

The Novato Historian

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Preserving Novato's History Feature Section

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The Novato Historian

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Mr., Mrs. & Mrs. Henry Pini

by Michael Read



A young Enrico "Henry" Lidio Pini

One of the best known names in Novato, along with Sweetser, DeLong and Nave, is Pini. The following is the information I was able to uncover about Henry Pini and what little is really known about him.

Much is written about the store, H. Pini & Company, however newspapers rarely wrote about him. Most of the known information is written in the book *"Financing an Empire, History of Banking in California"* published in 1927.

The following is what Henry Pini's biographer wrote in the book.

"One of the most important commercial enterprises in Novato is the H. Pini Company, which during the twelve years of its existence has enjoyed a remarkable growth, reflecting great credit on the initiative and executive ability of its founder, Henry Pini. No resident of this section of the county stands higher in public confidence and esteem. He was born in the Canton of Ticino, Switzerland, on the 1st of January, 1886, and is a son of Domenico and Carolina (Padrazzetti) Pini, who were natives of that country and there spent their lives, both being now deceased.

Henry Pini secured his education in the public schools, which he attended to the higher grades, and then, desiring a field of larger opportunity for individual advancement than was afforded in his own country. He embarked for the United States, landing in San Francisco October 4, 1905. He remained in that city about a year and then went to Napa County, this state, where he became foreman on a large vineyard and dairy ranch owned by Mrs. Mary Bazzini. He retained that position about six years and in 1912 came

to Novato, where he has since lived.

Buying five acres of land, he engaged in the poultry business, in which he met with very gratifying success, building up a fine establishment and having five thousand chickens.

After five years, Mr. Pini sold out and turned his attention to



Maria and Henry Pini

Mr., Mrs. & Mrs. Henry Pini

commercial lines, opening a store in Novato, in which he carried a general line of merchandise, and at about the same time he bought fifteen acres of land near town, where he established his residence. His store proved a successful venture and his business grew so rapidly that, feeling the need of a partner, in 1918 he admitted William E. Cole, of Novato, to an interest therein.

The business continued to increase rapidly and on March 25, 1922, it was incorporated under the name of H. Pini Company, with a capital stock of fifty thousand dollars, which was in 1923 increased to one hundred thousand dollars. The company does a general mercantile business, carrying a large stock of groceries, flour, feed, hardware, hay and grain. He also owns an up-to-date mill, equipped with modern machinery, and is extensively engaged in the manufacture of poultry and stock foods. They keep two salesmen on the road and employ fifteen people. Mr. Pini is president of the com-



Maria Berta and John Bazzini

pany and Mr. Cole is secretary and manager. The stock on hand will invoice at about fifty thousand dollars. The company's policy has been distinctively one of service, and H. Pini Company is recognized as a distinct asset to the community."

"On December 4, 1923, Mr. Pini was united in marriage to Miss Mary Bazzini. He was a member of Petaluma Lodge, No. 901, B.P.O.E.; Genesee Tribe, No 207, I.O.R.M., at San Rafael, and Novato Grove, No. 113, Druids. Mr. Pini has proven himself a man among men, commanding the respect of all who come in contact with him, and enjoys marked popularity. He has taken a keen interest in everything pertaining to the prosperity and advancement of the community, giving his earnest support to every measure for the public benefit, and is regarded as one of Novato's best citizens."

Mrs. Henry Pini

Maria Catterina Severina Berta (also known as Mary) was born on November 21, 1869, in Anzonico, Ticino, Switzerland. (Ticino is a state of Switzerland; it is smaller than Rhode Island.) She came to the United States in 1882 and married her first husband, John Bazzini, on August 13, 1890. (John was born November 5, 1858 and came to the United States in 1878. John ran her family business, the A. Berta Fruit and Vegetable Company, at 530 Montgomery Street, which was originally owned by her brother Attilio Berta, who died on January 4, 1895, leaving an estate worth \$50,000. John and Maria's house was at 1628 Lombard Street, San Francisco. John was first a salesman for the company and after Attilio's death, he managed the business.

