

# The Novato Historian

Winter 2022

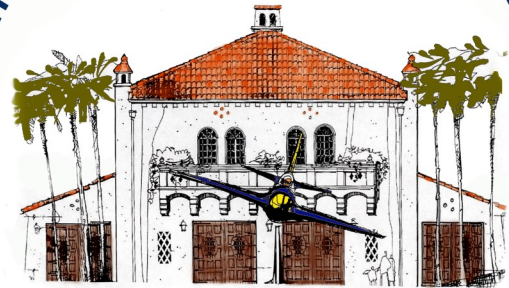
Volume 46 Number 4

NOVATO HISTORY MUSEUM



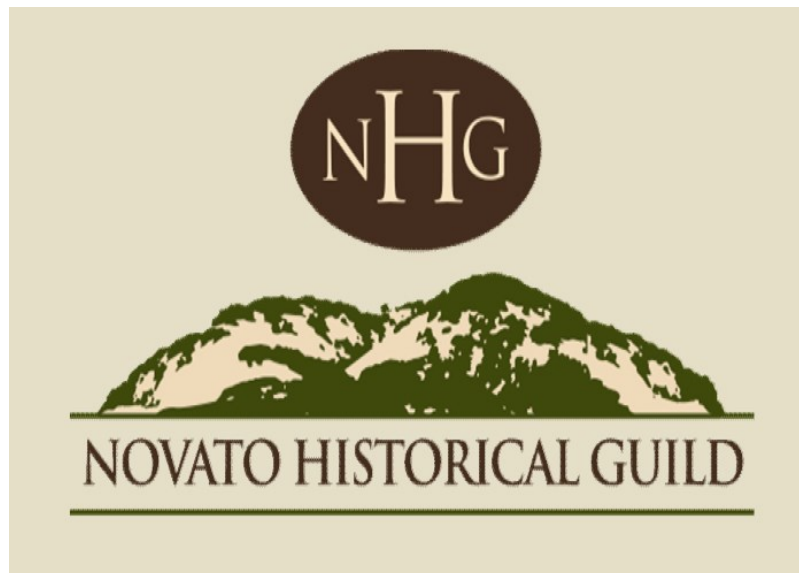
*Postmaster's House c. 1850*  
850 DeLong Avenue  
Novato, California

Hamilton Field History Museum



Hamilton Field Fire Station 1934

Presented by the Novato Historical Guild



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## The Novato Historian

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### Guild Mission Statement

To collect, preserve, and make reasonably available to the public, exhibits and information related to the history of the Novato area..

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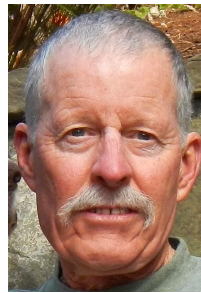
Deadline for the December 2022 issue is November 1st

### City of Novato Staff

Drew Bendickson

### Address Changes

The Novato Historian is mailed by bulk mail and will not be forwarded by the Postal Service. Please notify us promptly of your address change at Novato Historical Guild, P.O. Box 1296, Novato, CA 94948.



## President's Corner

Jim Crumpler

President, Novato Historical Guild

Hope you like the new HISTORIAN format as much as I do. I've always thought that our superb five-star content deserved a better cover. Which is why we upgraded, from newsletter to Magazine! The new Historian will also be available online for all of those members who wish to save a tree and avoid the amount of paper around your house. To receive only the online addition, simply check the box "digital version only" when you renew your membership.

I always find it fascinating to discover who I have shared my hometown with. I already know of: The Grateful Dead, Metallica, Journey, Sly Stone, Pernel Robert's (Adam, Bonanza), Mario Cipollina (Huey Lewis), and the Doobie Brothers, to mention just a few. This week I found out that Sacheen Littlefeather had been living here until her recent death. Sacheen was an American actress, model and Native American civil rights activist. Littlefeather was born to a Native American father and a White mother in Salinas, California in 1946. During the 1969 occupation of Alcatraz, she became involved in the Native American activist community. What I remember most about Sacheen is that she was the Apache activist and actress who



refused to accept the best actor award on behalf of Marlon Brando at the 1973 Oscars, drawing jeers onstage in an act that pierced through the facade of the awards show and highlighted her criticism of Hollywood for its depictions of Native Americans.

The next Membership Meeting will be Saturday, December 10 at Novato City Hall. The meeting will be from 10 A.M. to 12 noon and will feature a wonderful talk by local archeologist Teresa Saltzman. Teresa will be discussing her specialty, the local Native Americans.

A BIG "THANK YOU" to all of our volunteers and docents for what you do and in particular Tom Keena and Diane Campbell for their amazing amount of work on the outside of the downtown Museum, yard maintenance, power washing, painting and improving the path and flag holder. We couldn't exist without you.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,  
Jim

# World Trade Center Artifact

This is a firsthand account from of how the Novato Fire Department came to be in possession of the steel artifact from the World Trade Center.

By Scott Freedman, Novato Fire Department Battalion Chief, C Shift

During a trip to Arizona for a Fire House conference in May of 2013, I took a tour of a training facility in Glendale, AZ. In the facility, a piece of the WTC was displayed. I thought it was an amazing tribute and a very neat piece of history. I decided that when I returned to Novato, I would look into what it would take to get a similar piece for us to display. At the time, the new Sta. 64 was being built, so my initial thought was to display it in front of the station.

Once I returned, I spent many hours on the internet trying to determine how to get a piece of the WTC. After about 6 months and many phone calls and dead ends, I finally made contact with a person at the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey. This person was in charge of the "Artifacts Program". I learned that the program had been in place for a while before I contacted them and that there were very few pieces of the WTC left to give out. Artifacts were mostly being given to governmental agencies and a few other big corporations. All recipients had to agree that they would display the artifacts in some sort of tribute fashion.

The process for the Port Authority to release the artifacts was slow in that each piece was still considered evidence and a judge had to sign off on the release of each piece prior to them being given to the requesting agency. In October of 2014, I was told to write a letter to the Port Authority with our request and our intended use of the piece. I did this and received a return letter letting me know that we were being placed on a waiting list with a 3-6 month wait. There was no communication after 9 months, so I reached out to the Port Authority who advised that they were still processing requests and had hired a contractor to handle the processing of all the artifacts.

