

The Novato Historian

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Preserving Novato's History Feature Section

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The Novato Historian

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Nave Garage—100 Years



Looking north on Redwood Highway is the DeBorba Ice Cream parlor on the left, the old Midway Garage (next) and the new Nave Garage on the right.

By Mike Read

According to Elton Carlile his father, Charles "Ed" Carlile, bought a Peerless in 1912. Automobiles were not a practical means of travel at that time. Break downs were not uncommon. Blacksmith shops, the only available aid in miles, were not equipped or experienced to repair them. The Peerless was kept in their "barn" garage. In time, maintenance was needed. Manuel Mathias, who had some knowledge in this respect, was hired. Eventually Ed bought a lot on the left side of the road to Petaluma and built a garage there. He hired Mathias to operate it. Although this was the only garage with a mechanic in Novato, business didn't prosper.

April 25, 1914 Tocsin – "C. E. Carlile is putting up a fine large garage on the Burdell tract near Grant Avenue. It is to be fully equipped with supplies for automobiles. Manuel Mathias was associated with Mr. Carlile and was in charge of the garage." The garage was called "Midway Garage" halfway between San Rafael and Petaluma.

July 16, 1916 Petaluma Daily—Willie Nave of Novato has purchased an interest with John Rosa in the Midway Garage.

Dec 14, 1916 Petaluma Daily – "There has been a change in the ownership of the Midway Garage. Manuel Matthias is retiring. Will Nave and John Rosa will continue the business and Manuel has again hitched up with the Sutton Garage."

Dec. 15, 1917 Tocsin – "Manuel Matthias, the enterprising young owner of the Midway Garage, is the latest volunteer from Novato for U. S. Service. Manuel has qualified and is now expecting his call to enter the aviation mechanical corps. He has a number of influential friends working for his interests in that department. in which he certainly makes good."

Dec. 15, 1917 Independent Journal – "Little Louie Nave of Oldtown received the boy's medal for selling the most Red Cross Xmas seals"

March 23, 1918 Tocsin – "Manuel C. Matthias has sold the Midway Garage to a Mr. Boegel of San Rafael. The latter is said to be a skilled mechanic. Matthias is on the draft list."

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(Above) Nave Garage opening day with the band getting ready. (Below) Nave Garage building during the 1925 flood.



May 24, 1918 San Anselmo Herald – “Bill of Sale – Manuel Matthias to Fernand Boegel; tools stock and auto supplies and good will of Midway Garage.”

July 10, 1919 Independent Journal – “Louie Nave, who was with the 323rd Engineers and saw active service in France for 17 months has just returned home. He was one of the first Novato boys to go over and the last to return.”

The Start of Nave Garage

Sept 12, 1919 Petaluma Daily – “Fernand L. Boegel

and Louis J. Nave have formed a co-partnership under the firm name of the Midway Garage and have leased the property from Joe Pomeroy for five years.”

October 31, 1919 Petaluma Daily – F.L. Boegel of the Midway garage, was struck on the face by an auto crank, while starting a Ford the other day and received a badly cut face and several of his teeth were knocked out.

December 28, 1920 Petaluma Daily – Boegel and Nave of the Midway garage, have bought three lots from Robert Trumbull on the corner of Grant Avenue and the highway on which they will erect a re-enforced concrete garage.

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In August 1923 Mr. Nave changed his advertising in the *Novato Advance* from Midway to Nave's Garage

March 17, 1923 Novato Advance – “Novato’s New Garage Formally Opened—Saturday night (March 10th) will go down as a memorable one in the history of Novato, the occasion being the formal opening and dedication of the fine new garage erected by our enterprising and public-spirited citizen Louis J. Nave.

The imposing structure graced the northeast corner of Grant Ave and the State Redwood highway, built of reinforced concrete with large plate glass windows facing both thoroughfares, and is not only a substantial and imposing structure but its architectural beauty makes it an appreciated ornament to Novato.

About four hundred people accepted the public invitation of the owner to attend opening night and make merry. A good orchestra furnished music, and dancing was indulged into the heart’s content, a hundred couples finding ample room on the main floor to trip the light fantastic in comfort. Refreshments were served at midnight, and the happy throng thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality of the host.

The salesroom was a bower of exquisite floral pieces and baskets of bouquets of varied designs and colors, presented by



Frances Sawyer (left) and Walt Simonds — Two salesman who sold “Star Cars” at Nave Garage. “Star Cars” were built in Oakland by Durant Motors Company, and were one of the only locally manufactured cars at the time.

