

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 Feature Section

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Frank DeLong Sweetser

by Michael Read

This is a picture of Frank DeLong Sweetser, the youngest son of Novato pioneer Joseph Bryant Sweetser and his wife, Maria Ingalls Sweetser. Frank's father, J. B. Sweetser had arrived in San Francisco on Admission Day, September 9, 1850 from Maine by way of the Horn. He first settled in Alviso, California. In December 1856, J.B. Sweetser and pioneer Francis DeLong purchased the 17,000 acre Novato Rancho.

Frank DeLong Sweetser was born in Alviso, California on June 29, 1856 and later called the Novato Rancho his home. He suffered from asthma, and as early as 1873 (at age 17) he operated a cattle ranch in the high altitude of the Raft River Valley in southern Idaho. In 1879 he ran cattle in Silvies Valley, in eastern Oregon and made drives to Winnemucca, Nevada, the shipping port. It was said that Frank Sweetser rode the West on horseback and could lean down from his saddle and catch a rattlesnake by the tail and snap off its head. Known as Colonel Sweetser because he was an officer of the national guard, he was among the first to up-breed his herds with good Herfordshire bulls.

On January 1, 1880, Frank D. Sweetser married a San Rafael girl, Maria Elizabeth Sutherland, the daughter of Donald and



Frank DeLong Sweetser

Caroline (Drew) Sutherland. Frank then made his headquarters at Winnemucca. On February 13, 1884 when the Nevada Livestock Association was formed, Frank D. Sweetser was selected as its permanent secretary. He went to the first National Convention of the cattle growers of the West which assembled on November 17, 1884 in St. Louis, Missouri.

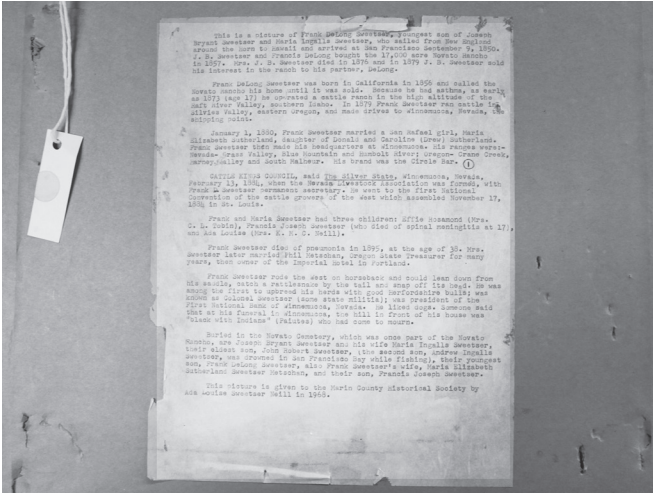
Frank DeLong Sweetser



The Sweetser Family - circa 1880 - taken at the Sweetser home. Around the table: (left to right) – Andrew Ingalls Sweetser, John Robert Sweetser, his wife Frances Ellen Johnston Sweetser (elbow on husband's shoulder); Joseph Bryant Sweetser – John Robert's father. Standing in the plaid dress is Mrs. Andrew (Lisbeth F. Hitchings) Sweetser; in the swing is the second Mrs. Joseph B. Sweetser (Elizabeth Rideout). The young girl is Maria Josephine Sweetser, daughter of John Sweetser, who later married James Burdell. To her right is her brother, Fred Wiley Sweetser, who later married Henrietta Valencia. Sitting on the table is Andrew Ingalls Sweetser's son, Louis Hobart.

Frank and Maria Elizabeth Sweetser had three children: Effie Rosamond (Mrs. C.L. Tobin), Francis Joseph Sweetser (who died of spinal meningitis at 17) and Ada Louise (Mrs. K.M.C. Neill). In 1895, at the age of 39, Frank died of pneumonia. Mrs. Sweetser later married Phil Metschan, who was Oregon State Treasurer for many years and then owner of the Imperial Hotel in Portland, Oregon. Frank D. was buried in the

Novato Cemetery which was once part of the Novato Rancho along with his father, Joseph Bryant Sweetser and his mother Maris Ingalls Sweetser. Other Sweetsers interred on the knoll of the cemetery are Frank's brothers, John Robert Sweetser, and Andrew Ingalls Sweetser, who was drowned in San Francisco Bay while fishing. Frank D.'s wife Maria Elizabeth Sutherland Sweetser Metschan and their son, Francis Joseph Sweetser, rest in what is now called the Novato Pioneer Cemetery.



The document which was on the back of the photo of Frank DeLong Sweetser.

**Marin County Tocsin
Volume 16, Number 45
9 March 1895**

DEATH OF FRANK D. SWEETSER.