In the 1906 earthquake the business was destroyed. They temporarily reopened the company on June 30th at the corner of Market and 11th Street. By November 5, 1908 they were able to reopen at the old location of Pine, California, Kearny and Montgomery Streets. After the earthquake John and Maria remained at 1628 Lombard Street until at least 1915.

The 1910 census shows John and Mary Bezzinni (i.e., Bazzini) living in Yount, Napa County, on Sorpresa Road. He is 51 and she is 40. Also on the farm is Mario Beroldo, age 16, a foster son (Mary would take care of other foster kids throughout her life), Joseph Beroldo,

Mr., Mrs. & Mrs. Henry Pini

age 53, a hired man, and Henry Pini, age 24, also a hired man on the farm.

The 1920 census shows John divorced, not working, owning the home at 1628 Lombard with a mortgage on it. He was living there but not as the head of the household. The 1930 census shows John's residence as 1650 Lombard Street. He is listed as a boarder and a waiter. He died on April 14, 1931.

The 1920 census shows Mary Bazzini, age 50, living on Novato Blvd. She is married, speaks Italian Swiss, is a merchant of groceries, owns a business and rents her home. Augusto Adamina, age 65, is a boarder, who is a widower from Switzerland and worked as a laborer on a truck farm.

Next door is Henry Pini, age 34, He is single and a merchant of groceries who owns the business and owes nothing on his home. Pio Lafranchi and Mary "DeBorba" Almada are also neighbors.

On May 19, 1921 the *Marin Journal* reported that "an agreement Maria Bazzini with John Bazzini, wife and husband – that each release the other from all claims and demands, and that all property in the name of either party is the separate property of the party having the record title."

During the 1920's and 30's the Pini's purchased property all over the Novato area. Usually from a widow or a family that had to move. They were buying and building up until 1939. We have a report from the *Argus* paper on "March 25, 1939, that Mr. and Mrs. Henry Pini are building a four-room bungalow on their property on 4th Street."

Mr. Enrico "Henry" Lidio Pini

Carolina Domenica Sinforosa Pedrazzetti (Henry's mother) was born in 1854 in Arbedo, Ticino, Switzerland. Her father, Nicola, and her mother Adelaide were both 24. Carolina married Domenico Pini on February 28, 1881, in Ticino, Switzerland. They had nine children in 13 years

and Henry was the second oldest child. She died about 1925, in Bellinzona, Ticino, Switzerland, at the age of 71.

Domenico Pini (Henry's father) was born on August 19, 1856, in Bellinzona, Ticino, Switzerland, the child of Tomaso and Teresa. He died about 1910, in his hometown, at the age of 54. Arbedo (population in 1900 was 1,042) today is a residential suburb of Bellinzona.

Enrico Pini left Arbedo, Ticino, Switzerland in 1905 and arrived in the United States October 14, 1905 on the S.S. La Touraine sailing from Le Havre, France to the port of New York. According to the ship's manifest: he was 20 years old, married, a laborer, able to read and write, nationality or country of last permanent residence was Italy, race was Italian, last residence was Bellinzona, he was headed for San Francisco, he had a ticket to the final destination, paid for by himself, he had \$28 on him, he had not been in the United States before, he had a "friend and cousin" Martha Vitalis in Santa Rosa, CA, he was never in prison, was not a Polygamist or Anarchist and he was in good health.

On the manifest it said he was married. He may have left a wife and child in Switzerland which would have been consistent with his character, but we have no information on them.

It is rumored that he was in San Francisco during the 1906 earthquake, where he helped bury the dead.

In 1910 Enrico "Henry" Pini was in Younts, Napa County and worked as a hired hand for John Bezzoni. The 1910 census indicates that Bezzoni is also of Swiss origin.