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prominent citizens and well-wishers who admire the courage of Mr. Nave and welcome such a magnificent business establishment. Several of the floral pieces were made in horseshoe shape, symbolical of good luck—the expressed sentiment of the whole community.

A nicely furnished ladies rest room is a valuable adjunct and shows thoughtful planning.

Mr. Nave believes that the method of the enterprise is to plan with audacity and execute with vigor to sketch out a map of possibilities, and then to treat them as probabilities. Such has he carried to a successful conclusion in building the new Midway Garage, which stands as a monument to his enterprise and the town in which he lives. All Novato applauds his achievement and wish him unbounded success.

The new Midway Garage is conveniently arranged for the display of automobiles, and in the rear is a large work room equipped with all modern appliances for overhauling and the repairing of machines.

Mr. Nave will specialize in the Buick and Star automobiles and will keep on hand a number of these well-known makes for speedy delivery to customers.

Novato is proud of its new garage and the man who had the courage and faith to build it.”

May 12, 1923 Petaluma Daily – Louis Nave owner of Nave’s Garage now has in use a complete wrecking car with appliances for wrecked cars of all conditions. The employees of this garage are now all in uniform.

December 1928 – “We were talking with Louie Nave over at Nave’s garage and he told us that he has two classes of customers. The first kind is the fellow who whenever he hears a strange noise or a tiny little knock or squeak, comes breezing right in to have it fixed, while the second kind just keeps on pouring gas and oil in the old bus



1952 picture of Nave Garage on top and below an ad that John Angeloni ran in 1952 when he took over the garage. Note the two added cars.



until she is a total wreck and has to be laid up for a week or two while the repair costs mount up. And Louie says he likes the first kind better because he is proud of his car and always buys more accessories and body polish.”

May 13, 1930 Petaluma Argus – The 40 x 50 addition to Nave’s Garage, Grant Avenue and the Redwood highway, is rapidly nearing completion, only waiting for electricity to be

occupied. Concrete about 4 feet up, the rest glass, giving plenty of light for repairs. Two “Easy Hydraulic Lifters” have been installed and its owner claims that when finished it was the best equipped repair shop north of San Francisco. The space now used for repairs was used for a first aid and tire department.”

Petersen Bros. has moved into the old Midway Garage on Redwood

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Highway, where they were pleased to receive draying orders.

April 24, 1933 Argus – Louis Nave has awarded the contract for building four stores, with four apartments over them, on his garage property, to Louis Bormolini, Novato contractor. The cost was \$11,000. Work starts immediately, with practically all local labor employed on the fine stucco and concrete building. With every modern equipment planned it is expected to be ready for occupancy within the next four months. The stores and the apartments have all been spoken for.

June 16, 1950 Novato Advance – Louis J. Nave, owner of Nave's Garage, has started work on his new 30,000 dollar building and remodeling job. The building is to be erected on the present used car lot next to his building on the east side of 101 Highway, north of Grant Avenue.

The new building was an addition to his present garage, which was remodeled to conform to the new structure. It was the showroom for Dodge and Plymouth deluxe and special deluxe cars and the Dodge Job-rated trucks. It will also house the offices of Mr. Nave and the sales department.

Louis J. Nave has been at his present location for the past 31 years and has

been the Dodge and Plymouth dealer for the past 16 years.

Another new feature was the installation of many new pieces of equipment to better serve the car owners of Novato.

The Chrysler Corporation, Dodge and Plymouth Division, has promised a larger allotment of new automobiles for the Novato territory, with delivery from the San Leandro, Calif. plant at a stepped-up pace.

The new building should be ready within the next 60 days, with the grand opening announced at a later date. Watch the Novato Advance for the announcement.

October 27, 1950 Novato Advance **Nave Grows With Novato**

Celebrates 31 Years In Garage Business With Opening of New Show Room

The Grand Opening of Nave's Dodge and Plymouth Show Rooms on Saturday morning, October 28, celebrates Nave's 31 years of progress in Novato.

Nave's first garage was located across the road from the show room, on the narrow north-south highway, where he started business as a young man after returning from 28 months over-seas



John Angeloni in 1962 picture as a Novato City Council member.

service in the Army during World War I.

Those were the days of Durants and Stars, of dusters and goggles and motoring veils, and bad tires that were apt to blow out every 10 miles, bad roads, cars that had to be cranked and broken axels. The "Get Out and Get Under" days immortalized by a popular song of that day.

