

2. **K. Carlisle House - 1896**

This home was originally built in 1896, making it more than 100 years old. It was purchased by **Charles Carlisle** and his wife, **Clara Belle (Riddle) Carlisle** in 1902. He came from the midwest to take the job as ticket agent for the Northwestern Pacific Railroad. He and Clara Belle were married in the newly built Presbyterian Church on Sept 5, 1897. *We will see it later in the tour.* They raised their two children in this house. The railroad was very important to early Novato and you will find many connections to it on this tour. Later Carlisle opened a Wells Fargo Express office by the railroad depot and started a popular local hardware store. We will see those two buildings later on in the tour.

Look at your picture #1 and then look at the house as it is today. See if each of you can find at least one thing that is different between the picture and the house you see before you. Put up your hand when you are ready. (Give each child a chance to voice one change.) We are lucky that the Carlises were active people in the community and so we know quite a bit about them and their lives. So we will use them to represent the lives that many people in Novato lived. Mr. Carlisle worked just down the street (point), and Mrs. Carlisle worked at home taking care of her house, children and husband. That means on Monday she did the laundry in a washtub and later in a crude washing machine (probably like the one you will see on the buggy porch), she cooked on a big wood stove which also kept the house warm and heated the water for her to do her washing. There was no central heat, only probably 2 fireplaces in addition to the stove. Did she have running water? Not when she first moved in. Her water was pumped from underground up into the tank in the tank house at first probably by a windmill, and later probably by a pump fueled by kerosene before electricity came to Novato in 1911. Indoor bathroom? Not at first. Did she have a telephone? Not when she moved in, no one did until 1908 then only a few. What do you think the Carlises did to entertain themselves in their free time? (No electricity so no TV, radio, iPods, Gameboys, etc. Played games, card games like bridge, sang, [we have a photo of other townspeople, friends, in their living room playing musical instruments], they also read books, and wrote letters.) Continue along this vein as long as it is lively then continue on with the tour down Reichert Street. (p.s. this house was just remodeled and much of the gingerbread added in 2000-2001. It now houses the Chamber of Commerce and other businesses. Once this house and the one to its right on Reichert were twin houses built by the same builder. Both have been remodeled.)

Their Lives:

- Mr. Carlisle:**
1. Ticket Agent of Northwestern Pacific Railroad.
 2. Opened Wells Fargo Office in the Flatiron Building - 1908
 3. Opened Hardware Store down the street - 1910.
- Mrs. Carlisle:**
1. Active in Church activities, Ladies' Aid Society, Camp Fire Girls and other youth Activities, and was a midwife.
 2. Later she ran a gift shop in a corner of Carlisle Hardware Store.
 3. She ran the Carlisle Household, cooked, cleaned, washed, etc.

3. **2. Novato Railroad Depot circa 1879**

This building served as Novato's first railroad depot, built about 1879, when Northwestern Pacific Railroad was constructed here. It was later moved here to make room for a new depot building by the railroad tracks in 1903. Built of redwood, you can see it is a very simple building, almost like a barn. The earliest buildings in Novato were very simple, especially if they were meant for a very practical purpose. What was this building used for when it was a railroad depot? [passengers waiting; produce and freight waiting.] If you look at the picture and look very carefully at the side of the building you can see where the freight door once was. Hundreds of gallons of milk were shipped to S.F. morning and evenings from Novato. Three passenger trains and several freight trains daily passed through here carrying tons of fruit, dairy products and mail, even cows! Cost to ride from Novato to San Rafael dropped from 55 to 35 cents in 1889. After the building was moved it was used as a "stable" for horses. (define)

4. **Mr. Yelmorini's (now blue) Saloon on Scott Street. (short stop)**

Mr. Yelmorini, originally from Switzerland, worked on a dairy after coming to Novato. He saved his money, and eventually bought his own dairy. He sold that in the early 1900's and moved into town and built his saloon right facing the depot. (Strange back door is beneath street level. No one knows whether the street used to be lower, gravel over mud yearly built up the road we think.) (They sand-bag when it rains!)

