School Fuel’s Tour of Novato - Explore Our Town

Explore Novato at your own pace and earn digital badges by visiting Discovery Stops all around town. The Tour of Novato is an annual Novato-wide celebration of our schools and a fundraiser to support them. This year, the event was redesigned with public health considerations and COVID-19 in mind. Instead of a one-day gathering, the Tour of Novato this year will be a series of Discovery Stops and challenges that families can complete on their own timeline. Riders visiting each stop can scan the QR code posted at the location, or check-in from their personal fundraising page. As they complete the stops, they earn badges on their page to show off their progress! Discovery Stops were visited between April 1, 2021 and May 1, 2021.

Anne Russell, Board Member gave a presentation about the Novato Historical Guild to the Novato Chamber WIN on March 17th. She wore an 1890’s Victorian Dress that is her 3rd Grade Tour Docent costume. Many attendees said they would definitely get more involved in the NHG.

Third Grade Tour is now virtual!
Student Tour of Old Town Novato
https://www.novatohistory.org/third-grade-tours/

Gerald (Jerry) Reese passed away March 20th at home with family. Jerry was born in Tulare, California, graduated high school in Oxnard, CA, and started college at College of Marin. He earned his teaching credential at San Jose State, and a masters in reading at Sonoma State. He is remembered fondly by his former students and their parents from his 50 years of teaching, mostly in Novato. He felt everyone could learn and succeed. He encouraged children as a basketball coach in CYO leagues at Hill Junior High and San Marin High School. He restored the horse drawn buggy currently on display at the Novato History Museum.
President’s Corner
Kathryn Hansen
President, Novato Historical Guild

Continuing Our Mission During Covid

Exciting news – The Hamilton Field History Museum opened April 1, 2021 after being closed for over one year.

Ray Dwelly, museum manager, organized a volunteer committee to prepare for the opening. To begin with they had to sweep and dust. Next, they had to test all the electronic devices to make sure they still worked. All the light fixtures had to be tested and replaced if burnt out. They had to make sure that the seals on the plumbing fixtures did not dry out. That was just the start. Next step was to line up docents for Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday (noon-4PM). A lot happens in a year and some docents are not able to participate this year.

Exciting news - The Novato History Museum opened April 14, 2021 after being closed for over one year.

Susan Magnone, museum manager, organized a volunteer committee to prepare for the opening. Besides everything mentioned above, new safety protocols were implemented:

- Determine the maximum amount of visitors allowed in at one time.
- Have masks available for visitors who forgot their mask.
- Have hand sanitizers at different spots in the museum.
- Mark the floors for one-way travel.
- Provide two pencil holders(one for clean and one for used).
- Wipe down all surfaces that were touched by volunteers or visitors with disinfectant at the end of the day.

Call for Docents – being a docent is ever so fun. Most docents volunteer one 4 hour shift a month. During those four hours docents have time to look at all the exhibits, read the books, view the videos and chat with interesting visitors. One noteworthy visitor to Hamilton Field History Museum was Lafayette Hanibal, the first African American aircraft mechanic who served at Hamilton. Mr. Hanibal said he remembered how the airmen were so welcoming to him when he arrived.

Laurie O’Mara takes third graders through the history of Old Town Novato in a new Youtube video created for the Guild. See website for video.
Novato – 50 Years Ago
(April, May, June 1971)
by Yvette Borloz Jackson

Dear Readers,

Happy days, things are getting better, the weather is spring like, we all have access to a vaccine for Covid-19, the Museums are opened, and best of all, it’s time for another issue of the “Newsletter.” Please enjoy.

Yvette Borloz Jackson

THE NOVATO SCHOOL BOARD was trying to figure out Monday how a bay for spectator seating could be created in the Hill Junior High gymnasium, and everyone agreed that vision would be blocked from many of the seats. Then deputy superintendent Ralph Giovanelli came up with a tongue in cheek suggestion: let the spectators watch the action by close circuit TV from the classrooms...