On May 10, 1910, on his "Declarations of Intention for Naturalization," it noted that he is a farmer, 5 feet 6 inches tall, weighs 145 pounds, lives in Oakville, Napa County, and that he arrived in New York on October 4, 1905.

As Enrico got older he was 5 feet 5 inches tall and weighed 175 pounds. Oakville is just north of Yountville (Younts) in Napa County and Enrico "Henry" Pini was most likely on the Bezzoni ranch working as a farmer. The ranch was between Oakville and Yountville. In 1910 Henry's father died in Switzerland and Mary

Mr., Mrs. & Mrs. Henry Pini

Bazzini's sister had also passed away in Switzerland that same year. It appears that they went to Switzerland together to pay their respects to the families.

According to the ship's manifest:

On November 25, 1911 Mary Bazzini left from Le Havre, France and arrived in New York on December 5th on the S.S. Chicago. She was going back to her husband's home in San Francisco at 1628 Lambert (Lombard) St. On the same ship was Enrico Pini, a passenger who listed himself as a "mechancian," from San Francisco, who was going back to San Francisco & Marin County to stay with a friend, Luigi Pellandini, in Novato. Pini also brought his brother Mario with him to the states.

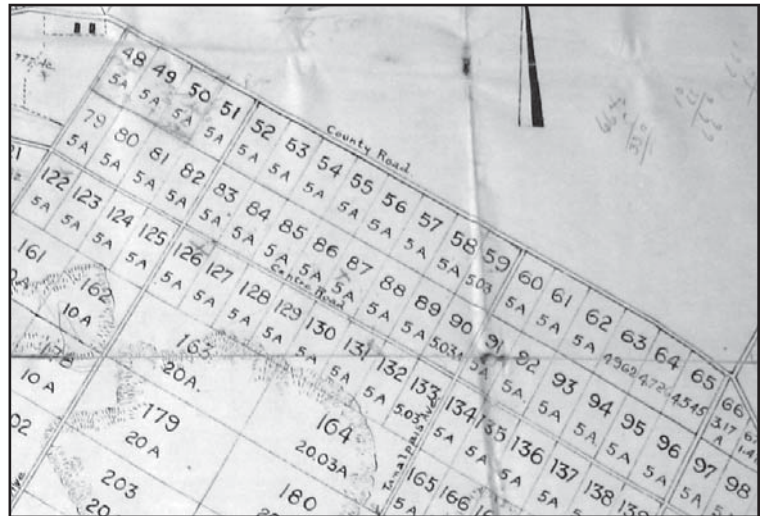
In November 1912 Henry had a new residence erected on his property, lot 56, Novato Land Company, subdivision B, on Novato Boulevard which he bought in June. The property was formerly known as M. Putz place. The Tiabucci Bros. had the contract to build the house.

In March 1914 he bought lot 90 from Henry Good and in May, 1916 he purchased lot 89 from Anthony Bock. In September 1919, he bought lot 58 from the widower Arthus E. Booth. He also sold his home on lot 56 with its 5 acres to Mary "DeBorba" Almada.

Henry was Catholic and would become the godfather to Eleanora Lafranchi.

On October 1918 the *Marin Journal* would write: "Among the young men from Novato who appeared at the Local Draft Board, San Rafael, for physical examination, were Uri Patterson, Herbert Bond, Henry Pini, John Joseph, Peter Bell and Richard Turfferth."

Henry's World War I registration card would read Serial # 2153 Enrico Pini age 32. Date of birth January 1, 1886. Occupation, grocer - own employer, nearest relative - nMrs. M. Bazzini, address RTD # 6 Novato. Signed by Enrico Pini, height short, build medium, with blue eyes and



Lot 56 is just south of where Grant Ave. comes into Novato Blvd. Lot 58 is where he would build his second house and it is near the corner of Novato Blvd and Tamalpais. Lot 89 and 90 are just behind lot 58 and they are at the corner of Center Road and Tamalpais.

brown hair. Not obviously disqualified, signed by Frances Bond, Sept. 12, 1918.

