
 - Tickets have gone on sale for three "paying" events at the April 19 "Our Own Thing" program at Novato high school. The rock concert, scheduled for 3 to 5 PM at the new gym, and featuring the "Loading Zone" and the "Edwards Brothers" groups, plus radio TV personality Jim Lange as MC, will cost \$2.50 per person at the door. The gym can hold an audience of 1500, so a big attendance is expected. The "Loading Zone" group is the biggest name rock band to perform in Novato and the "Edwards Brothers", formerly known as the "Beatables" have a loyal following. Tickets for the spaghetti feed which will be held at the high school cafeteria from 2 to 7 PM will cost \$1.50 per person and \$.75 for spaghetti-eaters under 12 years of age.
 - The news was bad today for the Novato school district as President Nixon announced his revised budget and the cuts he intends to make. Supt. James Bunker told the *Advance* he had learned the PL 874 funds providing aid to school districts with non-taxable federal installations in their midst would be reduced to \$187,000,000 The Johnson administration had proposed \$300,000,000 and the House committee on labor and education recommended \$622,000,000 favorably. The House of Representatives is scheduled to consider the bill next Tuesday. If Nixon's cuts were to go through, the Novato school district

50 Years Ago

Continued from Page N - 3

- would lose approximately \$550,000 of the \$900,000 it is anticipating for the 1969-70 school year, leaving \$450,000. Nixon's revised budget calls for elimination of all National Defense Acts funds for schools and the elimination from PL 874 fund consideration for children whose parents work at Hamilton Air Force Base, but do not live on base. There are some 1500 of these pupils in the school district.
- Pini Hardware which constructed its own building at 1107 Grant Ave. and opened the doors in April, 1947, 22 years ago has been bought by Ben Young and Arlon Branson of Novato and a third silent partner, Edward Thompson co-owner of Marin French cheese Co. The sale will become effective May 1 and Pini partners Baxter Hovis and Clarence Nelson will stay on for a few weeks to help with transition of ownership and operation. Pini hardware was purchased by Hovis and Nelson in 1943 when H. Pini Co., formally a general store, was divided into separate feed, clothing, food and hardware stores. The stores were located on the north side of Grant Avenue east of Highway 101 where the Novato theater now is located in. The buildings were destroyed by fire in 1944.
 - Chris Malmstrom has been elected president of the newly organized Bel-Marin Keys Teen Club. Serving with Chris are Sally Stewart, secretary, and Roger Chrichton, treasurer. The club meets every other week at the Bel-Marin Community Center. The group is planning bus trips to San Francisco, beach excursions and dances. Adult chairman is Richard Marcus.
 - The average gross family income in Novato rose to \$12,900 in 1969; it has been estimated in a recent market study prepared for a major landowner in the Novato area. The gross family income is expected to rise to \$13,400 next year. Income in Novato has always lagged behind the rest of Marin County, but in recent years the gap has narrowed because of the higher income families moving here. Average gross income per family in Marin County this year is \$13,700; next year it is expected to be \$14,100.
 - Here we go again: We like to remind everyone that daylight saving time starts at 2 a.m. Sunday. When you retire Saturday night move your clocks ahead one hour... (04/23/69)
 - The Novato Little league launches its 1969 season this Saturday at the Rancho School field with opening ceremonies and a doubleheader. The ceremonies, with Bob Hall, league president, at the microphone, will start at noon. Bob diGrazia, Novato police chief and past league president, will present a plaque bearing the names of the major donors in the 1966 fund-raising drive for the construction of Rancho Field. The 30 teams and their sponsors will be introduced prior to the first game. (04/23/69)
 - An Airman reported for duty with the band at Hamilton Air Force Base the other day, and was greeted with raised eyebrows and a few disbelieving stares. The Airman, it turned out, was a she. WAF (Women in the Air Force) Deborah Seher to be specific. She plays the clarinet. The raised eyebrows and stares were natural enough too. The petite, 19 year old brunette, from Sacramento, is the first WAF ever assigned with the Hamilton unit, officially designated the 573rd U.S. Air Force band. (The band by the way, has been at Hamilton for some 18 years) Airman Seher is also believed to be one of only three musicians assigned with bands throughout the Air Force. How did the object of all this attention feel? "I'll admit at first I felt a little strange," Airman Seher- who likes to be called "Debi" said, continuing: "But now that I know them, they're all groovy they're perfect gentleman, and the finest musicians I know."
 - Novato High School has selected Art Yee and Joel Carpenter as its 1969 "road scholars" and named Richard Adads and Dennis Moore as alternates. The two-man team will compete in the annual Plymouth Trouble Shooting Contest slated May 8 at 1 p.m. at Hillsdale High School in San Mateo. Bob White, Novato High auto shop instructor, will accompany the contestants.
 - THOUSANDS CHEER "OUR OWN THING" Public Schools Week Doesn't Usually Call For A Giant Celebration- But Saturday's Eventful Variety Show At Novato High School Entertained The Biggest Audience In The School's History. It's unbelievable that one high school with 1500 students can have so much talent available" was the pertinent comment of one of many parent visitors to Novato High Schools "Our Own Thing" program. The all day smorgasbord of events drew a total estimated crowd of more than 3000, according to Edward Kraft and John Enders, co-chairmen. Plans now call for a repeat all-day program next year to honor Public School Week because "nothing succeeds like success".
 - The San Marin Pisceans will host and also participate in the novice synchronized swimming championships this Sunday at the San Marin Club.
 - Nick Miller, former Novato high school athlete now in his second year of professional baseball, is off to a swinging start with the Bakersfield Dodgers of the California league.
 - First Mustang Lettermen are Dennis Miller, Steve Lambert, Steve Francis, Ken Gness, Bob Fowler, Rod Perryman, John Kinnear and Steve Silvey. All eight are juniors and participated in sports at Novato High before moving over to San Marin.
 - Thirty-five contestants have already registered for this Sunday's 25th annual junior and open horse show sponsored by the Novato horseman.
 - Mrs. George Nolan defeated Mrs. Ed Searcy 4-3 in yesterday's finals to win the championship of the annual women's Spring Handicap tournament at the

