

The Novato Historian

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Preserving Novato's History Feature Section

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The Novato Historian

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4th of July Parades in Novato

By Mike Read

Novato had its first Fourth of July Parade in Novato in 1902, and continued this tradition until 1923. Below are the newspaper stories of Novato's 4th of July parades and the story of the 1993 parade when Novato restarted its annual 4th of July Parade.

for spectators. But the 4th dawned bright and clear, promising a most desirable day. The sun shone brightly the whole day, yet it was not oppressively hot, since a cool breeze kept down the temperature.

This being the first local, celebration, the best efforts were put forth.

The town was attractively decorated. From places of business and even private dwellings the national colors were made conspicuous by flags and bunting.

The parade was headed by Captain Leon, who acted as grand marshal. The band was next in order and took a conspicuous part, being well drilled in the intricacies of marching and in the patriotic selections rendered and because of making its first public appearance in full uniform. Immediately following the band came the handsomely decorated carriage of the day, containing the president of the day, Hon. J.H. Atherton; orator of the day, Col. Judson C. Brusie; chaplain, Rev. Joseph Byrne and Dr. H. Kuser of the committee of arrangements. The Goddess of Liberty float took the next place, Miss Mae

Green representing the goddess and Misses Emma Senter and Fannie Riddle being maids of honor. After this came two floats carrying the girls and boys respectively, of the public school. Mr. C. Brown, in appropriate uniform, represented the familiar, jovial figure of Uncle Sam driving the former. After the floats followed a line of citizens in carriages and on horseback, all becomingly decorated. Prominent among these were little Florence Keeling, beautifully representing the figure of Columbia; Messrs Louis and John Busea taking off a



Grant Street decorated for Fourth of July Parade in 1909

Marin Journal, July 10, 1902

NOVATO HAS A BIG CELEBRATION

Novato observed the anniversary of - the nation's birthday with an appropriate patriotic celebration. Several days previous the winds had been blowing fiercely, and on the evening of the 3rd, heavy mists floated in the air, threatening, if not to cripple the celebration at least to make it unpleasant for those who took part, and

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colored Aunt Dinah and maid, and Lester Dotters, who must have been Uncle Sam Jr. The latter four were on horseback.

The parade formed on Grant Avenue at the railroad depot, moved down the street several blocks, then turned into the principal residence streets, later again appearing on Grant Avenue, countermarching and proceeding up Reichert Avenue to Novato park.

The park grounds had been prepared for the occasion; underbrush cleared away, a platform and chairs furnished for the official speakers, benches for the public, and a barrel of really ice-cold lemonade thoughtfully provided for all the thirsty.

The president of the day introduced those taking part in the program. Invocation by the chaplain address by the speaker of the day; in his address Col. Brusie complimented the people of Novato for their enterprise the success attained in the celebration, and for the patriotism thus evinced. Reference was made to the early settlers of our land, their reasons for coming to the shores now ours, their principles, their influence, etc.

Independence Day was characterized as a distinctively American day. Through it a form of government best adapted to modern conditions was initiated into the world. Due recognition was given to the potent and beneficent influence of religion in its relation to our progressive civilization. All especially the children were urged to be mindful of the sacred responsibility resting upon all citizens of our beloved nation, and to do what was in each one's capacity to help the nation to fulfill its highest destiny.

Col. Brusie's address was clear and delivered with animation and force. It was interrupted by occasional outbursts of applause showing that it was understood and appreciated.

Mr. J. H. Bond, editor of the *Marin County Banner*, made a few remarks referring to possible future celebrations and thanking the officers of the day, committee of arrangements, subcommittees, the band, and all others who assisted in making the day a success.

The program ended with patriotic airs by the band and songs by the children.

Captain Leon's commodious new barn was temporarily transformed into a banquet hall. The decorations of red, white and blue, with ferns and redwood branches,

were tastefully arranged. A bountiful spread was served. Those in prominent connection with the celebration and the Novato band were the guests. The fairest of Novato's fair sex waited on the tables with becoming grace.

In the afternoon a lively game of baseball, played between two sides chosen on the grounds adjacent to the park, entertained the spectators. About two hours were consumed by the game. Good plays were made by both sides, the score standing 10 to 13.

Fireworks were scheduled for 8 p.m., and drew a large crowd, which remained until the last rocket was fired at about 9:30. The Cedar Grove band of Petaluma furnished music during this part of the celebration.

The day ended with a ball given under the auspices of the Cedar Grove band.

Those upon whom fell the duty of planning and executing the celebration deserve congratulations. The committee did well. Those who financially supported the celebration did so liberally and cheerfully. The ladies furnished an abundance of choicely prepared, substantial and delicate viands and deserve much credit. Others who in any way co-operated to make the occasion a success, should receive due recognition.