On last Monday the remains of Frank D. Sweetser were brought home from Winnemucca, Nevada, where he had died after a short sickness. Mr. Sweetser was well and favorably known throughout the county, having been born in Novato 39 years ago. In 1880, Mr. Sweetser married Miss Maria Sutherland, daughter of our esteemed townsman, Mr. D. Sutherland. His early days were spent on the home ranch, but becoming interested in stock-raising, sought a larger field and made his home in Nevada, where he soon became a prominent banker. Mr. Sweetser was subject to lung troubles and after being exposed to the cold, he caught pneumonia from which he died.

The funeral took place last Tuesday from the residence of Mr. Sutherland's and the internment was in the family plot in Novato beside his father, Joseph Sweetser.

We take the following from the Silver State, published at Winnemucca, Nevada, the late home of Frank D. Sweetser:

"The citizens of Winnemucca were startled this morning to hear that genial whole-souled Frank Sweetser was dead. He had been ill for some days with a complication of asthma and la grippe, but although he was quite sick, no one had any idea that he was so soon to be called away by the dreaded messenger Death.

Frank De Long Sweetser was a native of California and was 38 years old. He had resided in Nevada for the last 12 years and was extensively interested in the stock business in this state, Oregon, and Idaho, under the firm name of Staffer & Sweetser. He was also president of the First National Bank. He leaves to mourn his death a loving wife and three sorrowing children, Effie, Frank and Pansy, besides two brothers have been telegraphed for and they will be here tomorrow. It is thought that his remains will be taken to California for burial, but no definite date for the funeral has yet been set.

No man in Humboldt County was more popular than Colonel Sweetser, as he was generally called, he having formerly been an officer of the national guard of this State on the Governor's staff. He will be generally missed, as he was a favorite with all who knew him, and his loss will be serious to the community, to his wife and children, however, the greatest and saddest loss will fall, as we never knew a man who was more attached to his family. They were his whole pleasure in life and to give them comfort and care was his greatest aim. We can only say to them that God does everything for the best and while it is hard to bear the loss of a husband and father, such things have been and always will be and poor mortals must bear the cross. Everyone in Winnemucca extends to them their heartfelt sympathy, empty consolation though it may be.

NOVATO'S TREASURES

The Novato Advance Building

868 Grant Avenue



1923

William Hanen, 62 years old, started the *Novato Advance* on July 1, 1922, out of the Flat Iron Building.

On April 21, 1923 he wrote in his paper: "Being the lowest bidder, Chas. P. Schuetz, builder of our Community House, was last week awarded the contract for the erection of an office building and residence for the *Advance* and its staff. Our new home, with its stucco finished front, will be of such an architectural character that no one need feel ashamed of their newspaper office. We have faith in Novato and its people, hence our nerve."

On May 5, 1923: "May Day, the anniversary of the entrance of Admiral Dewey into Manila Bay, ground was broken for the erection of a building to house Novato's paper and job printing plant. G. Trabucchi a Novato contractor, is putting up the building, assisted by Novato carpenters, and all the material used will be purchased from or through local dealers as far as possible. When the *Advance* is settled in its new home, the latchstring will be hung on the outside of the front door, and all friends will be welcome to enter without knocking. Back of the printing office will be the editor's domicile, where cordiality will be enthroned."

On July 7, 1923: "Kindness Appreciated – Although we gave no house warmer on the completion of our building, yet a number of good friends have called and, besides wishing us well, greased the shelves of our larder with substantial things, for which the orphan bachelor feels grateful and thankful. In the first place contractor G. Trabucchi gave us a better building than the contract called for. In the midst of our moving and trying to keep the office business going, Rev. Charles Christensen appeared on the



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scene with a can of stain and exemplified the Christianity he preaches by staining the floors of our living quarters. ... Mr. Christensen is never too busy to help a neighbor, and the work, time and money he has given to the Community House entitles him to a place in the hearts of all people of Novato."

"We are now comfortably located in a growing town of warmhearted, whole-souled people, and by co-operation can do much to advance the interests and prosperity of the *Valley of No Regrets.*"

He would also write: "The *Advance* celebrates its first anniversary today, and begins volume two in its own building. We are now located in the business section, and extend a cordial invitation to all friends to call and inspect our new quarters, which have been built at an expense few printers would consider justifiable, but we have faith in this section and full confidence in the people of Novato and northern Marin that they will give their support to the local enterprise."

On January 23, 1953: Today is moving day for the Novato Advance. The entire operation will be transferred from its home of 30 years at 868 Grant Avenue to new, larger quarters at 1068 Machin, next to the Post Office."

"Although moving the plant and machinery of the *Advance* will probably be something of a nightmare to the rest of the staff, it's expected that the front office will function with unruffled calm."

In the 1960's, Stan's Appliance center would be in the building. In recent years, it has been a restaurant, Portelli, Kitchen and currently Batika India Bistro.



The late Mr. and Mrs. William Hanen stand in the composing room of the *Novato Advance*.