In August of 2015, I was finally contacted by the Port Authority and advised that they had an artifact for us. They provided a picture of the artifact as well as dimensions and weight. The agreement in accepting the piece was that the Fire District had to come and get the piece and provide our own transport of the artifact back to the District. The piece weighed over 2900 lbs. The Port Authority gave a short time frame for us to either accept the artifact or decline it. I quickly did some research on shipping from New York to California to get a ballpark price for shipping costs. This came to approx. \$3000. I consulted Chief Heine to determine if we still wanted the piece knowing the price to get it here. He advised that he did want to proceed. I let the Port Authority know that we did want the piece and would begin arranging pick-up and shipping.

The artifact was stored at a hangar at the JFK Airport in New York. The Port Authority would only allow pick-ups once a month during a very specific time frame. They stated they would provide minimal assistance with moving the artifact and that the requesting agency had to provide the equipment needed to move the artifact. With this information, I began cold calling freight companies in the

Manhattan area to try and find a vendor that would agree to go to JFK with the correct equipment and then package and ship the artifact to CA. After many failed attempts, I finally made contact with a company that agreed to all the parameters. After much back and forth in dealing with insurance for both shipping the artifact and for allowing the shipping company to do work on the Port Authority property, we finally had all pieces of the puzzle complete (with much help from Colleen Walraven on the insurance contract end).

In April of 2016, the artifact was picked up and shipped to Station 62 without any issues. Station 64 had already been completed by the time the artifact arrived to us, so it sat for close to 2 years before we came up with a plan for its placement and the 9/11 tribute area at Station 61. The planning of the 9/11 tribute area was accomplished using a local engineer (who offered his services free of charge) to determine the correct mounting/display needs for the 2900 lb. artifact. Once this was determined, a contractor was hired, and the artifact was moved to Station 61 and mounted where it sits today. The bronze tribute plaque was purchased and mounted at the same time as the artifact. A ribbon cutting ceremony for the 9/11 artifact and the Station 61 fire museum occurred on September 11, 2019.

Novato Citizens Killed During 9/11 attacks: Paul Sloan—26— Working on 89th floor of Two WTC, Jeffery Collman—41 —Flight attendant on American Airlines Flight 11, John "Jack" Keohan—41—killed by falling debris after exiting One Liberty Plaza



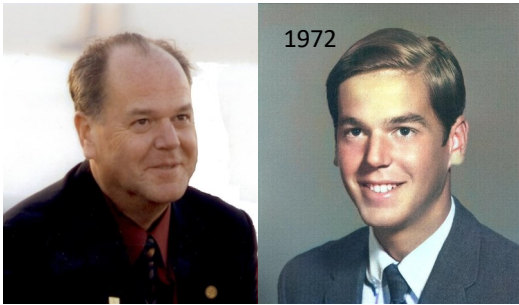
*World Trade Center artifact and plaque at Fire Station 61, 7025 Redwood Blvd Novato,*

## Nominations for Board of Directors of the Novato Historical Guild

Proposed Slate for Board of Directors of the Novato Historical Guild The candidates listed below are recommended by the Nominating Committee to serve on the Board of Directors of the Novato Historical Guild for 2023 and 2024. Voting will be at the General Membership meeting on December 10, 2022 at the Novato City Hall.

Ray Dwelly	Manager Hamilton Field History Museum
Susan Magnone	Board Member & Manager Novato History Museum
Mike Read	Board Member & Guild Treasurer
Anne Russell	Board Member & Docent
Lane Yee	Board Member & Membership Chair





# Novato – 50 Years Ago

## (October, November & December 1972)

by Michael Read

Go to <https://novatoadvance-ca.newsmemory.com/>  
For 50 years ago stories weekly in the Advance



Fresh from triumphantly swimming 10 laps each last Saturday is the Novato city council which last night decided to challenge the school board to a like performance. The challengers pictured above are, left to right, David Price Jones, Fred Ruegg, Dorothy Young, Mayor Wayne Sartain and George Quesada.

Some 15 members of the Novato Rotary Club turned out to start building the barbecue and picnic area under the laurel trees adjoining the Pre-History Museum at Miwok Park. Left to right are Gordon Lee, Richard Oldham, Robert McCreadie, Charles Joseph, Paul Scheller, and Dr. Ernest Berg.



A grand opening and open house were held at 1122 Grant Avenue where Novato Realty's new building is located. Left to right they are: Skip Fenner, Chamber V.P.; Councilwoman Dorothy Young Mayor Wayne Sartain; Ned Dean of Dean Fry & Associate., tenant; Gordon K. Morse partner with Louis J. Giovine in Novato Realty; attorney John Trumbull, Ervin H. Hille, architect who occupies second story; Phillip Coady, and Giovine.

Police officer Al Mendoza holds a case of 8 track stereo tapes, part of the unclaimed merchandise that the city will auction off. Mamie Lamson, left, and Patsey Medieros, city finance secretaries, display a couple of auto stereos that will also go on the block.



Two days of Orange Crate Derby were held on San Marin Drive. 35 entries representing 16 cities competed, which was hosted by the Novato Jaycees. Karen Humphreys of Novato was a double winner.

Police officer Al Mendoza holds a case of 8 track stereo tapes, part of the unclaimed merchandise that the city will auction off. Mamie Lamson, left, and Patsey Medieros, city finance secretaries, display a couple of auto stereos that will also go on the block.





A disheartened Lee Gerner ponders the wreckage of what once was a lovely aggregate stone table in Gerner Park behind Sambo's restaurant. Someone apparently took a sledge hammer to it causing \$300 worth of damage. Also smashed was a water fountain. For good measure the vandals tore up \$100 worth of rhododendrons and dumped two trash bins into the creek behind Pumperdink's delicatessen for another \$250 worth of damage, according to Novato police



Novato High's. 1972 homecoming queen candidates, from left, JoAnn Dunlap, Kay Moroski, Val Gardiner, Candy Matson, Shona Bardwell, Nancy Mangiefico, Pam Arnold and Chrisy Bushton. Pam Arnold was the homecoming queen.



November 18, 1972 fire destroys Reichert Villa landmark. See Novato Historian Spring and Summer Issue 2021 for full story.



These girls will form the royal court at San Marin High's homecoming dance Saturday night in the school gym. In back, from left, are Debbie Avella, Joyce Beedle and Marisa Leandro. In front are Wendy Putnam, left, and Claudia Graves. Miss Beedle, Miss Graves and Miss Putnam are queen candidates and Miss Leandro and Miss Avella will serve as attendants. Claudia Graves was the homecoming queen.



