

# The Novato Historian

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## Preserving Novato's History Feature Section

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## Carlile Recalls Past Of Local Countryside

**Novato Advance March 11, 1959**

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Notes added by Michael Read

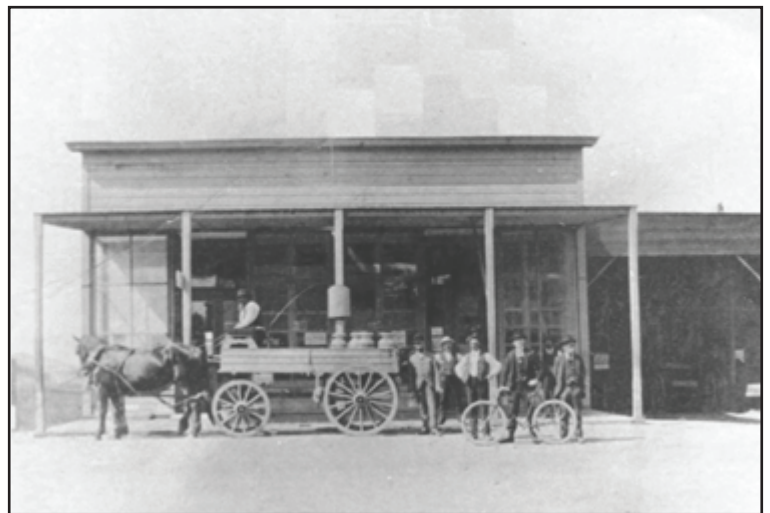
One of the chief repositories of Novato history is 82-year-old C.E. Carlile, who has been a resident of Novato since 1895 and has owned and operated his hardware store at 815 Grant Avenue for nearly half a century, since 1910. (*Started in the Flat Iron Building*)

For 14 years before he opened his hardware store, Mr. Carlile was the station agent at Novato for the Northwestern Pacific Railroad. At the time he opened his hardware store there were two general stores nearby. One was that of Ernest Samuels, whose store was in what was known as the Samuels Building. It was the building at Grant and Reichert Avenues which was wrecked and burned recently after having been occupied for several years by Ernest Vogel's junk shop. Samuels owned the building until 1945 when it was sold to the Melny family.

In the Scott building at Sherman and Grant Avenues A.D. Scott owned and operated a second general store that carried "everything from groceries to ribbons," Carlile recalls. It is presently occupied by Johnson Red Barn Furniture Company.

### In Busiest Part

The stores were located in the busiest part of town – near the depot where the heavy flow of incoming and outgoing travelers and cargo kept activity at a peak. There were no cars or buses to compete with the railroad then.



January, 1895 - Mr. Ubl of San Francisco has just put the finishing touches on his store building on the north side of Grant Avenue, Novato, and Mr. Samuels, to whom he has leased the place, is taking possession and will run a general merchandise store there.