The following are most of the stories found about Henry in newspaper articles:

Oct. 1922 – "That he is alive-to-day H. Pini has reason to be thankful. When crossing the railroad track at the depot Monday evening in his Ford truck, he did not notice the approaching Eureka train until it was nearly upon him. He hastily put on all speed, but the train caught the rear of the car, throwing Mr. Pini out onto the ground and badly wrecking the Ford. It was a hair-breadth escape, but Mr. Pini did not receive a scratch. E. R. Samuels saw the accident, and fully expected to find a mangled body of one of our citizens."

In 1923, Henry became seriously ill after he had eaten mushrooms. In 1928, while visiting a ranch near Yolansdale, he fell down a ravine into a creek striking his head on a stone and he lost consciousness. In 1942, he was eating a quail dinner when a wishbone became lodged in his esophagus; he had to go to Stanford-Lane Hospital in San Francisco to get it removed. In 1943 he underwent a major surgical operation at St. Francis Hospital in San Francisco, which resulted in a blood transfusion also.

Mr., Mrs. & Mrs. Henry Pini

Mrs. Enrico Pedrazzetti (Pini)

When Lillian Lyndall Whittle was born October 30, 1904 in Watsonville, California, her father, Louis, was 26 and her mother, Mae, was 22.

The 1910 census shows her in Santa Cruz at the Holy Cross Academy as a ward at the age of 5.

The 1920 census shows Lillian Whittle in Novato at age 15, living with her grandfather Frederick Wheeler, age 65, who was a goat farmer.

The 1930 census shows Lillian living in Napa on a farm that she and Enrico owned. Lillian was the one who was interviewed by the census taker. She is now 25 with her husband Enrico Pedrygette. (The family name was misspelled in the document.) He is 46. Her first marriage was when she was 16 and his was when he was 35. In the house is Laura - age 8; Henrietta - age 4; Enrico - age 2; and Laura Wheeler - age 72, the mother-in-law to Enrico. Enrico is from Switzerland, speaks Italian, came to United States in 1903 and is a salesman for a hardware company.

The story from Ancestry.com says "she (Lillian) married Henry (Enrico) Pini in 1924 in Sea, Somerset, England."

Using the numbers from the 1930 census, Henry's first marriage was in 1921 and so was Lillian's. Were they married to each other at this time? It appears that Henry used his mother's maiden name Pedrazzetti to hide this marriage.

No records could be found of Henry and Lillian's marriage or any documentation of their arrival to America from England in 1924. There is no report anywhere of a Henry Pini (or Pedrazzetti) who left or entered the country between 1911 and 1935.

Henry and Lillian Pini had seven or eight children during their marriage.



Circa 1923 – Lillian with daughter Janie in Novato

Henrietta L. Pedrazzetti - July 25, 1925 – 2004 born in San Francisco,

Carolina "Dimples" Pedrazzetti - about September 1, 1926- 1929 born in California,

Enrico "Henry" L. Pedrazzetti - October 31, 1927 – 2015 born in Alameda,

Lidio Pedrazzetti (son) - April 27, 1929- April 29, 1929 born in Alameda,

Theadora "Doris" Faith Pedrazzetti - June 18, 1930 - born in Napa,

Elvetzia "Joy" Pedrazzetti - December 15, 1931 – 2014 born in Napa

William "Bill" Tell Pedrazzetti - December 15, 1931 – 2013 born in Napa

Laura "Janie" Jane Cardellini Pedrazzetti Chenier 1922 – 1983 was born on January 28, 1922 in San Rafael.

It appears that Lillian married Primo Cardellini, who was a milker on the Andrew Andersen farm, according to the 1920 census. They filed for divorce on June 1922 and the divorce was granted on October 19, 1923.

When Laura Jane, the Pedrazzetti's youngest daughter, got married in Highland Park, Michigan, on November 3, 1944 to Richard D Sorenson, she listed her father as Henry Pedrazzetti and her mother as Lillian Hamilton.