The freeway construction crews have had a hard time coming to grips with the slow-moving, sometimes stopping, trains of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad. As many as 30 earthmoving trucks

are delayed for 15 to 30 minutes as the trains pass through town two or three times a day. The lineup, such as the one pictured above, is at the Mira Monte Marina Road crossing at the north end of town. Drivers along Highway 101 who have waited for freeway trucks to cross at Atherton Avenue can at least take comfort now in knowing the construction drivers also have to wait.



## 25 years ago

Frank Galli, known to legions of customers and friends as the "Mayor of Ignacio" and the proprietor of a Marin County institution, died Saturday, Oct. 25, 1997 at his home after a long fight with cancer.

Mr. Galli, and his father before him, operated Galli's Restaurant in Ignacio, a landmark eatery and popular watering hole—even during the Prohibition years. The family closed Galli's with his retirement in 1985. But Mr. Galli, who had tended bar in the restaurant since 1948, remained a fixture in Ignacio.

Frank Galli was born on July 25, 1924 in San Rafael. His father, Salvatore, came from a town near Lucca in northern Italy. His mother, Alma Dal Poggetto Galli, had been born in Sonoma. The Gallis home stood on Enfrente Road, now the site of the Maya Palenque restaurant.

Salvatore Galli established Galli's—where Ristorante Orsi now stands—in 1920. He was experienced in the restaurant business. He had operated the Two Mile Inn, which did well in Terra Linda.

Galli's made no pretension to culinary sophistication. The food, from steaks to squab to pastas, was very good and the portions generous. A sign over the lane leading to the restaurant said it all: "A Place to Eat—Not a Cabaret." Salvatore Galli's success, his son said in an interview last July, came from "always giving you value for your money." Galli's looked like what it was—a house.

"One customer once said that sitting in the corner was like waiting for Machine Gun Kelly to come through the door," said Jean Galli, Mr. Galli's wife of 44 years.

The restaurant's ladies' room retained its original clawfoot bathtub. The tub—now a planter box—still greets customers at the rear of Orsi's.

There was nothing highfalutin about Galli's. Those who called to make reservations learned that service was first come, first served. All customers were treated as equals, be they elected officials or ranch hands.

Ignacio and neighboring Novato may have been small, but they were more than a crossroads. And there was plenty of traffic between Sausalito, Petaluma and Sonoma. Galli's attracted a strong following from the beginning. Its



*Frank Galli 1990*

customers—who became like a second family— included what Frank Galli called "the cream of the crop" of movers and shakers from San Francisco. Galli's was one of a number of Bay Area establishments where alcohol could be had even during the ostensibly dry years of Prohibition. Salvatore stocked his bar well, both before and during Prohibition. By the time Repeal came, Galli's still boasted an impressive variety of wines and liquors.



*Frank's father (right) Salvatore Galli in their bar*

Mr. Galli attended grade School in Ignacio, then went to live with an aunt so that he could attend Tamalpais High School in Mill Valley, which offered a strong metal shop program. He graduated from Tam, where he had excelled on the school's boxing and swimming teams, in 1941. He spent the next two years working as a machinist for CAM Manufacturing in Ross. He had poor hearing and eyesight and served in the California State National Guard and Army Dental Corps from 1943 to 1946. Most of that time was spent in Tacoma, Wash. He stayed on in Tacoma for two years working as a machinist. "Then his mother called and asked him to come home for a short time because they needed him at the restaurant," said Jean. "A short time turned out to be almost the rest of his life." Frank was roped into being bartender at Galli's. In 1954, he married Jean McKeon of San





*Galli's Bar/Restaurant*

Francisco. His best friend had married her best friend and match-making had ensued. "I married him because I thought I'd never have to cook again," she said. They were married on a Monday—the only day the restaurant was closed—in Sonoma by his cousin, Judge Newton Dal Poggetto. "Frank never did anything the way other people did," she said. "I said, 'Do all the babies have to be born on a Monday?' The world centered around the restaurant." A more formal wedding came several years later, at the old Our Lady of Loretto Church on Grant Avenue in Novato. Jean Galli also worked in the family business, first as busboy, then as waitress, then, for seven years, as cook.

The presence of Hamilton Air Force Base across the highway accounted for a fair share of his business and Mr. Galli—brilliantly witty, irreverent and quick to make friends—welcomed the newcomers as if they were old friends. Over the years, said Jean Galli, the establishment became "a living library for an oral history of Marin County." At night, Jean recalled, "There were a lot of good times. We had a lot of happy memories."

Mr. Galli worked in and managed the restaurant until its closure. All his children worked there as well. His unofficial role as "Mayor of Ignacio" came from his fierce determination to put the area on the map—something he took delight in doing, quite literally. In 1960, when a world atlas published that year showed Ignacio but not Novato.

He also won the battles over the official designations of the new post office to go into the then Roger Wilco supermarket and new interchange on Highway 101. He successfully lobbied county supervisors and federal postal officials and was triumphant on Feb. 10, 1961 when he received a letter from a postal official informing him that the new substation would be known as the "Ignacio Branch." The freeway overpass likewise became the Ignacio Interchange. Mr. Galli loved these battles, which kept alive the placename dearest to him.

"People just forget about places and that's not right," he said last July.

His love of a place and its people was more than matched by his devotion to his family. His grandchildren were the loves of his life. Once a champion swimmer himself, he proved the inspiration for 7-year-old Gina, who swims—and wins—for the Riptides. He taught Kelly, 3, and Jenna, 4, how to make pancakes. And 10-year-old Sean was his travel companion, going with him on short trips to Black Point and elsewhere in Marin. Mr. Galli leaves his beloved wife, Jean Galli of Ignacio; his daughters, Gilgia (Jill) Linehan of Ignacio and Lisa Galli of Novato; his son, David Galli of Concord; his son-in-law, Tom Linehan; his daughter-in-law, Jane Galli; and his grandchildren, Sean, Gina and Kelly Linehan and Jenna Galli.

He will also be deeply missed by his friends in the Novato Historical Guild, the Sons In Retirement Chapter 134, American Legion Post 179, Moose Lodge No. 435 in Tacoma, Wash., and the Marin County Historical Society, which he once served as president.



*may 8, 1986*

IJ photo/Marian Little

**END OF AN ERA:** Frank Galli (right) watches as his restaurant in Ignacio is demolished Wednesday. A developer will start building a new restaurant and offices on the site. Story, A6.



# Landmarks Prove Novato Ranch 'Home Place' Of Marin Pioneers

December 13, 1952 IJ  
By Elizabeth Sonn

"I call the 'Home Place' the house and land where I live now in Novato," the late Robert H. Trumbull said in a talk to the book section of the Novato Improvement club in 1951.