SHOPPING CENTER PROPOSAL
Shopping center developer H. L. Bryan of Oakland will come before the city planning commission April 19 with plans to transform Novak Square on Novato Boulevard into a major neighborhood shopping center, including a movie theater. Brian's plans, drawn by Weiner and Fischer architects, also of Oakland, are tentatively sketched out at this point, but give the general idea of the developers intentions. Novak Square presently contains the Roger Wilco market of 20,000 square ft. and the West Novato Shell service station. The original developer, John Novak, also had bigger ideas for expanding the center, but the availability of funds didn’t match plans for him or for subsequent proposals.

GARGIULO ELECTED MAYOR:
Douglas Merrill stepped off the council last night as mayor and councilman, and Joseph Gargiulo got the votes of all three other councilmen to succeed Merrill as mayor. Gargiulo, who was elected to the council in April, 1969, and named vice mayor last April, praised Merrills’ “quiet leadership” and pledged he will make himself available to all citizens. He said he was pleased to be named mayor without the need to attend meetings in smoke-filled back rooms and in bars because he neither smokes nor drinks.

COUNCIL NAMES ATTORNEY: attorney David Price Jones, 36, winner of the Novato Jaycees distinguished service award for 1970 and past president of the Novato Civic Foundation, was unanimously elected by the council’s four voters last night to fill out the unexpired term of Douglas Merrill until April 1972. Jones was finally settled upon as the compromise candidate in a council secret session Saturday morning and pledge to carry on “in the tradition of Douglas Merrill.” He praised the community spirit of Novatans, promised earnest study of all facts before reaching a decision and said his office door would be open to citizens who wish to discuss problems. Jones said he would be grateful for suggestions.

JUNIOR ROTC SUCCESS STORY:
The Novato High School Air Force Junior ROTC unit has already had three of its cadets appointed to service academies this year. Receiving appointments were Roland Mangan, George Franklin and Leonard Rodriguez. Paul Curtis has received a four-year ROTC scholarship and Mike Smith has received a vice presidential nomination for the Air Force Academy. Mangan is the first Novato High...
50 Years Ago
Continued from Page N – 3

cadet offered an appointment to the US Coast Guard Academy.

STAFFORD LAKE OPENS APRIL 30:
Cost of fishing permit for Stafford Lake will be the same as last year under the fishing program budget approved last week by directors of the North Marin County water District. Daily permits will cost $.50 for juniors and $1 for adults. Season permits are priced at $1.50 for juniors and $4 for adults. They can be purchased at the lake, at the city Parks and Recreation Department, or at Jim’s Sport Shop. The fishing season at Stafford opens April 30 and closes September 6. Fishing will be permitted from 6:30 AM until dusk.

SWEET ADELINES ISSUE INVITATION: “If you’re too busy to sing, you’re too busy,” says Mrs. Wayne Womack of her hobby of barbershop singing with the Marin Chapter of Sweet Adelines, Inc. “I invite every woman who can get away to join me and the rest of the chapter for an evening of singing starting at 8 PM Monday at the First Presbyterian Church in San Rafael,” says Mrs. Womack. “We believe there are many women in Marin County who would enjoy the friendliness and pleasure of membership in the chapter and we would like to demonstrate this for them at our special guest night on May 3.”

FAD COUNTRY: Is any community as afflicted by developer fads as Novato? Once it appeared, Novato was headed as the gas station and franchise take-out restaurant capital of the North Bay area. Remember the mobile home fad that hit two years ago and now the townhouse fad? There are now five pizza restaurants either in operation or being constructed in the area with another one -occupying 5000 square ft.- proposed for the Novak Square shopping Center at Novato Boulevard and Wilson Avenue. Another fad that appears to be headed this way is car washes - Novato has two now- and an application for another is on the city planning commission’s agenda this coming Monday, with another reportedly under consideration for elsewhere in town. Straw Hat pizza is also up before the planners Monday.

BANK MOVING DAY: Some 2000 people attended the open house last Thursday evening at the new Bank of America office in Novato at 1600 Grant Ave., according to manager Richard Beazell. Over the weekend cash and safety deposit boxes were moved under police escort from the old office at 1200 to 1600 Grant Ave. The bank pays the police officers who were required to guard the boxes involved in transit.