5. **3. Flatiron Building - circa 1908 (photo taken about 1910)**

When approaching this building from Yelmorini's blue saloon, tell them you have a surprise for them. Tell them to notice the wide end of the gray building to the left of the blue building. (Guess how many rooms? Windows are clues. Why are the pipes on the outside of the building? History Mystery! (Because building built 1908, no city water until 1911!)) When you get to the narrow end show them how narrow it is. For many years residents have called this the "flatiron" building, because it comes to a point just like your clothes iron at home does. *Can you see why it was built in that shape?* (to take advantage of all the land on the lot, which comes to a sharp point). Flatiron buildings found in many towns and cities, including San Rafael on B Street, and in San Francisco off Market St.

This was originally built about 1908 by **Abraham Yelmorini**. Mr. Yelmorini wanted to compete with the other saloons in town so he built it on the corner of Scott and Grant Ave. (AKA Main Street) so passengers getting off the train wouldn't see any other saloons but his (next door). Later, **Charles Carlyle** opened the Wells Fargo Express Office here. Wells Fargo Co. was founded in the 1850's to get mail and small goods from the pioneer settlements in California to their friends and families back east by horse or stagecoach. Later Wells Fargo used the train to ship their letters and packages, which is why Charles Carlyle established it here, near the depot. Later Carlyle opened a hardware store here before he opened another larger store down the street (which we will see later). Novato's newspaper, the Novato Advance, also operated from this location for a few years. It has held many different kinds of businesses since then and upstairs is a couple of apartments.

4. **Second Novato Train Depot:** The first Novato Depot was moved behind Loustaunau Hall and the second depot was built about 1903. Notice the covered waiting area, and the clothing styles the people are wearing (hats, long dress). Notice the windows and doors are fancier than those of the first depot, which was very basic.

The second depot had two waiting rooms. One was for men and the other for women. Many male passengers smoked or chewed tobacco and used rough language. Women in those days did not smoke and did not appreciate swear words.

Notice the early automobile in the picture and the wagon, which would be drawn by a horse. During the first two decades of the 1900's both were used on the streets. The freight room held goods and produce until the train arrived. It burned down about 1917.

6. **5. Novato Railroad Depot - 1917 (original site of all 3 railroad depots.)**

We are talking a lot about the railroad today because it was so important to the history of Novato. This is actually the third railroad depot building, constructed in 1917. (The second one burned. What was it made of?) Look at the picture of the depot in about 1930. Look how busy it is. Those girls are carrying school books and wearing uniforms. There was no high school in Novato (until 1955) so the young people had to take the train to San Rafael to go to high school. There was no bus to bring them to the train so most had to walk from anywhere in the valley. Bet they were careful not to miss the train coming home! You can see the train station isn't busy anymore. It is abandoned. *Tell me some of the reasons why.* (Trains stopped running on a regular basis through Novato about 1955; trucks carry goods over highways now; the train station burned down).

7. **6. Novato House Hotel - circa 1889 - (photo taken about 1900)**

In the early days trains were very simple - no food, drink, or restrooms. Not built until about 10 years after the train's arrival, the **Novato House** offered rooms, food, drink and in the back, a "livery stable", for people getting off the train to have transportation in town. Ten years later, (after several owners), **Capt. Leon Hirribarren** moved over from the settlement at Novato Creek, called "**Old Town**" to this one, called "**New Town**" to run the hotel, restaurant and saloon. Before that Captain Hirribarren had piloted a barge - a type of boat - called the "**California**" that used to sail all the way up Novato Creek to where the post office is now to pick up fruit from Rancho Novato and other fruit ranches, and deliver goods to ranches. *Why do you think Captain Hirribarren gave up his old job as a boat captain to come run a hotel by the railroad depot?* [The railroad replaced water transportation on Novato Creek. the creek also silted in so that it was more difficult to get barges and scow schooners up to South Novato Blvd., and Center Road, the site of "Old Town"]. (picture shows Capt. & Mrs. Hirribarren and their granddaughter). **Mrs. Hirribarren** cooked for the hotel. A meal with a bottle of wine cost 50 cents.