Trumbull and his wife, Edith McBrown Trumbull lived on the "Home Place" they bought in 1916 for nearly fifty years. From 1905 to 1909 Trumbull managed the farming, ranching, manufacturing, which included drying of tons of fruit, making wine, vinegar, cider, cheese, and butter. He shipped produce, cattle and hogs from the 11,000 acres of the Rancho de Novato, then known as the DeLong ranch.

**NOVATO LAND COMPANY** owned the ranches which operated by tenants on shares, with the company transacting all the business. From 1909, until the last large dairy ranch,



*Best view of the house, built in 1869, showing its simple and dignified style, is from the lane leading off Wilson Avenue. Photos taken by IJ photographer Warren Roll.*



*View of the late Robert H. Trumbull's "Home Place" Rancho Novato showing an unused doorway once the carriage entrance to a hallway between the front and back parlors. A long circle driveway swept past this doorway during the height of Novato Rancho's wealth and prosperity in the 1870's and 1880's. Distinguished persons drove fine equipages followed by coach hounds.*

small farms and lot's were sold, Trumbull directed the breaking up of the land grant. The Novato Land Company, according to an account given in "Financing an Empire: The History of Banking in California," 1927 by Ira B. Cross, was an association formed by Frank C. DeLong's creditors – "... Eventually Sweeter sold his interest to DeLong, who became the owner of about 20,000 acres ... He (DeLong) went into politics, was elected to the state senate and afterward got into financial difficulties, and in about 1889 sold 900 acres of the tract, including the present town of Novato, and in the course of time was forced to make an assignment."

"One of his largest creditors was the Wickersham Bank of Petaluma, which consolidated with the Swiss American Bank, and Henry Pierce, also a large creditor was made assignee. He (Pierce) had an idea that the land could be profitably devoted to the raising of Jersey cattle and fine horses, but at a meeting of the creditors, the Novato land Company was formed, and Mr. Hatch was made secretary -manager. This company bid in and took over a mortgage of two hundred thousand dollars held by the San Francisco Savings Union and which covers 11,000 acres of land comprising seven fine dairy ranches ..."

## **ROBERT D. HATCH**

preceded Trumbull as secretary-manager of the Novato Land Company. Born in New Hampshire, he was brought up in Pt. Reyes. After ten years at Novato, he became famous in financial circles for his land promotion in the San Joaquin Valley.

During his management at Rancho de Novato, 1894 to 1905 – "... They milked about one thousand cows, the milk being sent to San Francisco and the shipments averaging five tons a month. There were also five hundred acres in vineyards, from which five hundred to seven hundred tons of grapes were



sold annually. Seventeen hundred acres were planted to apples, which were shipped through Balfour, Guthrie and Company.

“There was a large pear orchard, as well as much small fruit, and from three to five carloads of evaporated apples were shipped each season, as well as many carloads of peaches and apricots. During the busy season as many as two hundred men were employed ...”

### TWO MEN FAMOUS

in early California history had lived there after Don Fernando Felix and before Sweetser and DeLong.

The first recorded owners after Felix, was Jacob P. Leese and his wife Rosalia Vallejo, sister to General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo of Sonoma.

Leese, a mountain man, was a fabulous figure even in the fabulous time of Kit Carson. Born in Ohio in 1809, history shows him in the fur trade in Santa Fe in 1830, and one of the first men to follow the trail over mountain and desert to the Mexican pueblo of Los Angeles. He became a trader in Los Angeles, and then made the trip north to Monterey with Governor Chico.

Leese took an active part in the Bear Flag war at Sonoma and attempted to colonize lower California. He also drove cattle from California to Oregon.

### LEESE WORKED

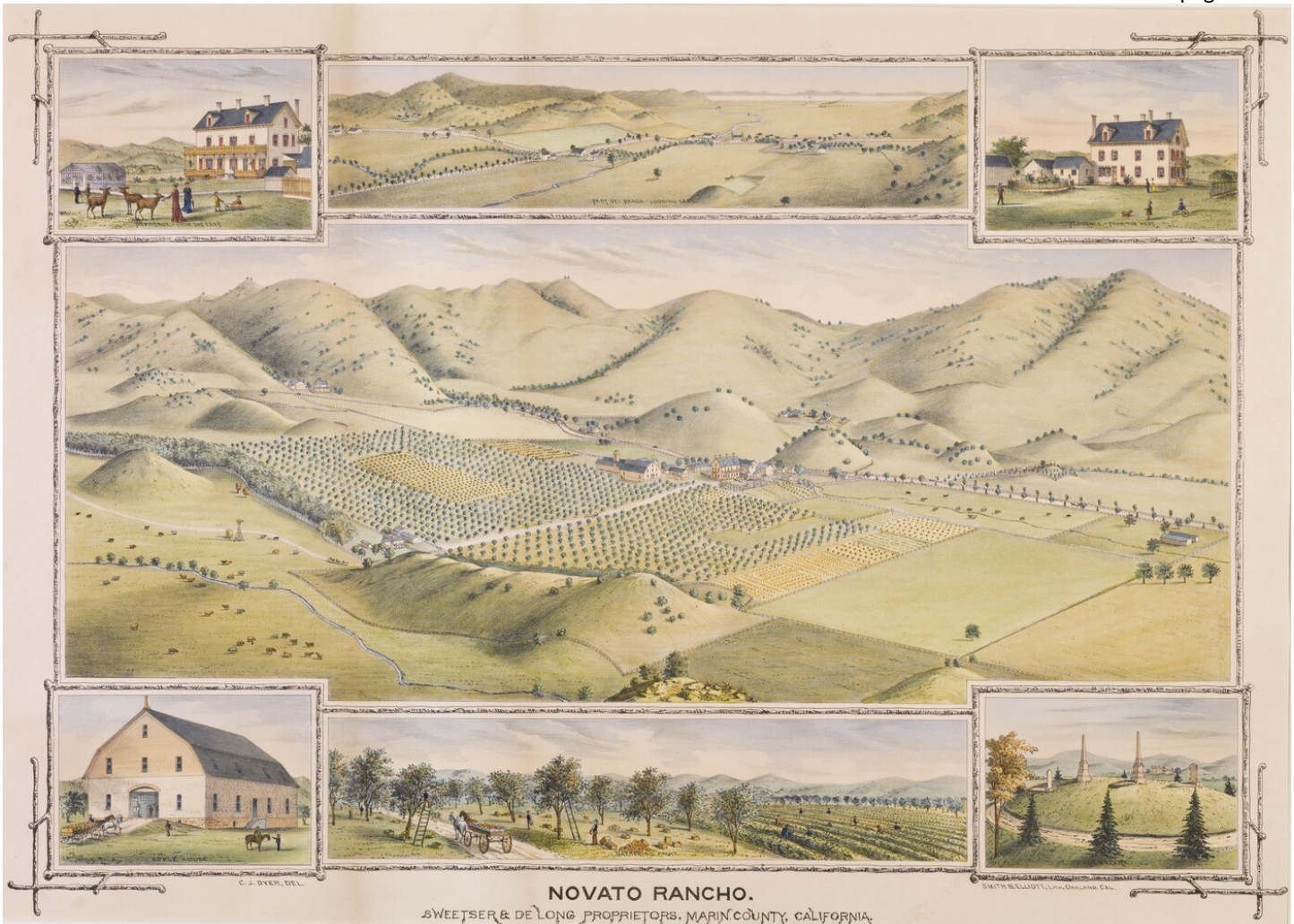
on the stage in the Bay Area and at Rancho Novato and Sonoma after his marriage to Rosalia Vallejo, and even after he had become a Mexican citizen and had received a grant of pueblo lots on the sand dunes of the San Francisco Peninsula, in what is now the downtown financial district of the city. He is credited with laying out the streets in Portsmouth Square. He built the first substantial building and warehouse and trade post on Montgomery near Sacramento. And on the days of the tule raft and redwood dugout 1836, he ran a lighter, the “Isabela,” on San Francisco Bay and up the rivers, creeks and estuaries, trading with the Spanish Mexican ranchers.