Continued on Page N - 5

50 Years Ago

Continued from Page N – 4

- Indian Valley golf club the consolation title went to Mrs. Lew Baysinger with a 5-4 win over Mrs. William Sparrow.
- Despite the wind, an estimated 1300 people were at Stafford Lake Saturday (05/03) for the opening of the 1969 fishing season. The total of 550 youngsters and 750 adults more than doubled last year's attendance of 500.
- That Hamilton officers wives club will present an international food tasting bazaar Saturday night at the officers club the bazaar will feature of men dishes and desserts from many countries, including France, China, Japan, Mexico, Italy, India, Pakistan, Germany, Norway and Sweden. The dishes will be prepared by members of the club many of whom have lived in or were born in foreign countries.
- Sunny Hills Guild No. 1 will hold its 17th annual rummage sale at the IDESI Hall on Friday and Saturday. Proceeds from the sale will go toward the purchase of ingredients for the nut bread featured by the guild at their nut tree booth at Sunny Hill's annual grape festival.
- Azaleas in bloom, golden marigolds, delicate bamboo plants, hanging basket fuchsias, and large liquid amber trees are just a few of the choice items which will greet Novatans at the May Mart this Friday morning. The Novato Garden Club Inc., sponsors of this annual garden bazaar, will conduct May Mart sales from 10 AM to 5 PM Friday and from 10 AM to 3 PM Saturday along the main mall of Nave Shopping Center on S. Novato Blvd.
- Since 1961 the Novato Junior Women's Club purchased two isolettes and one nebulizer for Novato General Hospital. During the past year they have added an isolette modifier. Mrs. Harold (Dolly) Avery accepts a check for its final payment of \$320 from Mrs. Donald Babcock and Mrs. Alan Chisholm.
- With the advent of May comes another Fiesta at West Novato School enjoyed by youngsters (and oldsters). This year's festival will take place Saturday at the school grounds from 10 a.m. to

3 p.m. Along with the regular booths, two new booths will be initiated - the checker-toss and color wheel. Another new feature is the jellybean count set up and operated by six graders. First prize winner will receive a Polaroid camera and a second prize winner will receive the jellybeans. The kitchen will have chili as its main attraction together with all the necessary accompaniment. There will be a baby-sitting booth for the younger set and the cakewalk for all ages. Other popular booths include goldfish, snow cone, cotton candy, elderly things, physical fitness, and golf, to name a few.

