

HILARITA DAIRY TO REED SCHOOL

By Dave Gotz

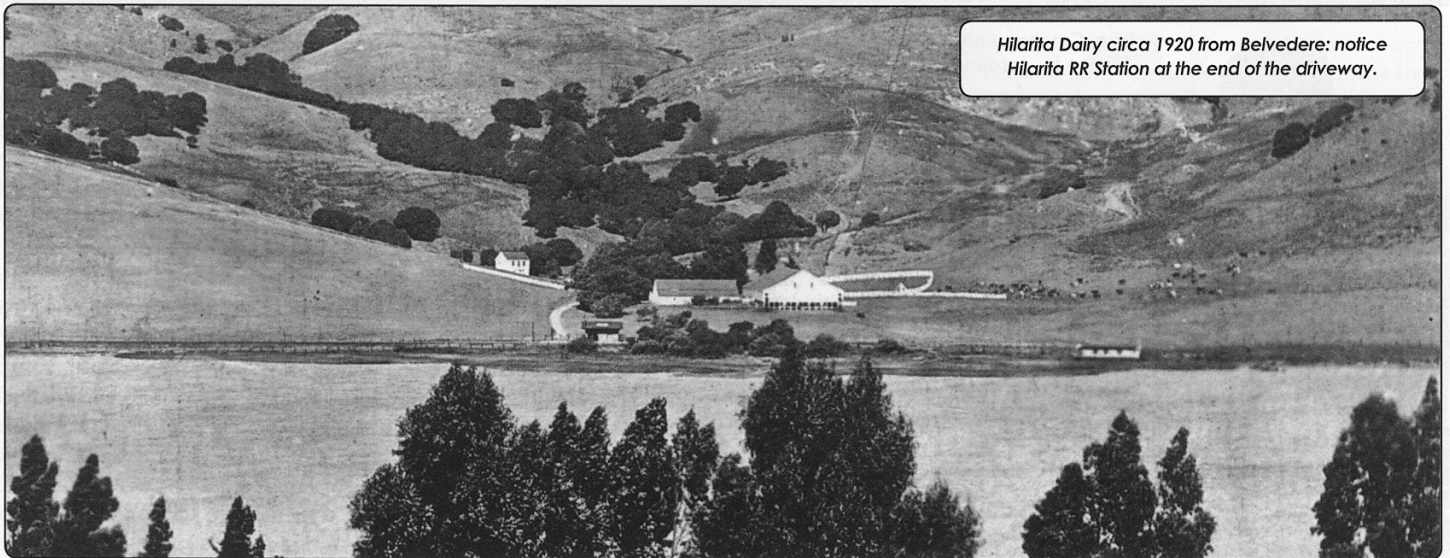
In the November issue of 94920 we outlined how the three public schools on the Tiburon peninsula are located on former dairy ranch properties. Here is a closer look at the third and final property.

One of the two properties that Hilarita Reed inherited when the Rancho Corte Madera del Presidio was divided up around 1870 was the end of the Tiburon peninsula. Separated from her brother John Joseph's land by a line that ran across the peninsula from Paradise Drive to San Rafael Avenue, the pastureland extended over Red Hill and along the Tiburon Ridge to Lyford's Hygeia, a subdivision created at the tip of the peninsula by her husband Dr. Benjamin Lyford. The dairy operations were located on the flat land at the base of Sugarloaf Mountain.

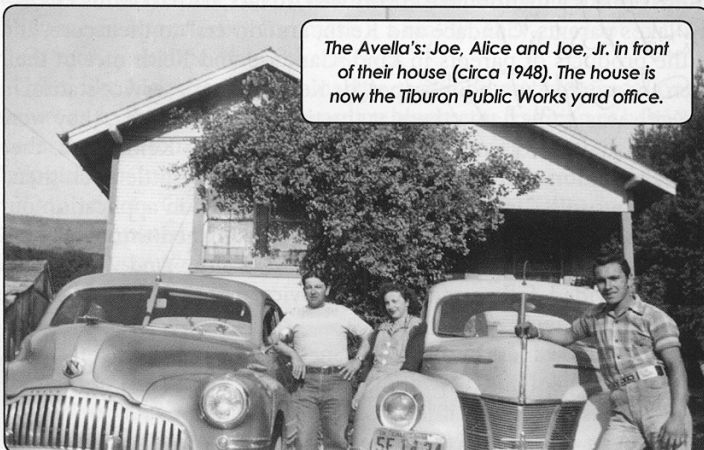
As with the other Rancho properties, an exact date for the establishment of a dairy is unknown. It is very likely that the dairy existed by the time the railroad came to Tiburon in 1884 because the first station after leaving the Tiburon waterfront was called Hilarita (the approximate location was across the road from the present day Tiburon Police Station). The first mention in our records is on Antone Souza in partnership with his brother Joao, John Bernard and John Silva operating the dairy in 1902. The ranch was commonly called Souza's because of this partnership, which ran the dairy until Antone's death in 1927. At that time Joseph Avella bought into the partnership

with the other dairymen. He eventually bought out his partners and the Avella family continued to operate a successful dairy until 1947 when Joe sold off the cows and took his family to the Azores to visit his mother who he hadn't seen since 1920.

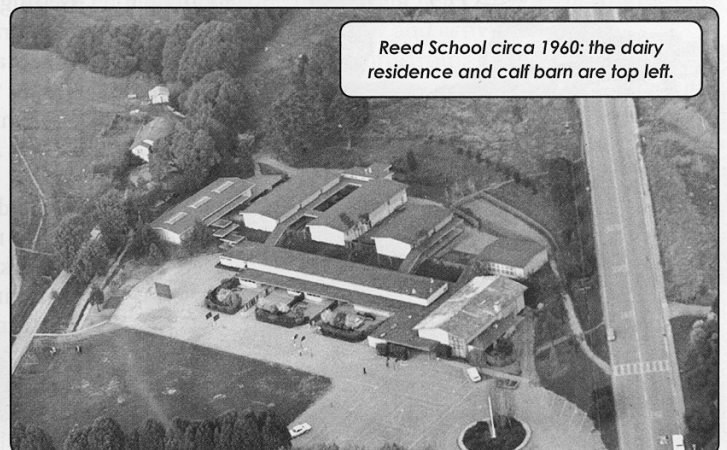
Ownership of the Hilarita ranch property passed to Thomas Deffebach when Clotilde Reed's estate settled in 1942; he later sold the dairy property and some of the grazing land to W. Campbell Judge (who donated land on the other side of Red Hill to Tiburon which became "Judge Field", now the parking lot for the TPC). In 1951 the Reed Union School District bought the former dairy property. The Avella family stayed on for a short time operating a small cattle business during the first phase of construction of Reed School. In the first year of school operation, the cattle still grazed on Sugarloaf and the children enjoyed visits to the barn behind the school. When the school was completed in 1954, all that remained from the dairy was the Avella residence (built by Joe in around 1934) and the small calf barn. The residence continues to be used as the Tiburon Public Works yard office, while the calf barn was dismantled and moved to the Golden Gate Dairy near Muir Beach last summer to become part of a historical exhibit about Portuguese dairy farming. <http://landmarksociety.com/>.



Hilarita Dairy circa 1920 from Belvedere: notice Hilarita RR Station at the end of the driveway.



The Avella's: Joe, Alice and Joe, Jr. in front of their house (circa 1948). The house is now the Tiburon Public Works yard office.



Reed School circa 1960: the dairy residence and calf barn are top left.