Leese exchanged manufactured goods for fresh provisions for the sailing ships that put in at San Francisco harbor. Rancho de Novato with the “Home Place” cultivated by Mission Indians and its creek dock probably was a good source of supply. There is no mention of Leese having lived at Novato, but one historian states that Rancho Novato was famous when Bezer Simmons, the master of a whaling vessel, bought it in 1846.

### BEZER SIMMONS

was a short time at “Home Place,” Novato. He died in 1850.

Continued on page 10



*Drawing of Novato Rancho in its heyday. Small view in upper left shows front of the mansion before trees and shrubs screened it. At upper right is back view of the house showing Captain Bezer Simmons’ house added as a kitchen wing. Lower left, the great cool-storage apple barn, in use when Balfour, Guthrie and Company shipped apples from the Rancho’s 1700 acre orchard around the world. The barn was torn down in the 1940’s. At lower right is the Novato Cemetery.*





*'Home Place' showing the kitchen wing, left background, 'the fine two-story wooden house' built by Captain Simmons between 1846 and 1859, just south of the Fernando Felix adobe. The adobe and Simmons house were one place and for many years used as bachelor quarters by pioneers J.B. Sweetser and Francis C. DeLong.*

Johnson had given them title to his one-half undivided share in December 1856 for \$20,000. These men, DeLong, the tanner from Vermont, and Sweetser, the merchant from Maine, developed "Home Place" in the world biggest single orchard in the world of its day, and shipped produce around the world.



*This comparatively modern dairy barn and silo on the 'Home Place of Novato Rancho once housed a herd of purebred Ayrshire dairy cows. Robert Spear Brown, brother of Mrs. Robert Trumbull Sr., in 1901 bought "the largest herd, 31 head, ever brought into California. For many years thereafter he continued to import full-blooded bulls and built up some of the finest herds in the state." The Brown family also introduced raising of trotting horses and turkeys to Novato Valley.*

He made a fine wooden two-story addition to the Fernando Felix adobe, and he was no doubt responsible for the handblown glass windows, the wooden floors, and wooden roof on the adobe. The docks and wharves and small boats on Novato creek were mentioned in a deed to his heirs. The northwest corner of the grant, called Rancho Hoyó, was deeded to Bezer's son Benjamin Franklin Simmons. There were about 2000 acres in this place. The main ranch which when surveyed in 1859 covered nearly 10,000 acres, was deeded to Capt. Simmons' brother-in-law, Frederick Billing (as in Billings Montana), Capt. H.W. Halleck, and James R. Bolton, with instructions to administer the estate to the best advantage of the heirs and creditors.

**THERE SEEMS**

to have been little done at Novato by the succession of owners that followed Bezer Simmons, except for the sale of wild horses and mares, and cattle. Archibald Peachy bought Novato in July 1852 and sold it to Andrew I. McCabe and James Johnson in December.

McCabe sold his share to Sweetser and DeLong in January 1857 for \$15,000. James



*View of 'Home Place' Novato Rancho from Novato Boulevard shows the height of the Indian mound or burial ground in front of the house. A blackberry jungle grows along the north edge of the mound fed by the great spring that attracted three civilizations to this spot. The late Robert H. Trumbull said, "The corn always grew best on the burial ground. My son Bob picked up all sorts of arrowheads, manos, pestles and mortars there when he was a little boy."*



# History In North Marin New Slant On Bear Flag 'Robbers'

By CHRIS and ED MANNION 7-1-1957

Dona Rosalia Leese, famed as one of the most beautiful Spanish women in Alta, California, has a community property interest in the name of Novato's Leese Lake – even though she might not like all those Americans living in bordering Marin Heights.

Mrs. Leese's temper, as well as her beauty, is well recorded following the arrest of her brother, General Mariano Vallejo, by the Bear Flag Party and later imprisonment of her husband Jacob on Fremont's orders.

She never got over her resentment toward the "Bostons," a feeling not helped any by the fact that her husband in later years deserted her as well as four daughters and two sons.

Jacob Leese, short-time owner of the Novato Rancho, was a Yankee merchant who played a prominent part in early California events proceeding statehood.

Accounts dealing with either the Vallejo family or Bear Flag matters sometime mention an interview between Rosalia and Henry Cerruti, agent for historian Hubert H. Bancroft. History in North Marin writers were interested in the document not only because Leeses have a local connection but because the columnists have never seen any portion of the interview in print.

## Honesty Disputed

Friends have said perhaps the reason for the blackout is because Rosalia's views on the Bear Flaggers are false. One respected colleague even called her comments, a pack of lies," pointing to her opening statement that 72 "rough looking desperadoes" were present when the original group of invaders has been pretty well established at 33 or 34.

Well, in regard to that point, Americans began pouring from all directions into Sonoma as soon as word spread the place had been captured. Certainly, there were more than 72 foreigners there in the next few days-and Mrs. Leese was telling her story 28 years later.

Dona Rosalia's bitterness may have caused her to go overboard on certain details, but the handwritten manuscript in the University of California's Bancroft Library is an intensely interesting and human document and presents a side of the Bear Flag Party days that is rarely considered.