Notice: wooden sidewalks,

horse in "traces" (can't see the wagon or buggy)

the lady's clothing

the horse "trough" (recall story of Henry Jones if it was in the introduction).

July 1897 Marin Journal
column on events in Novato

Steve Porcella has a fine cottage built and
the painters are now putting on the finishing
touches. Steve is single and the house is roomy.
Hint for the girls - married Minnie Hopkins
Dec 8, 1898

8.7. **The Fashion Shop (Blacksmith) - 1893 - (Photo taken about 1900.)**

This picture shows a blacksmith shop called "The Fashion Shop". That seems like a funny name for a blacksmith shop to us now. *What did the blacksmith do?* [He "fashioned" or made things out of iron, like tools to order for ranchers, saws, for carpenters, or even wagons]. This building was built by a blacksmith named **Stephen Porcella** in 1893 which makes it about 110 years old! We call this type of building a "false front" building. *Can you guess why?* [In the Old West the false front had a formal business-like front, but behind it was really just a shed or barn. If you had enough false fronts close together, people couldn't see the little sheds behind. It was a cheap and early way to construct commercial buildings in California. It also provided a larger space for advertising your business than a peaked roof front.] (There are several entertaining stories which can be told about Mr. Porcella, his family and his car.) **Sandy MacIntosh** worked with Mr. Porcella for 30+ years, lived above shop, and played violin at Carlisle's musical evenings. *Home cost \$700 to build.*

9.8. **Loustaunau Hall and Hotel - circa 1899**

John Loustaunau and his wife decided to open a hotel, restaurant, and saloon of their own to compete with the old Novato House Hotel in about 1899. He called his place "The Club" and advertised that he now had the "largest recreation room in the county"..... Used for dances, meetings, plays, fancy balls, and even silent movies by townfolk, it was a center of community activity for many years. *Where do we hold those kinds of events now?* [recreation and entertainment is much more spread out in different locations: school auditoriums, movie theaters, etc. There is still a Community House, built in the 1920's across the street from the police station, and the Margaret Todd Senior Center on Hill Road.] After the Loustaunaus died the Druids (a fraternal order or club) bought the building (1937). It still serves as the Druid's Hall. *Do you see any changes from the picture to its present appearance?* [entrance was changed, note the wood sidewalk].

Notice: wagon without the horse, muddy street; wood, sidewalk up stairs provided by each business. *Do you think wheel chairs could get around town easily? (Had wheel chairs been invented?)*

812
814
10. **Torassa Building:** (built 1937) (no picture) Look up! Mediterranean architecture, like Italy where Mr. Torassa came from. (Pink, tile roof). Family lived upstairs (some still do); He had Italian Bakery (opened 1922) where Goldpost now is. Wonderful bakery *smells!* Novato Library was once located here (1945) after it was located on the second floor of the Community House.

11. **9. Carlisle Hardware - 1910 - (photo taken about 1915)**

At our first stop we saw the house where **Charles Carlisle** and his family lived. In 1910 this building was Charles Carlisle's new hardware store. You might remember that Carlisle started out as a ticket agent for the railroad, then branched out and became the Wells Fargo Agent before trying hardware. Let's look at the picture of his building and see the kinds of things he sold in his store. *Why do you think he decided to open this kind of store?* [All the farmers needed equipment, tools, and supplies, so a hardware store was very profitable.] About 1930 Mr. Carlisle remodeled part of his store to provide an area where **Mrs. Carlisle** could sell wedding gift type items which women would buy. Mrs. Carlisle still did her work at home, but when she had a customer Mr. Carlisle would crank up the phone on the wall and call her. She would stop what she was doing and walk down Reichert Ave., and turn left on Grant Ave. to the store, help the customer, and then return home to continue her work.