So it is possible that Primo was an alias of Henry Pini, who was involved with Mrs. John Bazzini, who was getting a divorce in 1920-21. Remember, Lillian was only 16 or 17 years old at this time.

1940 census – No records of Mrs. Mary Pini or Henry Pini were found in any census. A "Henry Pedrazzetti:

Mr., Mrs. & Mrs. Henry Pini

“head of household” was found in Petaluma on Old Cotati Road. They were renting a place there, paying \$15 a month.

At this time, Henry was 54 years old and Lillian was 35. They were married, with a daughter Henrietta 14; a son Henry Jr., age 11; a daughter Theadoris, age 9; William, age 8; and a daughter Joy, age 8. The census questionnaire was reported by Lillian. She reported that Henry (Enrico) went to school up to the 6th grade and Lillian Carellini Pedrazzetti went to school up to the 8th grade. Henry was on a farm and renting. He was unemployed and seeking work. He had been out of work for 10 weeks as of March 30, 1940, and was a general laborer. He had made \$1500 in 1939.

It looks like Mary found out about Lillian in early January 1940 and fired Henry from H. Pini & Company. She kicked him out of the house. In 1940 she started selling all of their holdings from farms, land, houses and the business.

Then the story goes that Lillian found out about Mary and kicked him out also. An Ancestry.com contributor said he had talked to Henry's children and they said, “His children have told me that there were at least two more wives, but they haven't given names.”

Lillian moved to Washington State and remarried on May 15, 1951 to Edwin Paul in Montesano, Washington, when she was 46 years old. She died March 11, 1959 in Raymond, Washington, at the age of 54.

Henry moved back in with Mary Bazzini Pini and died in the Sweetser mansion on Elm Drive.

The following was reported in the *Petaluma Argus-Courier* newspaper. The Novato History Museum and the *Novato Advance* are missing January 1945 newspapers.

Death of Henry Pini

January 20, 1945 “Henry Pini Passes Away In Novato – Henry Pini, 59, died today at noon at his home in Novato ... He had been ill for a year. He leaves a widow, Marie. The couple had no children...



This 1933 picture shows the Pedrazzettis, from left to right: Henry (6), Joy (1) on Janie's (11) lap, mother Lillian (29) on her lap is Bill (1), Henrietta (7) and Doris (3).

January 22, “Funeral Plans For Henry Pini - ... Pini was the husband of Mary Pini, brother of Mrs. Dora Carmine and Mrs. Gemma Gagetta, Guido, Remeo and Ulyssis Pini, and was a native of Switzerland. He was a member of Petaluma Lodge No. 901, B.P.O.E., Novato Grove of Druids, Novato Council of the U.P.E.C. Sons of Italy and Swiss Benevolent Society.”

January 26, “Tribute Paid To Henry Pini Novato – The Pini store on Grant Avenue and the Pini Feed Mill were closed Tuesday until noon out of respect to the memory of their founder, Henry Pini, whose funeral took place earlier in the day. The final resting place in Mt. Olivet cemetery.”

“Beginning with a fresh vegetable store on Grant Avenue many years ago, the late Mr. Pini, assisted by his wife, later enlarged the business and erected the new store, known as Henry Pini & Co. Inc., with Pini the president, which an office he held until his death. Two years ago later the various stores united, brought the stock and good will of their departments and conducted their business under individual names and Pini retired from active business. A progressive citizen, his many unknown acts of benevolence to lesser fortunate ones will make his memory beloved for years to come, not only in Novato, but throughout Marin County where the firm did a large wholesale business under his personal supervision.”

Mr., Mrs. & Mrs. Henry Pini



Mrs. Maria Bazzini and Henry Pini about 1920.

The pallbearers were:

Doug Phillips, of the Pini Hardware Co.