It is here printed in its entirety if not for the first time, certainly by a newspaper in a long, long time.

Cerruti began the questioning, "Please, Madam Leese, tell me what you know with reference to the hoisting of the Bear Flag in Sonoma."



*THIS PHOTOGRAPH taken about 1854 shows Jacob Primer Leese and his family. With him is his wife Rosalia Vallejo Leese, whose account of one episode in the Bear Flag rebellion is reported in today's History in North Marin. The children from left to right are Rosalia, the first white child born in San Francisco in 1838, Rosalia 2nd, David, Jacob R., Luis (Louis), and Adelida. Leese Lane is named after Leese. The picture is the property of Madie D. Brown, of Sonoma.*

## First Report

"About half past five in the morning of June 14, 1846, an old gentleman called Dr. Pepe de la Rosa, came to my house and notified me that a band of seventy-two rough looking desperadoes, many of them run away sailors from whale ships had surrounded the house of General Vallejo and Victor Prudon. On hearing this alarming piece of intelligence, I dressed in a hurry and hastened to the streets for one purpose of ascertaining the truth of such report—one first thing which met my eyes was Colonel Prudon hastening to the rescue of Captain Salvador Vallejo, whom a ruffian called Benjamin Kelsey was trying to murder in cold blood. I don't believe that you can give a different name to the killing of an unarmed prisoner by a stalwart bully who had seventy men of his own ilk at his back; the timely arrival of Prudon saved the life of the defenseless captain whom the companions of Kelsey hurried off towards the party under Doctor Semple to all appearance the last in human of that godforsaken crowd.

"I also perceived ex-commander General Vallejo dressed in the uniform of a general of the Mexican army, a prisoner of a large group of rough looking men, some wearing on their heads caps made with the skins of coyotes or wolfs, some wearing slouched hats full of holes, some wearing straw hats as black as charcoal – the majority of this marauding band wore buckskin pants that reached only to the knees, several had no shirts, shoes-were only to be seen on the feet of fifteen or twenty among the whole lot.

## Taken To Sacramento

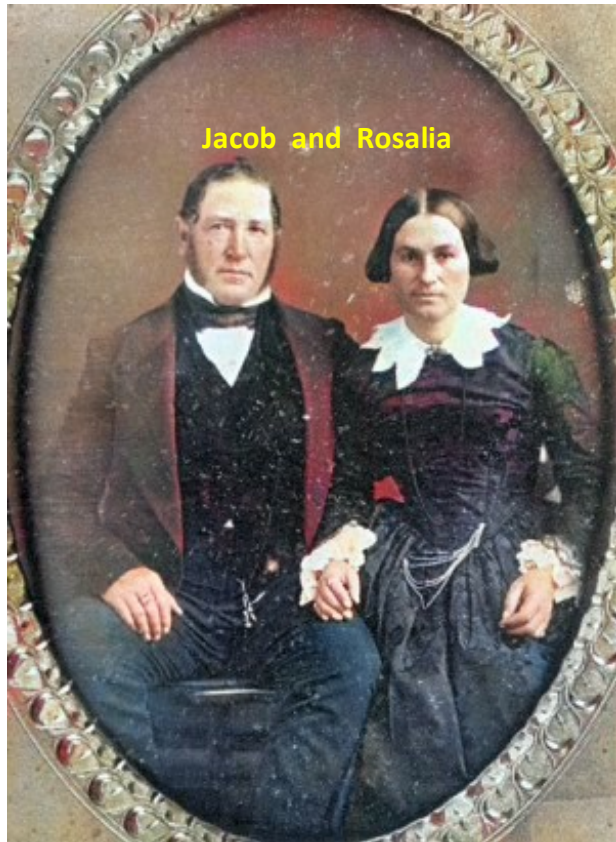
"After some parleying among themselves a great many of them mounted their horses and escorted General Vallejo, Captain Salvador Vallejo, Colonel Prudon and my husband Jacob Leese to Sacramento where they were delivered to the tender mercy of the archfiend John A. Sutter, a man who though married in Europe, where he left a wife and several children, was living in open concubinage with two black woman whom he had brought in his vessel from the Sandwich Islands.

After General Vallejo had been hurried away, some remaining robbers hoisted in the square of Sonoma, on the flag staff that was standing in the

Continued on page 12



corner of the plaza near the old mission church, a piece of linen about the size of a large towel, on it was painted a red bear and a star. It is to presume that John C. Fremont, the man who had planned the wholesale robbery of California, though an officer of the United States army, was afraid to compromise the honor of his government if his party their thieving operations under our flag, that lovers of liberty throughout the world hold dear, hence his reason for resorting to the adoption of a flag unknown to civilized nations.



**Given Storehouse Key**

"As soon as the flag of the Bear had been hoisted, the robber's interpreter Solis (sic) (formerly a servant of my husband) notified me that I was a prisoner, and he pointed towards four ill-looking desperadoes who stood near me with drawn pistols — resistance being useless, I yielded, and at their request gave them the key to the storehouse of my husband. No sooner I gave them the key they called their friends and began ransacking the storehouse where were deposited provisions and liquor sufficient to feed two hundred men for two years.

"A few days after the departure of my husband, arrived in Sonoma John C. Fremont, who, as he then said, came for the sole purpose and only purpose of arranging matters so as to give general satisfaction, and protect everyone against extortion or oppression. That man, whom many paid writers have dubbed with many an endearing epithet was a great coward. I say so with good reason —hear me—on the 20th of June news reached Sonoma" that Captain Padilla at the head of one hundred men was coming to the rescue of Sonoma. No sooner Fremont heard this than he sent for me and ordered me to address Padilla a letter requesting him to return to San Jose, and not to approach Sonoma. I flatly refused, but Fremont who was bent on having his way, told me that he would

burn our houses with us inside of them if I refused to address Padilla in the manner he wished me to do.  
 "I consented, not for the purpose of saving my life, but being in the family way I had no right to endanger the life of my unborn baby, moreover I judged that a man who had already gone so far would not stop at anything which may be a barrier to his ends, and being desirous of saving trouble to my countrywomen I wrote the fatal letter which induced Captain Papilla to retrace his steps. While on the alert for Papilla, Fremont changed his shining uniform for a blue blouse, put away his hat, and wrapped his head with a common handkerchief — he adopted this fantastic style of dress for the purpose of avoiding recognition — is this the conduct becoming a brave man?  
 "During the whole time Fremont and his gang were in Sonoma: Ladies dared not go out for a walk, unless escorted by their husbands and brothers — among my maid servants I had a young Indian girl about 17 years of age; and I assure you that many a time John C. Fremont sent me orders to deliver her to one officer of the barracks, but by resorting to artifices, I managed to save the unhappy girl from one fate decreed to her by the lawless band who had imprisoned my husband.  
 "During the whole time of my husband's imprisonment I forwarded him delicacies and gold, but the recreant Sutter, who on more than one occasion had been compelled to acknowledge the repertory of Mr. Leese, arranged matters so that during the two months of his imprisonment he never received a single dollar — he kept him during one whole week sleeping on the bare floor, and appointed a jailer of the room in which he was confined an uncouth Missourian who whenever he opened the door insulted the prisoners, whom a band of ungrateful horse thieves, trappers and runaway sailors deprived of their liberty.