ANNUAL HOLY GHOST PARADE, FIESTA TO BE HELD SUNDAY: Mary Antoinnette Nunes, a Junior at Saint Vincent’s High School in Petaluma and 16-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Nunes of Novato, will reign as queen of the annual Holy Ghost parade and fiesta to take place May 23rd. The junior queen will be Joanne Barbosa, six year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Barbosa. Joanne is in kindergarten at Rancho school. The Portuguese celebration sponsored by the IDESI Holy Ghost society is a tradition passed down from generation to generation since the days of Queen Elizabeth Isabella, when it is told a famine was miraculously averted.

35 YEARS IN PRIESTHOOD FOR REV. FARRELL MARKED: The parishioners of both our Lady of Loretto and St. Anthony’s churches joined together Friday evening in to give the Rev. Charles Farrell a surprise party honoring the 35th anniversary as his ordination as a priest. Father Farrell is pastor of our Lady of Loretto. Henry Sandbach presented a slideshow entitled, “this is your life Father Farrell,” using pictures from the age of three years in England, his birth place, until the present time. Five hundred parishioners and friends attended the affair which concluded with a champagne reception.
The Baccaglio Family

The Guild is now featuring the stories of the pioneer families of Novato with each segment taken from the book “Novato Township” by May Rodgers Ungemach.

In 1854, Antonio Baccaglio left his home in Tappia, Italy, and came “around the Horn” to California where he found employment on the Novato Ranch owned by Joseph Sweetser and Francis DeLong. While Antonio was making a place for himself in the United States, his nephew James was growing up back in Italy. In 1874, when James was 18, his uncle sent for him to come to Novato and work with him on the DeLong/Sweetser Ranch.

One day in the Fall of 1888, Antonio was badly injured while visiting on the Mattoni Ranch. Some ranch hands had, pressed grapes for wine, throwing the residue to the hogs. Becoming drunk on the refuse from the grapes, a large boar attacked Antonio, biting him and cutting his side with its tusks. The men rescued Antonio and called a doctor to care for his wounds. He recovered but the hog had to be shot. It was a grim coincidence that when Antonio was an infant, his right index finger had been bitten off by a sow.

By working hard and saving their money, in 1897 James Baccaglio and his uncle were able to buy part of the Faggiano estate on South Novato Boulevard. James found he needed a wife to care for their big home, so he went to Italy, married Fanny (her maiden name was Baccaglio, also) and brought her back to Novato.

Uncle Antonio passed away in 1912 and was buried at Mount Olivet Cemetery in San Rafael.

James was kept busy with his 15 acre vineyard and his work pruning trees for others, occasionally as far away as Angel Island. At home, Fanny cared for their six children: Pio (Pete), Joseph, Egidio, Frank, Anita and Edna.

In 1922, the Baccaglio family moved the old home from behind two Italian Cypress trees and built a modern home on the site. The new house was built by Joseph Faggiano of San Rafael, a descendant of the Faggiano who had built the original home in the mid-1800’s.

James Baccaglio passed away in 1925 and Fanny in 1959. Both are buried at Mount Olivet Cemetery. In 1984, the Baccaglio property was sold, the home torn down, and apartments built on the site. I. Pio (Pete) worked for the Poultry Producers for 25 years and became Novato Manager in 1934. He married Florence Leveroni. Pete died in 1952 and his wife in 1970. Both are buried at Mount Olivet Cemetery.

In 1984, the Baccaglio property was sold, the home torn down, and apartments built on the site. I. Pio (Pete) worked for the Poultry Producers for 25 years and became Novato Manager in 1934. He married Florence Leveroni. Pete died in 1952 and his wife in 1970. Both are buried at Mount Olivet Cemetery.

Notes on the Family Members

Joseph worked for Continental National Bank and in real estate. His wife was Margaret Corcoran whose family owned the Old Caliente Hotel in Sonoma. They have one daughter, Joanne, who married Gordon Fowler. Joe died of a heart attack while fishing in the marshlands west of Vallejo in 1968. He is buried in San Francisco.