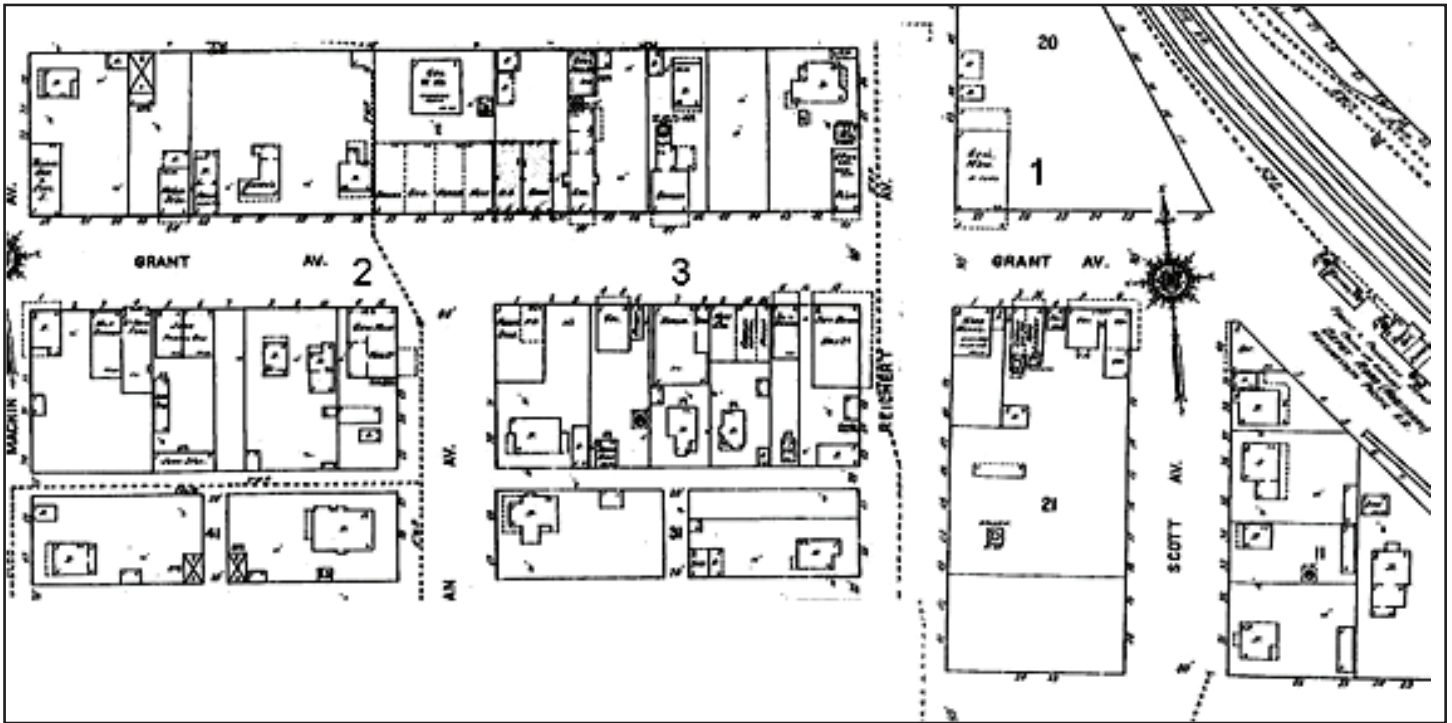
Scott's store had originally been located on Novato Boulevard near Diablo Avenue but Scott, noted for his business acumen, built the new store building on Grant Avenue and moved into the better business zone.

Carlile recalls that "Scott was a well-liked, good natured man," active in community affairs. He helped establish the Presbyterian Church in Novato and worked hard at getting students from San Francisco Theological Seminary at San Anselmo to fill the local pulpit on Sundays.

Concurring with Carlile's opinion of Scott is a passage from a book called "Financing and Empire," written in 1927 and now in the possession of Mr. John Novak.

It reads; "The life history of A.D. Scott is a record of untiring activity along well directed lines, and crowned

# Carlile Recalls Past Of Local Countryside



This 1924 map of Novato shows the location of the 3 stores – #1 top right, corner of Grant and Reichert is the Samuels store - #2 at the corner of Sherman and Grant is the Scott store - #3 in the middle, of Grant is the Carlile store.

by a degree of success only attained by those who devote themselves indefatigably to work before them.”

## Business College

Scott was born in Nova Scotia in 1865 and was educated there, eventually taking courses in business college. In 1882 he came to California with his parents and in 1884 he came to Novato where he went to work for the McDonald Brothers, who owned a dairy ranch and a general store.

He worked in the store as a clerk until 1888 then purchased the stock and took over as proprietor. He built the downtown store at Grant and Sherman about 1892 (1890) and he operated it until his retirement in about 1940 after 62 years in business.

(Found this store in the newspaper – “Dissolution of Co-partnership - GILBERT McDonald and Leslie McDonald, under the firm name and style of “McDONALD BROS.” and having its principal place of business at Novato, Marin County, California, has been this day dissolved by mutual consent. The said Leslie McDonald retires from

the said business, which will hereafter be conducted by the firm of “MCDONALD & SCOTT.” All debts due the late firm of McDonald Bros. must be paid to said “McDonald & Scott.” and all debts due from said “McDonald Bros.” will be paid by said “McDonald & Scott.” Dated July 22, 1887. Leslie McDonald. Gilbert McDonald.”)