Nave proved that he could patch and pump tires, weld broken axels on his father's old blacksmith's forge, carry



Nave Garage would be the name of the business when Mr. Nave build's his new garage in 1923.

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Nave's new tow truck in front of Nave's body shop on Machin Avenue next to the IDESA Hall.

a gallon of gas to a stalled car, haul a car out of the ditch, or meet the emergencies of the day and night with the best of them. In addition to running a day and night garage service, Louis ran the agency for the very smart Stars and Durants, now out of existence.

In 1924 the highway was widened, and Nave moved his garage to the spot where the Novato Pharmacy now stands, and Herb Graham the mechanic who is still with Nave's joined him in the "Getting Out and Getting Under" work of making the early cars run on good roads and bad.

In 1933 he moved the garage to its present location, farther north on his property and built the stores now occupied by Knutte Realty, the drug store, barber shop, shoe store and feed store, plus the apartments above them.

In 1934 he became an associate dealer handling Dodge and Plymouth cars and continued in that capacity for 16 years. But with the opening of the new Show Room on Saturday, Nave's starts business as a direct factory representative, dealing with the Dodge and Plymouth Division of the Chrysler Corporation. This enables Nave to get direct shipment of cars and trucks from the factory and thus serve the Novato area better.

At the Grand Opening there was new models of Dodge and Plymouth cars on display, as well as the Dodge new fluid drive trucks. Nave's service department will also be open for inspection on Saturday and Sunday. There Herb Graham who has worked with Nave's for 25 years will show visitors the new lubrication equipment, the new aligning equipment and other up-to-date and modern features of the service department. His co-workers

Ted Johnson and Lester Cash were there also to show people around.

Cye Whipple of the sales department, who came to work for Louis Nave about 2 years ago, was on hand in the new show room.

The expansion program is a demonstration of Louis Nave's policy of growing with Novato, the town he grew up in and is helping to build for the future.

March 23, 1953 Marin Independent Journal – Change of ownership notice – Notice is hereby given that the undersigned, Chester C. Kiesel and John J. Angeloni, have formed a partnership and are transacting business as co-partners in the Town of Novato, under the name of "NAVE GARAGE."

They both realized that the shop could only have one owner and Mr. Angeloni bought out Chester Kiesel.

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Chester started the A-1 Tool Rental and Repair company on Sweetser Avenue.

March 28, 1953 Marin IJ – Louis Nave Sells Garage Business – On March 31 Mr. and Mrs. Louis Nave will sell their business interests in Nave's Garage, situated on 101 Highway in Novato, to Chester C. Kiesel and John J. Angeloni.

Included in the sale will be the new car dealership for Dodge and Plymouth, all used cars, machinery, equipment, furniture and fixtures. Nave will retain the real estate on which the garage is located.

Both new owners are from the Bay Area, and plan to make Novato their permanent home. Chet Kiesel has had a great deal of mechanical experience with all makes of cars. John Angeloni has a background of twenty-seven years' experience with a large transportation company.

Kiesel, with his wife and eight-year-old son, Ronald, have moved to Novato and are residing on Nave Drive. Angeloni, who has a wife and three children, plans to move here as soon as he can sell his home in San Mateo.

Louis Nave, who first started the business across the highway from its present location thirty-three years ago, is retiring from active business due to ill health.

October 27, 1955 Novato Advance — John J. Angeloni is a comparative newcomer to Novato who has swiftly carved for himself a place of respect and esteem in the community.

Born in Oakland, Calif., in 1909, he completed his elementary and high school education in the Oakland public school system.

In 1936 John Angeloni graduated from the University of San Francisco, with a degree in law.

After passing the State Bar examinations he practiced as an

attorney in San Francisco for 15 years, having moved to that city in 1934.

During and after his college days the young lawyer was employed by the Pacific Greyhound Lines, an affiliation which lasted a total of 26 years.

In 1940 John Angeloni met and married Marie Williams and the couple now have five children, the youngest of which are the 2-year-old twins, Susan and Sharon.

The other children are Charlotte, 12, Frederick, 10, and JoAnn, 5.

In 1952 Angeloni gave up the practice of law as a full-time occupation and purchased the Nave-Garage and Nave Motor Sales agency on Highway 101 in Novato, a business which he continues to operate.

A past president of the Novato Lions Club, he is also past president of the Novato Chamber of Commerce and past Grand Knight of Our Lady of Loretto Council of Knights of Columbus, a former director of the Novato Community Club and a member of the Druids.

Asked concerning his hobbies, the popular Dodge and Plymouth dealer said smiling, "I'm too busy."