Egidio graduated from Novato Grammar School in 1918. Four years later, when he finished San Rafael High School, he had to go to work to help the family pay for the new house they had built. The Henry Hess Lumber Company had just bought the San Rafael Yard from Jensen & Schlosser Lumber Company, and also purchased the Novato Lumber Company from Robert H. Trumbull, Sr. The Baccaglio home was being completed.

Continued on Page N – 6
Novato Pioneer Families

Continued from Page N – 5

by the builder, Joseph Faggiano, and Mrs. Baccaglio asked him if they had any work for Egidio at the lumber yard. Mr. Faggiano talked to the San Rafael Yard Manager, Charles Lund, who said Egidio should report to Charles Kiser who was the Manager at the Novato Yard. That was the beginning of Egidio’s career in the lumber business. The Manager of the Novato Lumber Yard sent Egidio to the San Rafael Yard to get a horse and two lumber wagons which he drove to Novato that day.

“Gid” spent four years working in the lumber yard and delivering lumber on the one horse wagon. Then they needed a new Manager of the Novato Yard, so the San Rafael Yard sent Mr. Schlosser to be Temporary Manager while he was instructing Gid in the office. Egidio Baccaglio became Manager of the Novato Lumber Yard in 1927 and remained in that position for the next 32 years.

Gid’s career at the lumber yard was interrupted by World War II. He enlisted in the Navy Seabees and served for three years. He was attached to the 3rd Marine Division for the invasion of the Mariannas and spent 28 months in the Asiatic Pacific. Gid received the Bronze Star and an honorable discharge in October 1945.

When Gid returned to Novato, his job at the lumber yard was waiting for him. Mr. Hess passed away in 1959 and the Novato Yard was sold to the Mill Valley Lumber Company. During the next 11 years, it was sold three more times, but Gid stayed on through it all, working in the office, the lumber mill and the yard. He retired in 1972. Gid worked on the Baccaglio ranch with his brother Frank until the property was sold for development. He continued to reside in Novato.

Frank played semi-pro baseball for awhile. He served as a director of the North Marin County Water District 1948-1977 and was President of that Board from 1955 to 1958. Mrs. Josephine (Hoppe) Baccaglio died in 1982 and Frank in 1983. Both are buried in Calvary Cemetery, Petaluma. Frank and Josephine Baccaglio are the parents of four children: Martin, Mary Linda, Marsha and Marian. All are married and have grown children of their own.
I have always heard of a “park” on the hill behind the Novato History Museum. Elayne Miller, Novato History Guild member, said there was a park outside of her house, which is next to the museum on De Long, and that there were stories of the Presbyterian Church folks going to the park after church. This is what I have found through the following sources.

**February 23, 1888** The Independent Journal (IJ): Mr. Chase, the purchaser of the Black Point Ranch containing over 6,000 acres, had the avenues and streets bare the names of public men and prominent citizens and fruit and ornamental trees, and planned on having a park that would be located on the Miller Park place.

**July 14, 1893**, The Sausalito News reported that there was a grand picnic given on Miller Park Hill on the 4th of July for members of the Novato Social Club. Sometime after 1896 the park and tract would change names from Miller Park Place to Mahlstedt Park Place.

**July 10, 1902**, The Independent Journal reported: “The parade formed on Grant Avenue at the railroad depot, moved down the street several blocks, then turned into the principal residence street, later again appearing on Grant Avenue, counter-marching 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 those thirsty.

**May 18, 1931**, The Petaluma Argus: The Novato Chamber of Commerce will meet at the Community House where reports will be received and reviewed from the committee on the opening of Novato Park on Reservoir Hill.

**November 22, 1940**, The Petaluma Argus: Novato Boys League director, E.J. McDermed, has already raised about $200.00 through auctions and has spent $150.00 on improvements (installation of flood
These pictures were taken next door to Elayne Miller’s house. It appears that folks from the nearby church would walk across the street and have a picnic after church services.

There was a 1940 newspaper story about funds devoted for the improvement of Mahlstedt Park. The money appears to have been spent on a pond, stairs and paths.