(Note how the cars are parked! *If they did that today, what would happen?*) *Did this building have a false front? What was it used for? Did Mr. Carlisle go home for lunch? Name some things sold at Carlisle Hardware.*

12 **10. DeBorba's Inn - 1909 (optional) - (photo taken about 1945)**

Anthony ("Tony") DeBorba opened yet another saloon in the old downtown (known then as "New Town") in 1909. Are we starting to get the idea that people were drinking a lot of liquor in the old days? They did, but also remember that saloons served as restaurants and meeting places as well. In 1918 a law called "Prohibition" was enacted that outlawed the sale of all liquor. DeBorba then turned his saloon into a billiard parlor, like a pool hall, until that law was stopped. He opened an ice cream shop on Redwood Blvd. and Grant where tourists could get cool drinks and ice cream when they were driving from San Rafael through Novato to get north of here. Many went to the Russian River during the summer months. DeBorba's "Cocktail Lounge", or saloon, is still here today, and is one of the oldest businesses still operating in Novato.

13 **11. Novato Bank - 1913 - (photo taken about 1920)**

Can anyone tell me when this building was built? Yes, 1913. Sometimes buildings have their date right on the front, which makes things very easy for historians. Novato was a very small town before about 1905. It was mainly made up of a few dairy ranches and orchard farms. But by 1910 Novato was growing steadily because of the big boom in the chicken ranch industry. New chicken ranches were sprouting up all around, and most were very profitable. By 1913 there was enough money and people to need a bank in town. Before 1913 Novato people had to do their banking in Petaluma or San Rafael.

Unlike all the other buildings that we have seen today, this bank building was constructed of brick. *What did a brick building symbolize to townfolk?* Here's a clue: *remember the story of the Three Little Pigs?* (Brick or stone has always symbolized permanence and stability; in this case brick was also fireproof for the storage of money!) (Built by Frank Silva. James Black, Burdell was 1st Pres., George Morrison, 1st cashier.)

14 **Hamilton Grocery and Feed - 1904 - (optional)**

Before this building was here, there was another false front commercial building, called the Hamilton Grocery, started by Fred Hamilton in 1904. You can see by his advertising in the old photo that this "grocery" also sold cow and chicken feed. *What else?* This was before Mr. Pini built the big feed Mill, & later a Hardware store that we still go to further down Grant Ave. ("shoe story" of Mr. Hamilton). Mr. Hamilton's home was behind his store. Novato's first burglar alarm was a string from the front door of the store through his bedroom window to a bell. He was robbed anyway, with loss being all the shoes he stocked, but the robbers left all the boxes! The story was in the newspaper.

15 **12. Scott's Store - 1889 - (photo taken about 1908)**

This "general" store was built in 1889 by **A.D. Scott**. He moved here from "Old Town", which had been built at Novato Creek. As you remember, barges used to come up the creek. Mr. Scott moved here to be near the railroad. If we were standing here 100 years ago we would have seen several hotels, saloons, and general or grocery stores on East Grant Avenue. Now we see lots of gift shops and coffee houses. *Why?*

19 **13. Presbyterian Church - 1896**

Can you guess just from the shape of this building what it was first used for? Yes, it was a church. How did you know? (the steeple for a bell; stained glass or arch shaped windows]. This was the Presbyterian Church, built in 1896. The bell could be heard all over town so the people knew it was time to go to church Sunday morning. Also known as the Community Church because it was the only Protestant church in New Town Novato so not just Presbyterians attended here. This was the church where Mr. and Mrs. Carli

le were married, in 1897. Can you point towards where you saw their house? Note the differences Then & Now so you will remember and be able to draw it after lunch.

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