1965 Picture of Nave Motors at James Roberts property. The cement slabs to the left is the start of Empire Plymouth Toyota dealer (Novato Toyota).

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Between my family and the business, I just don't have time for hobbies."

Questioned concerning his future plans Angeloni stated, "I plan only to remain in Novato and to do my best, to grow with this community which I have come to love. To me, the opportunities here are boundless. This area has not begun to reach its eventual fulfillment and those of us who are here now have as fine an opportunity as exists anywhere in America, if we have the vision and foresight to capitalize upon it."

March of 1959 Nave Garage and Novato's Dodge and Plymouth Dealership would move to 7515 Redwood Blvd. owned by James Roberts.

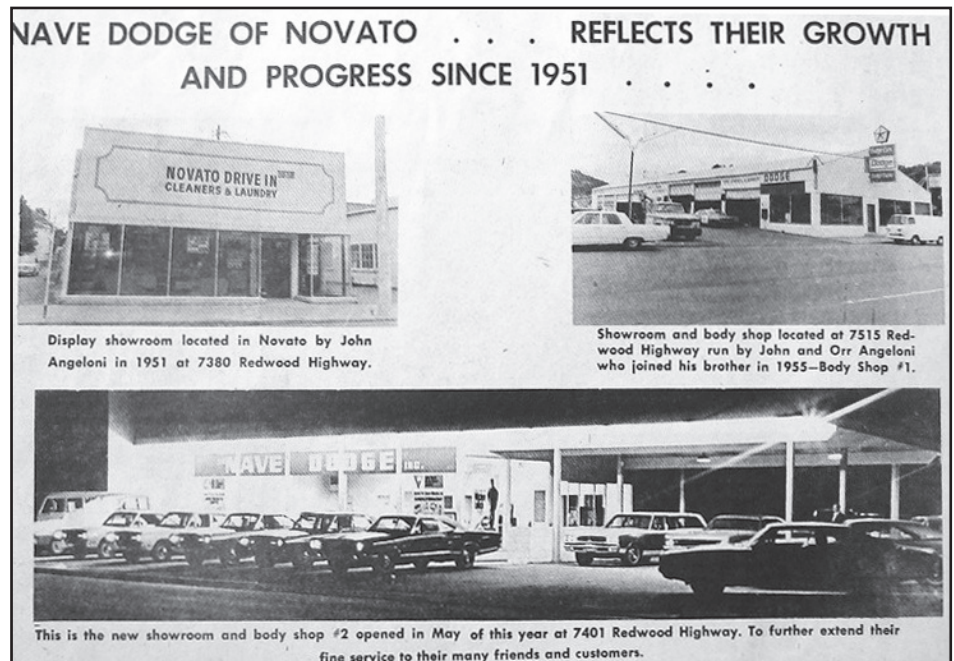
John J. Angeloni, owner, said all operations of the firm now spread over several locations, will combine in one place at the new location. This includes sales of Dodge and Plymouth automobiles, Dodge trucks and newly acquired auto line – the Studebaker Lark, used car sales, garage and body shop.

A new 80-foot building was constructed at the new location to permit expansion, Angeloni said.

November 2, 1962 Independent Journal – Angeloni now leasing the business site and buildings of Nave Garage at 7515 Redwood Highway, has bought 10 acres of land west of Highway 101 between Novato Creek and Yukon Way.

Nave Motors Inc. would incorporate June 6, 1966.

April 1969 – Nave Dodge opened its new and used car sales headquarters at 7401 Redwood Highway on the west side of Highway 101 in the space formerly occupied by Dervin Ford. The Nave Dodge service shop would continue to operate at 7515 Redwood Highway and John Angeloni, owner, says the shop eventually was expanded. About half of the 50,000 square feet at the shop location had been occupied by new car sales, so



(Above) 1969 ad in the *Novato Advance*. (Below) 1988 ad in the *Novato Advance*. The "our 36th year" was the 36th year that John Angeloni had owned the business since March 31, 1952.



there's considerable space for shop expansion.

January 15, 1970 Independent Journal – The Novato City Council overrode the city planners and granted a use permit to John Angeloni to construct a repair shop on the west side of First Street opposite the Nave Dodge salesrooms .

1987 saw the owners of Nave Motors as John's family members — Fred Angeloni, Jim Temple (who married Charlotte Angeloni), and Don Ricco, (who married Jo Anne Angeloni in 1968).

Nave Motors Inc. current owners are Charlotte Angeloni Temple and her two sons, Matthew and James Temple.