All who attended acknowledged having had an enjoyable day.

Worthy of note is the fact that none was injured by accident, and that there was not the slightest trace of disorder.

There was not a single case of drunkenness in town during the whole of the long day.

Marin County Tocsin, July 11, 1903

The celebration in Novato last Saturday, July 4th, was a grand success. There was a big parade, headed by the Novato Brass Band; then came a carriage drawn by a beautiful black and white handsomely decorated team containing Judge T. J. Lennon, orator of the day, Father. J. T. Byrus, chaplain, Hon. J. W. Atherton, president of the day; then four magnificent floats, the first with the Goddess of Liberty the others filled with the young Americans of the vicinity. Also were handsomely decorated private vehicles.

Novato Grove No. 113 paraded with their handsome banner, over fifty sturdy Druids were in line. The parade started at 11 o'clock sharp from Grant and Reichert Avenues, up Grant Avenue to county road, counter march to Reichert Avenue, then up Reichert Avenue to Park, where the exercises were held.

The oration by the Hon. T. J. Lennon was a master piece for the occasion. After the exercises a luncheon was served. In



Shown here on Delong Avenue are the children getting ready to be in the 4th of July Parade in 1908

the afternoon races were held on Grant Avenue. There were races for everybody, lean men, fat men, women and children and everybody that wanted to take a hand in the sport. All passed off nicely. The Fourth wound up by a grand ball in Loustaunau Hall. The hall was crowded. The dance broke up at 4 in the morning. Everybody enjoyed themselves and went home happy.

Marin County Tocsin, July 8, 1905

The Fourth was celebrated in Novato in a regular old Fourth of July style, a parade at 11 o'clock in the morning headed by Grand Marshal James Rogers and his aids, then the Novato Brass Band with their fine new uniforms.

The Hon. J. W. Atherton was president of the day and the Hon. Thomas P. Boyd orator.

Four fine large floats representing the different industries of this township, carriages of the different townsmen elaborately draped were features of the parade. The first prize went to Miss Maud Moore for the most handsomely draped carriage. The parade marched up Grant Avenue to county road, countermarched to Reichert Avenue to the park, where there were speeches by the Rev. Father Kieley and the orator for the occa-

sion, Thomas P. Boyd. Races in the afternoon and a ball at night wound up the celebration. Everybody had a good time.

This newspaper story shows how many people it takes to put on a parade.

Sausalito News, June 19, 1909

Novato Will Celebrate on July Fifth

Novato is making great preparations for a big Fourth of July celebration. There will be a parade with prizes of \$5 for the best decorated double rig; \$2.50 for single rig; \$2.50 for a greased pole contest, and oilier features.

Thos. P. Boyd is to be orator, and Supervisor Pacheco was selected for president of the day. Marshall's Band will furnish the music.

There will be a "Portola" float with L. A. DeVoto representing the Spanish Grandee; also other floats by the Athletic club and others.

The following is a list of the officers and committees:

G. Pacheco president of the day, and R. H. Trumbull grand marshal, with the following aids: D. J. Ryan., James Rogers, Wm. Brandon, A. V. de Borba, James Buletti, Lou Bugeia, W. Cain, Ramon Corello. Milton Valencia, E. C. Gibbs and Geo. Riscioni.

4th of July Parades in Novato

Finance Committee: Frank Gnos, Dr. J. H. Kuser, F. S. Hamilton, T. F. Keating, A. McIntosh, J. H. Bond,

Reception Committee: W. A. Powning, G. Pacheco, H. Nielsen, Dr. Kuser, H. Rudolff, Dr. Conradt, Capt. Leon, H. Rose, A. D. Scott, A. G. Scown, J. C. Green, A. V. DoBorba, E. R. Samuels, F. W. Sweetser, S. P. Fachutar, S. Porcella. Paul D. Culver, D. Grossi, Jos. Gambetti, R. DeRosa, Sr., C. Dahl, J. Mancebo, W. Jason, A. T. Winn, J. Silvers, P. Maggetti, E. Genserowsky, L. A. Devoto, Jas. B. Burdell, P. C. Guglielmetti.

Decorating Committee: J. E. Lewis, Fred Mahlstedt, A. Yelmorini, Jas. Nugent, F. B. Ross, J. Pronzini, Tom Keating, Anton Joseph, Gene Fisher, Harry Harper, A. Dilena, E. R. Johnston, John Guth, Fred Noell, Joe DeBorba, H. Gieselmann, Frank Silva; F. W. Sweetser, Manuel Mattaeo, Bruno Schulz, D Ville, George Heise, Felix Woehlerman.