- Mrs. Walter Bertsch, 795 Clausing Ave., has been named Mother of the Year. She was selected for the honor by the *Advance* staff on the basis of a letter written by her husband. "This is her birthday gift as well as Mother's Day gift," said Bertsch upon hearing the good news. Mrs. Bertsch turned a young 40 last Wednesday. Bertsch's letter cited his wife's fortitude and industry and the love, which she has bestowed in bringing up her six children, the three youngest of whom are orthopedically handicapped.
- Dennis W. Staggs, 18, son of Mr. and Mrs. Dewey Staggs, is serving aboard the hospital ship USS *Repose* of the coast of South Vietnam.
- Air Force Sergeant Rene M. Borloz left Friday from Travis Air Force Base for a tour of duty in Vietnam. While he is in Vietnam, his wife Judy and two children, Michelle and Paul, will be staying with her parents in Chicago after a visit with relatives in Novato.
- NOVATO HIGH GRADUATES 576 SENIORS: the largest senior class in the history of Novato High School received their diplomas in a fast moving ceremony Saturday morning on the school football field. (06/18/69)
- Sam Marzell is the first man to retire from the Novato Fire department, which he joined in 1950. Marzell plans to keep busy as a free-lance expert in tilling soil and cutting grass. When he works behind the plow, he loves to recite poetry.



Speaker Series

"1934 Waterfront Strike – San Francisco"

Battles | Bridges | Bloodshed

Wednesday, June 12th
7:00 pm

Novato City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue

Daniel Bacon, San Francisco Historian
and Author

• WEDDINGS APRIL THRU JUNE 1969:

- Donna Christine Given & Jeffrey Lee Wedel; Leslie Ann Westcott & Pvt Lonnie W. Raab; Sherri Ann Dimmick & Sgt. Ronald Edwin Dague; Gerri Tanzi & Michael Anthony Ryan; Jo Nell Engle & Alfred M. Arn; Judith Ann Cox & William T. Kelley, Jr.; Frenelle Rodack & Rudolph Mappus, III; Laine Louise Behrens & Charles Matthew Kelly; Marianna Michaela Rockey & Douglas Joseph McGill, Jr.; Linda Marie Zimmerman & Robert McKinley Harrigan; Cecilia Anita Hicks & SSgt. Reginald B. Martin, II; Foncine Grant & Joseph Anthony Costarella; Kathleen Ann Kofoid & Eric Taylor Emerson; Patricia Karlene Holmlund & Ronald Andrew Wallace; Claudia Marie Wright & SSgt. Ronald B. May; Rozan Harriet Fundy & Milton M. Perry; Bobbi Lauren Vannucci & John Barton Arntz; Laura Alice Campanelli & Arthur Thomas Ryan; Judith Ann Griffith & Robert Joseph Rodriguez; Candice Rose Anderson & Larry George Brown; Kathleen Ann Heyman & James Byron Landon, Jr.; Deane Probbas & Earl P. Lowe; Noreen Hartley & Reginald Mecham; Janet Mary Ward & Thomas Martin DeWitt.

Novato Memories

Jim McNern



Stephen and Carole (Garaventa) Taylor

Stephen and Carole (Garaventa) Taylor were born in San Francisco and met in kindergarten at the Old Grant School in Novato and were third grade sweethearts. They then attended Marion Street School. Steve went on to Novato High School, and Carole went on to Dominican Convent School in San Rafael. (Steve had to wait until after college to woo her back!)

Steve started work at Valente, Marini, Perata & Co. funeral directors in San Francisco and retired as the owner after 55 years. Carole went on to medical assistance school and worked for several doctors until the birth of their first child. They have been married for 53 years and live in San Rafael. They share their memories of growing up the 50's and 60's in Novato.