Scott was on the original board of directors and was one of the founders of the Bank of Novato when it opened in 1913 with his close friend George Morrison as cashier.

According to “Financing an Empire,” this was the first store in Novato and has always commanded its full share of local regard, enjoying a splendid reputation for attractive goods and square dealing. His invoice of merchandise probably amounts to \$10,000 or \$12,000 (in 1927).

## First Wife

Scott was married twice. His first wife was Matie Benedict, whom he married here in 1889. They had two children, Jessie Scott, who attended school here and was later a teacher at the old Grant School and Alger D. Scott, born in 1890, who became an oil company employee in Kern County.



This circa 1899 picture of the A.D. Scott store that was built in 1890 shows the Novato Druids had their meetings in the upstairs of the Scott Hall. The Druids was organized in 1899.

Jessie Scott resides in Southern California and is said to be a victim of severe arthritis. Alger died prior to 1940 leaving three children, Alger Jr., Harriet and Royal.

Matie Scott died in 1893 when Jessie was a year old and Alger three. In 1895 Scott remarried, taking as his wife Miss Francis Peters of Petaluma, a former school teacher and “a lady of culture and refinement,” according to the book. “She was devoted to her home and popular in social circles.”

The Scotts lived at 917 Sherman Avenue in a comfortable home built about 1914. That same year the Scotts took a trip back to Mr. Scott’s native Nova Scotia for a visit with relatives.

### **GOP Supporter**

Scott was always an ardent supporter of the GOP and was known as a “Black Republican” for his active political interest in his party. He never drank and he never smoked.

He sold out his store in 1940 because of ill health and lived only a few years longer, dying about

1946 or 47, a much respected man after whom Scott Street was named.

Carlile’s own career in business in Novato has paralleled that of Scott to a great degree. Since his wife’s death 11 years ago he has lived alone at his home at 853 Reichert Avenue. In recent years he has tended strictly to business but at one time he too was active in community affairs. He was one of the custodians of the Novato Emergency Fund, started by the late Judge George Faulkner.

The fund was accumulated from donations of the various churches and clubs of Novato and was used to take care of the emergent needs of families who were not eligible

for county relief or who could not wait for the slow wheels of welfare investigation to turn.

John R. Thompson and Mrs. E.R. McDonald were co-custodians of the fund until a few years ago when the balance, the records, and the responsibility were turned over to the local branch of the Salvation Army.

### **Well-Stocked Store**

Carlile still maintains a well stocked hardware store with many ultra-modern products in its aged shelves and counters.



Left to Right: Alexander Dill Scott and Frances (Peters) Scott in their store in Novato, California circa 1906.

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Carlile's Hardware store



Carlile's picture that was in the newspaper story in 1959.

Still on the wall of his business office is an old "wind-up" telephone, a privately owned instrument by means of which he used to communicate with his wife through a phone just like it in their home. As he now lives alone the old phone has not been used in many years.

He has a son, Dr. Elton F. Carlile, in Marysville, and a daughter, Clara Carlile, who owns a motel in Santa Rosa. He has two grandchildren who are married.

Carlile has always been a great reader and he is still a regular customer at the county library across the street from his hardware store. He rises shortly after five a.m. every day so as to be through with breakfast in time to hear the educational TV program "Continental Classroom" at 6:30 every morning. He is particularly interested in the lectures on science and electronics.

## Wide Reading

Carlile's conversation shows the results of his reading and listening and he can be classified as a

deep thinker. He is greatly concerned about the demoralizing effects of war on our society and blames it for the violent behavior of the adolescents of post-war generations.

"War produces a general acceptance of violence," Carlile believes, and through it violence becomes identified with heroism. This attitude is transmitted from the men who come home from war to their sons who in turn try to become social heroes through violent behavior.

He feels the young rowdies should be more firmly penalized by the courts as the soft punishments handed out only encourage further delinquency.

He belongs to the fading school of stern self-disciplinarians who never indulge themselves. He has paid cash for all his purchases, living comfortably but frugally.

At the age where many men have been retired for many years Carlile manages to keep up his business and his home single-handedly. He is an authority on Novato history and a part of it.