Committee on Music and Printing: Wm. Brandon, C. E. Carlile, J. H. Bond, H. G. Hill.

Barbecue Committee: J. Sutton, Frank Tanforan, Jas. Mattoni, A. DeBorba, jr., P. Nave, Manuel Smith, Sr., Pio Dilena. Jas. Casey, L. Maggetti, John Green, J. Augusthino, Jas. Bocaglio, A. V. Agualr.

Racing Committee: Lou Bugeia, F. C. Butler, John

Bugeia, P.L. Earhart, W. Swalve, J. W. Dotters, L. Beckstead, Henry Manzoni, A. Hiribarren, F. Gnos

Voting Contest Committee: A.D. Scott, F. S. Hamilton and J. P. Loustaunau.

Marin Journal, July 10, 1913

The Novato celebration of the Fourth was an entertainment that would have been a credit to a larger town.

Hon. E. I. Butler was the orator of the day, and delivered an eloquent address upon patriotism, progress and development, speaking before a large and attentive audience.

There was a fine parade and several decorated floats. Miss Hamilton daughter of a local merchant, made a very pretty Goddess of Liberty, Miss Smith and Miss Boilette being her attractive maids of honor.

Editor Bond was president of the day, and discharged his duties so satisfactorily, that he is in imminent danger of being re-elected many times.

When the exercises were concluded about 500 were entertained at a big barbecue, all present being invited to sit down and partake liberally of a substantial repast.

When the inner man had been comforted, there were all the usual athletic sports, competitive games and races, the victors in every instance receiving handsome prizes.



Fourth of July decoration and Marshall's Band in 1909. Looking west from about Scott Street.



The 4th of July parade started on Reichert Ave. and went down Grant Ave. across Highway and would turn around and go back down Grant Ave. Above is the turnaround area. The house on the right is Fred Sweetser's (where West America Bank is now). Just to the left you can see the old school house and just above the white horse you can see the arches on Grant Ave.

Marin County Tocsin, July 10, 1915

BIG TIME AT NOVATO JULY 5th

MONSTER FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION
AT NOVATO

Though the day was threatening yet not less than fifteen hundred citizens and visitors gathered at Novato Monday morning, July 5, 1915, to participate in the celebration of the Nation's birthday.

The following elaborate program had been arranged for the occasion:

10:30 am., parade; 11:30, exercises; 12:30 pm., barbecue; 2 pm., horse races; 3 pm., foot races, and 8 pm. to 2 am., dancing.

Cash prizes were awarded for the best decorated floats, automobiles, double and single rigs, and bicycles.

The parade proved to be the spectacular feature of the program, many beautiful floats being entered, of which the Ladies Aid Society of Novato were awarded the first prize, Black Point the second. A. D. Scott, best decorated automobile. A. H. Anderson, a special prize, he having entered a float representing a blacksmith shop in full operation; Miss Charlotte Millmeister, first prize for best decorated rig; Bonnie Bond, first prize for best decorated bicycle and the Novato Dramatic club the booby prize. The parade over, everyone

gathered at the grand stand where President of the Day J. H. Bond introduced the Rev. Father Baettesti, who delivered the invocation and incidentally spoke of the history of our country, the father retiring amid great applause.

President Bond next introduced the speaker of the day the Hon. Thos. P. Bond, who delivered an eloquent address, In fact, one of the most patriotic speeches heard in Novato in many a day. President J. H. Bond in a most masterly manner delivered the address of welcome and as on all previous occasions, was well received.

Mrs. James Lewis was then introduced and entertained the large gathering by singing the Star Spangled Banner, the rendition of which was beautiful. At this time the judges, J. H. Kuser, Al H. Smith and Thos. Pacheco, announced the winners of prizes in the parade. Miss Elodie Shrieve rendered that beautiful selection. "My Own United States," which was also well received.

Mr. H. Trumbull closed the exercises by vouching for the future of Novato.

Too much praise cannot be given to Messrs. Jose Hiribaman and Frank Tanioran who so successfully managed the barbecue, they having served at least 900 persons.

The horse races resulted as follows:

First, Walter Siemens' "Dollie" won, Mr. Slemmons up (2). J. Avelone "Dick" Von, L. Bugeia up (3). J. Bugeia's "Togo" and Endsberg Bros. "St. Edgar" ran a dead heat. (4) Col. Paxton's "Just Billy" won, Bugeia up. Mr. Frank "M. Gorman's pacer won the harness race.

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One of the features of the day was the fat man's race, won by Hugh J. McCurdy of San Rafael, some runner is Hughy.