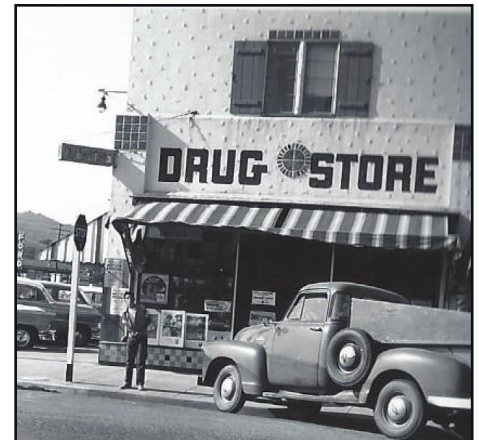
Our families moved to Novato in the late 1940's -- Steve's parents (Jim and Carmel Taylor) to escape city life and Carole's parents (Luigi and Dorothea Garaventa) to start Novato Disposal Service. When Carole and I met at Grant School, we met our friends Sheila Keena Brossier, Bob Sparrow, Mimi Baccaglio Nunes, Bob Porteous, and others. We all entered Marion St. School together in the fourth grade and remain friends to this day. Our teachers at Marion were Mr. Gregg, Mr. Slepnikoff, and Miss Bernard.

As mentioned in prior issues of the Novato Historian, 4-H was an important part of our lives; as was church

activities, Little League, CYO, etc. In 4-H, we had projects in vegetable gardening, poultry, beef cattle, tractor maintenance, sewing, and sheep husbandry. At the local county fairs, we showed our projects and auctioned our animals. These projects involved detailed record-keeping and adult leadership from the Schwindt family and the Fred Lear family. Carole's projects of sewing and gardening were led by Glenna Glass and Alta Johnson.

In addition to 4-H, Steve belonged to the Novato Horseman Juniors, the Cub Scouts, and Little League baseball. Carole was in CYO and active in most school activities.

Summers in Novato were great times for kids. We did Red Cross swimming lessons at the cold pool at San Rafael High School; fishing in Novato Creek; riding horseback all over town; baseball games; Western Weekend parade and rodeo; hanging out at the Hi-Fi Drive-In with 19 cent hamburgers; 4-H camp at Los Posadas near Angwin; cruising Burgies and King Cotton drive-ins on weekends was all good fun with friends Bill Hall, Ron Witzel Ron Grayson, Jim Temple, Tom Volk, Bob Ruzic, Elaine Knickerbocker, and Liz Chisolm Anderson.



Novato Rexall drug store at Redwood and Grant.

Saturday kids' matinees at the Novato theater were lots of fun. Don Donahue and crew kept us mostly in line. After the show, we would go to the Rexall drug store soda fountain adjacent to the theater for a "Green River" treat.

We attended catechism classes at our Lady of Loretto Church on Grant Avenue every Saturday. Everyone couldn't wait to cross Second Street after class for Mrs. Keena's warm cookies. The church had other activities -- CYO meetings and dances where many of our friends like Paul and Pete Ferrarese, Jan Smith, Dick Olrich, George Gness and others met.

Continued on Page N – 7

Novato Memories

Continued from Page N – 6

Steve attended Novato High School as part of the first four-year class at the new campus. Our class (1961) coined the mascot for the school -- "Hornets." Some of our teachers were Miss O'Brien, George d'Tunque, coaches Wood and Rodak, and the principal Mr. McCay.

After leaving Novato High, Steve attended and graduated from a 3R School in San Rafael. Then went on to College of Marin, followed by the San Francisco College of Mortuary Science. Carole graduated from Dominican High School, then College of Marin. She enrolled in, and graduated from, the Bay Cities Medical Assistant School and worked for several doctors in San Rafael.

In the mid-sixties, Steve joined the Air Force Reserves 349th MAW with Paul Ferrarese at Hamilton Air Force Base. The unit was activated by President Johnson at the time of the Pueblo incident for two years, flying missions to Viet Nam and Europe. The group was transferred to Travis Air Force Base after the closing of Hamilton Field. Steve married the love of his life, Carole Garaventa in 1966. We have three married children, Matthew, Angela, and Michael who have given us six wonderful grandchildren. We are lucky enough to have all of them close by. As a family, we enjoy many adventures, traveling, camping, water skiing, and spending time together at Clearlake.

Growing up in Novato in the 50's and 60's was our version of "Camelot." all our early life experiences could not have occurred in a more perfect place. The town and our friends will be forever in our hearts.