**Hatred Continued**

"I could relate many a misdeed of the Bear Flag crowd, but not wishing to detain you any longer I will close with the remarks that those hated men inspired me with such a large dose of hate against their race, that though twenty-eight years have elapsed since that time, I have not yet forgotten the insults they heaped upon me, and not being desirous of coming in contact with them I have abstained from learning their language.

"Monterey, June 27, 1874,

"For Rosalia de Leese by

"Rosana Leese."

If closing comment is needed it might be summed up as follows: WOW!



*Jacob P. Leese, died February 1, 1892, aged 83 years, 5 months and 13 days.*



## The Eventful Career of Jacob P. Leese

June 26, 1887 S.F. Examiner

Jacob P. Leese, the pioneer of pioneers, who built the first house in San Francisco, and who came overland to this country 54 years ago ....

"You suppose I have lots of property in San Francisco? No, I haven't. I haven't got a cent's worth, although as a pioneer, I am ahead of them all. I didn't think the place was going to amount to anything.

"Yes, I arrived here on the peninsula in 1836, just fifty-one years ago, and celebrated the first Fourth of July that was ever observed here. My partners, William H. Hinkley and Nathan Speare, joined me in it. You will find the most correct account of it that has ever appeared in print in the old book, 'The Annals of San Francisco.' These two men and I raised the American flag alongside of the Mexican colors, and we all joined in and had a celebration. There were several vessels in the port, and they brought over a number of Spanish residents of the Oakland side who were living along the waterfront. It was quite a successful celebration. I think I'll celebrate the forthcoming Fourth with J.B. Wolfskill, the old Californian, up on the Russian River.

"The first home here was built on the corner of Dupont and Clay Streets. It was 20x60, and I put it up in four days. But afterward, in '39, when the Hudson Bay Company began operations, I built this company's building on Montgomery Street, between California and Clay.

"I was impelled to go West by reading Lewis and Clark's book of explorations, I was a boy in Ohio then. I went to St. Louis and joined a west-bound company and traveled with General Sam Houston from the Little Arkansas to Pike's Peak, when the Pawnees attacked and killed several of our party and stole our horses."

"Reaching New Mexico, I carried on a trading business for several years with the old fighter Governor Bent at Fort Bent and Santa Fe. We sold goods to the Indians and freighted our goods all the way out from St. Louis. I came to the City of Angels, as it is called, and other places on the coast in '33, to look up opportunities for trading here. That is how I happened to be the pioneer in San Francisco.

"For nearly twenty years past I have been traveling in foreign lands; have visited Egypt, Greece, and gone everywhere in the Holy Land. I believe that in a few years more San Francisco will be a New York and that nobody now can conceive the coming greatness of this city and State."

Mr. Leese was born in 1809 and will be 78 years old in August next. He is a large, fine-looking old man, yet pretty well preserved, and says he never had any ailment in his life, except some months ago, when he had a slight attack of rheumatism. He accounts for his good health by the fact he has always been temperate in his habits.

## General Membership Meeting

December 10, 2022

The public is invited to attend the Novato Historical Guild's quarterly General Membership Meeting Saturday, December 10 from 10 am to 12 noon at Novato City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue. California archaeologist Teresa Saltzman, M.A. will discuss "The Coast Miwok and their Trading Networks in the Novato Area."

The Coast Miwok tribes exchanged items along traditional trade routes in the Novato area for thousands of years. Ms. Saltzman will review the Coast Miwok culture and history to the present. Reproductions of trade items such as obsidian projectile points and clam shell disc beads will be available for a hands-on experience and discussion.

Ms. Saltzman is the retired director of the Museum of the American Indian in Novato. While there she developed cultural programs and exhibits on Native Americans with a particular emphasis on the Coast Miwok culture and the archaeology of Marin and Sonoma Counties. She created a California Curriculum based class on the Coast Miwok. Ms. Saltzman has a Master's degree in Anthropology with a focus on California Archaeology and Native Cultures.

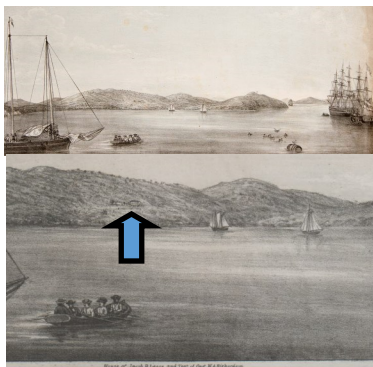
2008 picture of the Museum



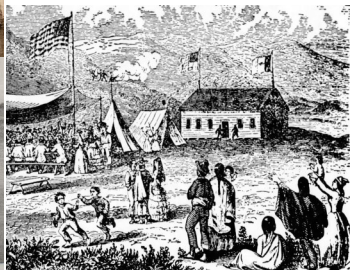
**The September 10th General Membership** meeting at Hamilton Field Museum by speaker Dr. Michael Blodgett,

PhD, on Operation Nickel Grass, which was the aerial resupply of Israel during the 1973 war, was well received by the Guild members.