The balance of the afternoon was taken up in foot races and games, all being hotly contested.

The evening was given over to dancing. Her Majesty Miss Millie Nave and Mr. Frank S. Thomas, leading the grand march, Miss Mollie Nave certainly looked a royal queen as she sat upon her throne, accompanied by her two beautiful aides, Miss Irene Anthony and Miss Fay Lester.

The success of the celebration is largely due to Mr. C. E. Endsberg, chairman, J. H. Bond, Secretary A. L. Anthony, Treasurer E. Sassemo and A. V. De Borba Jr. and, R. Trumbull.

Marin County Tocsin, July 8, 1916

Another successful Fourth of July celebration has gone down in the history of Novato. Festivities began Wednesday night with a dance which was well attended. The parade which began the celebration was one of the finest ever seen in Novato. Will Blank as Grand Marshal, and his two aides, Dan Lavoroni and Joe Gambetta, made a fine appearance on their well-

groomed and decorated horses. Madeline Hiribarren made a very beautiful Columbia seated on her white dias with her two pretty attendants.

The Indian Valley float which represented a glimpse of Indian life with the Indian squaws in "full dress" was truly artistic and picturesque and was given first prize. The Black Point float "Liberty" and "Liberty Bell" was very good and was given second prize. Bert Anderfuren with his "Blacksmith Shop afloat" was the most original.

Blacksmith Shop Float

The children of Novato were a fine feature of the parade. Hildegarde Kaufhold as a little soldierette riding her pretty pony and little Etta Warner standing on her pony like a circus rider, both received great applause. Then there were other floats, decorated automobiles and rigs too numerous to mention.

The exercises of the day were held on the Town Common. E. R. Samuels acted as President of the day, Rev. H. Christensen gave the invocation and Hon. Frank W. Dickey of Solano, as orator of the day, gave a splendid address on "Patriotism and Preparedness" which was well received. Mrs. James Lewis sang "The Star Spangled Banner" with violin obbligato, and Mrs. C. H. Thompson delighted the audience with a reading, "Old Glory." R. H. Trumbull gave a short address in behalf of the Novato Chamber of Commerce.





Novato Advance, May 19, 1923

Celebration Called Off – The proposed Fourth of July celebration and water carnival, to have been given at Novato, has been called off. This action was taken because of the inability of our people to give the matter the time required to make the celebration the success desired. The harvesting of crops and other business interests are very pressing just now and will be for two months to come. This with the fact that towns all around us are preparing to celebrate encouraged the action taken.



Only picture the Museum has of the Mahlstadt Park, which is just above the Novato History Museum. This picture was taking sometime after 1908, because you can see the Flat Iron Building just to the ladies left shoulder which was built in 1908.

4th of July Parades in Novato

Novato Advance July 7, 1993

Everyone loves a parade and Novato had a beaut.

Novato's first Fourth of July Parade in any one's memory was a happy march back to a time when communities celebrated Independence Day by watching their friends and neighbors parade down Main Street.

Novato's main street is Grant Avenue and more than 50 vintage cars, fire trucks, tractors, bikes, trikes, horses, color guards and local dignitaries streamed by an appreciative gathering that lined the street last Sunday morning.

The parade, led by the Novato High School Air Force JROTC Color Guard, stepped off precisely on time and in just over an hour had completed its march from Seventh Street to First Street where it led followers directly into the city's first Farmers Market of the year.

Of course, there were a few missing ingredients, as there invariably will be with any first-time effort.

"It was a great start," said Betty Machado, who remembers the days of the Western Weekend parades, "but we needed a band and I missed the floats."

"This is the biggest crowd I've seen for a parade since I've been here," noted Novato City Councilmember Dennis Fishwick, who, like other city dignitaries rode in the parade. "Everything was very positive and upbeat."

"I thought it was a great parade" noted Bill McDill, who watched from near his Grant Avenue physical therapy office. "Everybody seemed to enjoy it. All they needed was a marching band."

"I had never seen a parade in Novato. I thought it was great," said Tina Miller, who watched daughter Crystal help lead the parade as part of the ROTC Color Guard.

"I was so pleased that we had a good turnout," said Al Mendoza, president of the Novato Host Lions, a group that joined with the Lions 7-Uppers to hand out small American flags to the spectators.

"It helps us come together as a community to celebrate America. It is about time we had something like this."

Lin Hines, chair of the parade committee, breathed a huge sigh of relief when the parade marched by a large gathering of spectators precisely on time.

"I thought it went great," he said. "Being on time was important and we started precisely at 10 o'clock."



The first modern day 4th of July parade would take place in 1993 with the Novato Air Force JROTC color guard leading the parade.