The first Novato Disposal Truck. Carole Garaventa's dad and crew about 1950.



Novato Disposal's first new truck 1967



Mrs. Olsen's First Grade Class at Novato School, 1949.



Halloween Parade - Marion Street School 1957

NOVATO'S TREASURES

Gambetta/ Simmons Building

In March 1893, Joseph Gambetta bought lots 13, 14 and 15 from the Home and Farm Company on 850 Grant Avenue.

On Feb 22, 1916 the *Petaluma Daily* wrote "Novato is to have a new business block and plans for the structure are being drawn by F.A. Hill, the contractor. The building is to be erected on Grant Avenue adjoining the Novato Bank building. Mr. Gambetta has decided to improve the property by erecting a two-story ornate frame building with a frontage of 100 feet. The ground floor will contain three large stores and the upper floor will be converted into a large hall with a stage, ante and dressing rooms and will be strictly modern in every appointment." The second story would never be built.

Sept 9, 1916 – The Edsberg Brothers celebrated the grand opening of their "New Marin Meat Market" in the Gambetta building. It had a fine large refrigerator with all the latest conveniences and sanitary glass show cases. In 1921 W.T. Simmons became his butcher.

H. Pini and Company also opened in September 1916 with a fruit and vegetable store. They kept fresh fish and undoubtedly did well. Jacobs Dry Goods Store also moved in at that time, but closed in early 1917. The Novato post office moved in during May of 1917. The post office moved out in December 1923 to its former location in the old Hamilton building.

April 1923 – The building was sold to Mr. Crane of San Rafael by J. Gambetta Sr. At the time, it was understood that Mr. Crane wished to add a second story to the four-store building. The four stores in 1923 were a drug store on the left, Pini's had two stores in the middle, and New Marin Meat Market had the

storefront next to the Silva building. Pini's eventually moved out in February 1929.

June 1924 – Mrs. S. Edsberg sold the New Marin Market to W.T. Simmons and Joseph DeBorba. On December 1933, this partnership would end. The former owner of the building, Joseph Gambetta, died in April 1929.

August 1944 – Mr. Crane sold the 4-store building to W.T. Simmons. The four businesses occupying the building were Simmons New Marin Market, the Stout Feed Store, (which at one time was the site of the post office), Rayburn Grocery Store and Fragoza Department Store.

Simmons closed its meat business in 1954. Ritter's Meat Center opened in 1956. On Sept. 6, 1957, the B&W Meat Company opened at 830 Grant Ave.

June 2, 1958 – The Gambetta/Simmons building burnt to the ground. W.T. Simmons rebuilt his structure for \$40,000 and Rayburn's Food Center moved back into its old place, and now occupied all of the building.

Andrew S. Rayburn began selling off his stock in January 1967.

April 1967 – D&L Market took over Rayburn's Food Center. Simmons died in August 4, 1969. Novato Billiards' Lee Simon occupied the building from 1970 to 1986. A new front to the building was added in 1987. The sunburst signage on the building was removed in April 2006.

Today there are five stores in the building; Five Little Monkeys, Flour Chylde Bakery, Personally Yours Photography, Albor Medical Solutions and Bicycle Brüstop.



Building destroyed by fire in 1958.



Rebuilt building in 1959.



Picture of the building in 1970



Picture of the building in 1916



Picture of the building in 1917



Picture of the building in 2004

The Nurses of Bataan and Corregidor

By Michael Corlett

Manilla, on the Philippine Island of Luzon, was a great place to be stationed in 1940-41 if you were an Army or Navy nurse. A few nurses were stationed at various small military hospitals on Luzon, but the main hospital was the 450-bed Sternberg Hospital in Manila. Life was good, the atmosphere was laid back, their quarters were excellent, and their social lives were active. There was still a depression going on at home, so being an Army nurse afforded a good job and an opportunity for travel and adventure. They were soon to get more adventure than they could have possibly imagined.

The good life changed on December 8th, 1941. Ten hours after the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor the Japanese invasion of the Philippines began.

After continued Japanese bombing, Sternberg, along with all other military hospitals, was inundated with new casualties. Medical facilities on the island were soon overwhelmed. {Nurse Ruth Straub diary entry, December 13} "...Sternberg is overflowing. We are burying the dead in sheets."