Henry Fragoza from Novato

Fred LaFranchi lived in Nicasio (was a dairy farmer)

Laurence (Lorenzo) Benno (was a painter/ building constructor in Fairfax)

A. Ghisletti ran a farm in Petaluma.

Louis Pedrazzi (would have a ranch near the Petaluma Golf Course)

Mario Angelo Pedrazzi (born 1893 in Switzerland according to the 1940 census.)

In looking on Ancestry.Com. for Henry's two brothers, I could not find out what happened to Mario Remo Attilio Pini (1894 – died?) and Lidio Romeo Silvio Pini (1896 – died?) When I looked at the Pedrazzis I could not find any information on them coming to the United States or their family. It could be that Louis and Mario Pedrazzi were his brothers and they had changed their last names from Pini to Pedrazzi, as Henry had changed his to Pedrazzetti.

Death of Mary Pini

The *Press Democrat* April 27, 1952, reported – Funeral arrangements are being made for Mrs. Mary Pini, 82, wife of the late Henry Pini, former owner of Pini's Hardware Co., Novato. Mrs. Pini died Friday at her home in San Rafael.

The Pinis retired in 1944 from the hardware business they had operated since 1912. Mr. Pini died in 1946 (1945). Mrs. Pini was a native of Switzerland.

Interment will be in Mount Olivet.



Circa 1939 - Henry Pini with his daughter
Henrietta Pedrazzetti

NOVATO'S TREASURES

Hanen House - 908 Sherman Avenue



Nielsen-Simmons House - Early 1900's

Built around 1906, the house on the right (known now as the Hanen House), was first a barn for Hans Nielsen. Nielsen was born in 1849 and came to the US in 1869. He owned a ranch in Nicasio for many years. In 1895 he retired and moved to Novato with his wife and rented the Hayden House which was owned by Dr. Condrat and called the "Novato Heights." We now know it as the "Hilltop 1892 Restaurant."

In December of 1905 Nielsen bought lots 27, 28, 29 and 30 of Block G from Leon Greenbery and his wife of San Francisco for \$1,000. These lots are located where the Simmons House is now.

After the 1906 earthquake, Dr. Condrat wanted to move back into his "Novato Heights" home. Nielsen and his wife had to find new housing. In October 1906, Condrat moved into The Heights.

The Niensens built their new home on the corner of Sherman and DeLong Avenues with a barn in the back of the home.

In December of 1920 Hans Nielsen was killed as a result of a runaway accident in which he was thrown from a buggy. He was rushed to Novato where he was given first aid and rushed to Dr. Kuser's hospital in San Rafael. He never regained consciousness and died the next day.

The late Mr. Nielsen had accompanied Rev. Christiansen for a drive. When nearing Old Town Novato (South Novato Blvd.), the horses were frightened by an automobile and bolted.



Hanen House - 2017

Nielsen was thrown, his head striking the pavement and crushing his skull. Rev. Christiansen remained in the rig and finally calmed the horses. He escaped injury. Nielsen was survived by his widow Susana. She was born June 22, 1848 and died on January 2, 1931.

The *Novato Advance* publisher William Hanen would run a story in August of 1922 that Novato needed more housing. The *Advance* wrote:

"Mrs. Nielsen contemplates moving the large, fine barn that stands on the back of her lot into a five room house with all the conveniences for a good home. There is a growing demand for houses for rent in Novato, and this is a start to meet that need."

Nov. 1922 "The contract for construction of Mrs. Nielsen's cottage has been let to J/W. Crow. Work has already commenced and will be rapidly pushed to completion."

Dec. 1922 "Mrs. Nielsen's barn has been moved to the front of the lot and is being converted into a dwelling house." She would rent the house.

Sometime after her death, William Hanen would buy the cottage on Sherman Avenue.

William Hanen died on May 13, 1941; he was 81 years old. Mrs. Marian Hanen, his wife, died in her home at 908 Sherman Avenue on October 29, 1967; she was 78 years old.

The City of Novato now owns the house