Where the real park is today at the end of Hayden Road. Mr. Case gave the park to the town of Novato in 1888, The white poles next to the car are part of a PG&E substation.

July 13, 1966, The Independent Journal reported: The Novato City Council last night accepted City Attorney Clark M. Palmer’s advice that the city do nothing about Mahlstedt Park. The council had asked Palmer’s opinion on the city’s right to the park area at the top of Hayden Avenue hill. Palmer said the area’s park status results from maps recorded in the 1880s, on which it is designated “park.” But the area was never formally offered for dedication and was never accepted by the county, he said.

Title to the land is in the name of the defunct Home and Farm Co., but the boundaries of the area are not described precisely on any map. Public Works Director Lawrence A. Coleman said the city could obtain title to the land by accepting the implied dedication, by an expensive survey to determine the boundary, and by obtaining quit-claim deeds from adjoining landowners, a process that would probably involve litigation. He said the cost would be “extremely high for park use.”
The Hamilton Field Water Tower: What it could have been.

By Mike Corlett

In the late 1920s and early 30s, the US Army didn’t give much thought to making an Army base water tower ascetically pleasing. However, Hamilton Field Architect Howard Nurse had planned to do just that when he came to Hamilton.

Before being assigned to Hamilton Field, Nurse assisted in the construction of Randolph Air Field in Texas. The new flight training facility, later known as the “West Point of the Air,” was dedicated on June 20, 1930. The base design and layout were by Lt. Harold Clark of Kelly Field in 1928.

Lt. Clark’s idea was to centralize all base administrative functions within one building. In the same towering structure, he housed all the base administrative offices, an 1100-seat movie theater, a communications office, and last but not least, a 500,000-gallon water tank. This ornate building or tower had a light beacon and observation deck accessed by an interior elevator. Officially known as Building 100, later it became known as “The Taj Mahal” because some thought it was architecturally similar to the Taj Mahal in India.

Working on that project probably gave Nurse some ideas of how he wanted to conceal the water tower when he became the architect for Hamilton Field in 1931. The Army eventually shelved his concept of enclosing the water tank inside of a building. The funds were available for the project, but the Army chose to put the money toward more immediate needs instead of what some felt was a needless extravagance.

When Nurse left Hamilton, his next assignment was Hickam Field in Honolulu. He took his idea for an enclosure of the Hamilton water tower with him.

The Tower at Hickam Field, completed on January 14, 1938, is octagonal in design, stores 500,000 gallons of emergency water, is 171 feet high with a radius of 18 feet. Like the Taj Mahal at Randolph Field, it is of Moorish design. At the top of the building is a room 20 feet in diameter, used as a radio transmitter facility before and during WWII. A spiral staircase of 166 steps is the only access to the area. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese used the tower as a reference point and strafed it during their attack. However, the damage was not severe. On the 50th anniversary of Hickam Field in May of 1985, the tower was dedicated as “Freedom Tower.” It is to honor those who have served and will serve in defense of the country.

Every year the building is decorated with 5,000 multi-colored lights and is transformed into Hawaii’s largest Christmas tree.

Freedom Tower is a glimpse of what the Hamilton Field water tower could have been if Nurse had been allowed to complete the project as he designed it.
General Meeting
June 12th, 10 a.m.
The Fairfax Bolinas Road with Brian Crawford

Brian Crawford will be discussing his book, *The Fairfax Bolinas Road*. A fascinating account of the construction of this amazing road in the time that road construction wasn’t easy.

Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86277865305

Meeting ID: 862 7786 5305

One tap mobile
+16699009128,86277865305# US (San Jose)
+13462487799,86277865305# US (Houston)

Dial by your location
+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)
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+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

Welcome New Guild Members

Novato Historical Guild Membership Report
March 2021

Individual Membership
Caitlin Croughanl
Joni Degabriele

Family Membership
Dave & Susan Thompson
Dhyanis Carniglia and John Kalb
Shirley Shanahan

Supporting Membership
Tina and Peter McMillan

Corporate Membership
Valley Memorial Park

If you have questions about membership, call
Lane Yee, Membership Chairman,
415 – 898 – 0444

Please support our Guild Business Members:

Aaero Heating & Sheet Metal, Inc
A. D. Scott Building
Andrew McAghon Landscaping
Bank of Marin
Goltermann Real Estate and Construction
Indian Valley Golf Club
Marin Landscape Materials
Marin Volvo/Saab
Mclsaac Dairy
Nave Enterprises
Novato Builders Supply, Inc.
Pacheco Ranch Winery
Pini Hardware
Trumbull Manor Inc. – Novato
Valley Memorial Park
Valley Oak Wealth Management
Zenith Instant Printing

Novato History Museum and Hamilton Air Field Museum Discovery Stops on the *Tour of Novato* fundraising bike event.
MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please mail checks to Novato Historical Guild. P.O. Box 1296, Novato, CA 94948.

Yes, I want to join the Novato Historical Guild and help preserve Novato history! [ ] new    [ ] renewal

☐ Student (full time) membership $10/year  Name __________________________

☐ Individual membership $20/year  Address ________________________________

☐ Family membership $30/year  City ________________________________

☐ Patron membership $100/year  State __________________ Zip__________

☐ Supporting membership $200/year  Phone __________________________

☐ Life membership, individual $350  Additional donations? __________________

☐ Life membership, joint $500  Interested in volunteering? __________________

☐ Benefactor $1000/year  Email address: ________________________

☐ Business membership $50/year

☐ Corporate membership $1000/year

Finder Member:

Name __________________________

Address ________________________________

City ________________________________

State ___________ Zip__________

Phone __________________________

Additional donations? __________________

Interested in volunteering? __________________

Email address: ________________________

MEMORIAL PLAQUE GIFTS

You may honor a friend or loved one by having his or her name engraved on an individual brass plate on the Memorial Plaque in the History Museum. Please call the Museum at (415) 897-4320. All contributions are tax deductible. Plaques cost $250 per person named.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

You may make a gift of appreciated securities (stocks, bonds, mutual funds) to the Novato Historical Guild. Your gift is not only tax – deductible, but if you have held the shares for more than one year, your tax deduction will equal the full value of the securities on the date of the gift.

In Memoriam

Carol Tresch Maddox
Joyce Palmer
Camie Studley

The Guild Extends Sympathy to

The Tresch and Maddox families on the loss of Carol Tresch Maddox
The Palmer family on the loss of Joyce Palmer
The Studley family on the loss of Cami Studley

Contact Us

info@novatohistory.org

Hamilton Field History Museum
Manager: Ray Dwelly
Museum phone: 415-382-8614
Email: Hamilton_museum@att.net
https://www.facebook.com/HamiltonFieldHistoryMuseum/

Novato History Museum
Manager: Susan Magnone
Museum phone: 415-897-4320
Email: info@novatohistory.org
https://www.facebook.com/NovatoHistoryMuseum/

2021 Board Meetings

Second Tuesday of the Month

Zoom Meetings

until further notice

Time: 1:30 – 3:30 PM

Jan. 11 July (no meeting)

Feb. 9 Aug. 10

March 9 Sept. 14

April 13 Oct. 12

May 11 Nov. 9

June 8 Dec. 14

Membership Meetings

March 13 10 – 11:30 Zoom

June 12 10 – 11:30 Zoom

Sept. 11 10 – 11:30 Zoom

Dec. 11 10 – 11:30 Zoom

Guild members are welcome to attend the Board meetings. Please check with the President, Kathryn Hansen at (415) 898-0467, in case a meeting has been changed.
YOU ARE INVITED

General Membership Meeting ~ Novato Historical Guild

Saturday, June 12, 10:00 to 11:30 A.M.
Zoom Meeting - Login Info on Page 10

Brian Crawford will be discussing his book, The Fairfax Bolinas Road.
A fascinating account of the construction of this amazing road in the time that
road construction wasn’t easy.

Guild members and anyone interested in Novato history are welcome.

Novato History Museum       815 Delong Avenue     (415) 897-4320
Hamilton Field History Museum     555 Hangar Avenue (415) 382-8614

COME VISIT AND BRING A FRIEND!
The Museums are now open. Please call for museum hours.