Because of continued bombing around Manila and the landing of 43,000 Japanese troops at Lingayen Gulf in northern Luzon, Stenberg Hospital began evacuation procedures. On Christmas Eve, 25 Army Nurses, 25 Filipino nurses, and one Navy nurse were in a convoy bound for the Bataan Peninsula to set up and staff one of two battlefield hospitals.

Hospital No. 1 was near Limay on the west side of Manila Bay. The nurses had expected a nice building with all the conveniences. What they saw were a number of outbuildings with bamboo walls and grass roofs. Once the hospital was up and running, Nurse Dorothy Arnold recalled, "Surgeons operated in huts and under trees as bombs fell." Four weeks later, Hospital No.1 was relocated inland to get out of range of the large Japanese guns. Shortly after they had departed, Japanese planes came in low with incendiary bombs and destroyed the recently vacated hospital.



Hospital 2, Open Air Ward

The site of Hospital No. 2 was selected for its dense jungle canopy because it was to be a hospital with open-air wards. During Christmas week 19 nurses from Sternberg were ferried across Manila Bay to help set up Hospital No. 2. Just as they disembarked, they scattered and took cover as Japanese dive bombers attacked. The ferry sank, and all of the medical supplies on-board were lost.

During the invasion, the Japanese had cut off all the American supply lines, so no food or medicine got through. In mid-January, the American and Philippino troops and all medical personnel were on half-rations, roughly 1000 calories per day.

The Bataan Peninsula was infested with mosquitoes, and as a result, malaria was epidemic. Dysentery and Dengue Fever were widespread. The lack of effective sanitation resulted in flies contaminating the food and water. The rationed dosage of quinine was not nearly enough to be effective against Malaria.

{Straub Diary, March 23} "Japs active again today. Formation of nine planes flew back and forth about eight times. With planes overhead and shrapnel flying with such terrible force, there comes a fright I cannot express in words..."

Continued on Page N – 10

The Nurses of Bataan and Corregidor

Continued from Page N – 9

Hospital 1 was bombed on March 30th, with 23 killed and 78 injured. One week later the bombs fell again killing seventy-three and injuring 117 others, including three nurses.

By late March, Hospital 1 had 1500 battlefield patients and Hospital 2 had 3000. Nurse Rose Rieper described Hospital 2, "There were seventeen wards, each with between two hundred and five hundred patients—bed after bed after bed, spread out on the jungle floor in the open under a canopy of branches and vines..."

By this time half of the nurses had Malaria, however, they and other medical personnel continued working long hours, with little sleep on half-rations. Dorothy Arnold, referring to the nurses, "... also fought heat, flies, dust, and monkeys that attacked them for the dwindling food supplies."

Everyone was hungry. { Straub diary, February 18 } "Ash Wednesday. Whenever two or more people gather, there is the talk of food."

{March 11} "The song 'The Old Gray Mare' keeps buzzing through my head. We had horse meat for supper."

{March 12} "The food is becoming worse. Carabao stew."

{March 15} "Found worms in my oatmeal this morning ... still losing weight and so are most of us."

Ruth Straub describes hospital life on the Jungle floor. { February 25 } "We ran into a huge cobra tonight. It was ready to spring when one fellow shot it."

{February 26} "A rat got into the bed of Rita Palmer and bit her."

{March 4} "Hotter every day. Rats more numerous. More snakes have been killed in the vicinity. Flies are here in droves."

{March 14} "Malaria continues to claim the nurse corps..."

With the Japanese advancing, the surrender of the Bataan Peninsula was imminent. On April 8th, the day before the surrender, the nurses from both hospitals were ordered to evacuate to the Malinta Tunnel on the island of Corregidor. General Johnathon Wainwright knew that the Bataan Peninsula was lost, and he was making his last stand on Corregidor. He would need nurses. The nurses were heartbroken. Edith Shacklette, "... we were crying ... we hated to leave our patients, hated to leave our group."

The last group of nurses had boarded a motor launch for the 5-mile trip to Corregidor. The nurses arrived at Corregidor, but only after dodging the dive bombers that attacked them along the way. They scrambled off the launch and up the hill toward the Malinta tunnel.