They also saw the video "Novato: the 1950's & 60's" presented by the Leadership Novato Class



San Francisco (then Yerba Buena) on July 4, 1836





## The First Novato Post Office



Marin IJ—November 19, 1951  
 Mrs. Elizabeth Sonn, Novato historian, daughter of Novato Advance editor, was one that wrote:  
 “The first Novato post office building was constructed by Ramon Pacheco and is still standing on Nave Drive. The Novato Post Office was established February 2, 1856, With Henry J. Jones as postmaster.  
 It was temporarily discontinued January 14, 1860, shortly after Jones was murdered by being drowned in a well.  
 A man named Faggiano (first name not known) was acting postmaster between the time of Jones’ murder and the discontinuation.  
 Joseph B. Sweeter became postmaster when the office was re-established as Black Point Post Office (in Novato, not Black Point) on January 11, 1865.  
 A.D. Scott and E.R. Samuels served during alternating periods for several years. Scott was postmaster in 1910 and, through his influence, the name was changed back to Novato.”  
 According to information gathered by Mrs. Elizabeth Sonn. Elizabeth would pass away in 1958.  
**Note:** More information can be found at [Novatohistory.org](http://Novatohistory.org)—Feature Story Winter Issue 2014 “Novato Post Office History”

## Welcome New Guild Members

### Novato Historical Guild Membership Report December 2022

#### Individual Membership

Frank (Archie) Archibald  
 John Aurelius  
 Lindsay Boyce  
 Mike Diener  
 Thomas (Pete) Dolan  
 Nancy Forsythe  
 Cindy Fulchiron  
 Greg Gabby  
 Marcos (Tony) Garza  
 Eric Heim  
 Elizabeth Irvine  
 Peter Janssen  
 Abigale Levine  
 Farhad Mansourian  
 Terry Shea  
 Ron Simon  
 Michalene R. Thone  
 Helen Coale  
 Rhillip Dougherty  
 Tal Fletcher  
 Jason Seale  
 Dean J. Moser

#### Family Membership

Victor and Maria Aguila  
 Frances and Ben Borok  
 Bob and Laura Dimond  
 Steve Nash

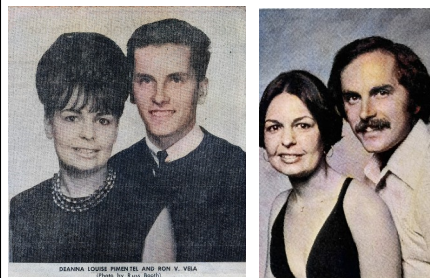
#### Life Membership

Walter & Jasmine Bachtiger

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

## Please support our Guild Business Members:

Aaero Heating & Sheet Metal, Inc  
 A.D. Scott Building  
 Andrew McAgnon Landscaping  
 Anixter & Oser, Inc.  
 Insurance Agents & Brokers  
 Bank of Marin  
 Elegance Hamilton Hill  
 Memory Care and Assisted Living  
 Goltermann Real Estate and Construction  
 H & J Tire  
 Indian Valley Golf Club  
 Marin Color Service  
 Marin Landscape Materials  
 Marin Volvo/Saab  
 Mclsaac Dairy  
 Nave Enterprises  
 Novato Builders Supply, Inc.  
 Novato Grove Druids #113  
 Pini Hardware  
 Planet Home Lending-Bill Hoopes  
 Trumbull Manor Inc.  
 Valley Oak Wealth Management  
 Valley Memorial Park Cemetery & Funeral Home  
 Zenith Instant Printing



Ron and Dee Vela—engagement picture (1964) and 15-year class reunion photo (1978)

### Where did the name Novato come from / Mike’s Reads Top Ten

- 10- It’s from Drake’s men who deserted him and comes from names of places in the island of Cyprus (Nicosia, Novato & Mt. Olympus)
- 9 - It’s comes from Russians passing through who were dismayed to find a shortage of water “no vata” (no water)
- 8 - It’s named after Saint Novatus (antipope – Group called Novatians)
- 7 – The Smithsonian, book about Indians, was named after a local chief
- 6 - It’s derived from the Latin NOVUS “new”
- 5 - It’s an old Spaniard surname
- 4 - Novato in Spanish means “novice” “tenderfoot” “beginner” - Corte Madera means “cut wood” – Rancho corte madera de novato means “farm cut novice wood”
- 3 – Indian word associated with a celebrated spring of living water or “No-to-nan” which means “easterners”
- 2 – During the 1800’s the official language of Spain was Castilian and “novato” then meant raw or green – Canada de Novata means Green Valley
- 1 - No one knows the origin of the name Novato



### 2022 Board Meetings

Second Tuesday of the Month  
Margaret Todd Senior Center  
1560 Hill Road

Time: 1:30 – 3:00 PM

Jan. 11	July (no meeting)
Feb. 8	Aug. 9
March 8	Sept. 13
April 12	Oct. 11
May 10	Nov. 8
June 14	Dec. 13

#### Membership Meetings

March 12	10 – 11:30
June 11	10 – 11:30
Sept. 10	10 – 11:30
Dec. 10	10 – 11:30

Guild members are welcome to attend the Board meetings. Please check with the President, Jim Crumpler at (415) 897-5705, in case a meeting has been changed.

### 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.

### 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.

## In Memoriam

Sheila Wood  
Esther Knutte Berthinier  
Caryll Mountjoy  
James Grossi

### THE GUILD EXTENDS SYMPATHY TO

The Wood family on the loss of  
Sheila Wood

The Berthinier and Learch families on  
the loss of Esther Knutte Berthinier

The Mountjoy family on the loss of  
Caryll Patterson Mountjoy

The Grossi family on the loss of  
James Grossi

## Contact Us

### 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](mailto:info@novatohistory.org)  
<https://www.facebook.com/NovatoHistoryMuseum/>

### Volunteer Opportunities:

The Novato Historian has an opening on the Editorial Board. If you like writing and/or editing this is the position for you. Please contact the Guild at [info@novatohistory.org](mailto:info@novatohistory.org) or

Ask for Michael Read at  
415-717-1412



## 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

Check if you want to receive the Historian newsletter in digital (email) format only.

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual membership       | \$20 year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family membership           | \$30 year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life membership, individual | \$350     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life membership, joint      | \$500     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business membership         | \$50 year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Free for 90+                |           |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Additional donations? \_\_\_\_\_

Interested in volunteering? \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_





Novato Historical Guild  
P.O. Box 1296  
Novato, CA 94948



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## ◆ YOU ARE INVITED ◆

General Membership Meeting ~ Novato Historical Guild

**Saturday, December 10, 10:00 to Noon**  
**Novato City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue, Novato**

The speaker will be Teresa Saltzman, Archeologist. Teresa will be discussing the indigenous people of Marin and Sonoma, The Miwok and The Pomo.

Hope you can make it. Bring some friends. Looking forward to seeing you there.  
Guild Members and anyone interested in Novato History is welcome.

**Novato History Museum**

**Hamilton Field History Museum**

**815 DeLong Avenue**

**555 Hangar Avenue**

**(415) 897-4320**

**(415) 382-8614**

### **COME VISIT AND BRING A FRIEND!**

The Museums are open three days a week -- Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday - Noon to 4 p.m.  
Closed Major Holidays