Part two of the story will appear in the next edition of the Novato Historian. It will describe the nurses' time on Corregidor, their experiences in the Japanese Internment camp, their eventual liberation, and their touchdown on American soil at Hamilton Field.

Sources:

Elizabeth M Norman, *We Band of Angels*, (1999) NY, Random House,

Diary quotations were excerpted from Elizabeth Norman, *We Band of Angeles*

Dorothy Arnold Interview, *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, December 7, 1980



Please support our Guild Business Members:

A. D. Scott Building
 Andrew McAgnon Landscaping
 Goltermann Real Estate and Construction
 Indian Valley Golf Club
 Marin Landscape Materials
 Marin Trophies
 Marin Volvo/Saab
 Mclsaac Dairy
 Nave Enterprises
 Novato Builders Supply, Inc.
 Pacheco Ranch Winery
 Pini Hardware
 The Wright Salon
 Trumbull Manor Inc. – Novato
 Valley Oak Wealth Management
 Zenith Instant Printing

Call for Board Member Applications

Guild members are invited to apply to serve on the Novato Historical Guild Board of Directors for 2020-2021. The term of office is for two years.

Requirements and Process:

- Have been a Guild member for a year prior to the election on Dec. 14, 2019.
- Complete the Guild Board Application and return it by September 15, 2019.

Board Applications are available at each museum or by email to Susan Magnone NHG1850@yahoo.com.

Interested members are encouraged to attend the Board meeting on August 13th at 1:30pm at the Margaret Todd Center and to talk with board members about the role, responsibilities and reward of serving on the Board.

2019 Board Meetings

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

Time: 1:30 – 3:30 PM

Jan. 8	July (no meeting)
Feb. 12	Aug. 13
March 12	Sept. 10
April 9	Oct. 8
May 14	Nov. 12
June 11	Dec. 10

Membership Meetings

March 16	10 – 12 City Hall
June 15	10 – 12 City Hall
Sept. 14	12 – 2 Hamilton Field Museum
Dec. 14	10 – 12 City Hall

Guild members are welcome to attend the Board meetings. Please check with the President, Jim Crumpler at 415 897 – 5705, in case a meeting has been changed.

In Memoriam

In Memoriam

Kay Antongiovanni
Agnes Henderson
Jim Henderson
Eleanor Kegg
Alice Westland Mazzoleni

The Guild Extends Sympathy to

Roger Antongiovanni and family on the loss of Kay Antongiovanni
The Henderson family on the loss of Agnes and Jim Henderson
The Kegg family on the loss of Eleanor Kegg
The Mazzoleni family on the loss of Alice Westland Mazzoleni

Welcome New Guild Members

Novato Historical Guild Membership Report June 2019

Individual Membership
Sue Virta

If you have questions about membership, call

*Lane Yee,
Membership Chairman,
415 – 898 – 0444*

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: NHG1850@yahoo.com
<https://www.facebook.com/NovatoHistoryMuseum/>

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 his or her name engraved on an individual brass plate on the Memorial Plaque in the History Museum. Please call the Museum at 897 – 4320. All contributions are tax deductible. Plaques cost \$250 per person named.

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"/> Student (full time) membership | \$10 | year | Name _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual membership | \$20 | year | Address _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family membership | \$30 | year | City _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron membership | \$100 | year | State _____ Zip _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting membership | \$200 | year | Phone _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life membership, individual | \$350 | year | Additional donations? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life membership, joint | \$500 | year | Interested in volunteering? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$1000 | year | Email address: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business membership | \$50 | year | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate membership | \$1000 | year | |



Novato Historical Guild
P.O. Box 1296
Novato, CA 94948



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YOU ARE INVITED

General Membership Meeting ~ Novato Historical Guild

**Saturday, June 15, 10:00 am – 12:00 noon
Novato City Hall, 901 Sherman Ave.**

There will be a presentation by Mike Moyle, Chair of the History Committee of The Sausalito Portuguese Cultural Center. Mike will be giving a talk on the "Portuguese Dairies of a Marin."

Come enjoy refreshments, familiar company and a wonderful speaker. Hope you can make it. Bring some friends. Looking 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