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THE LEFTOVERS

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New Acquisitions:

Ed Banducci's 1942 Ledger Book

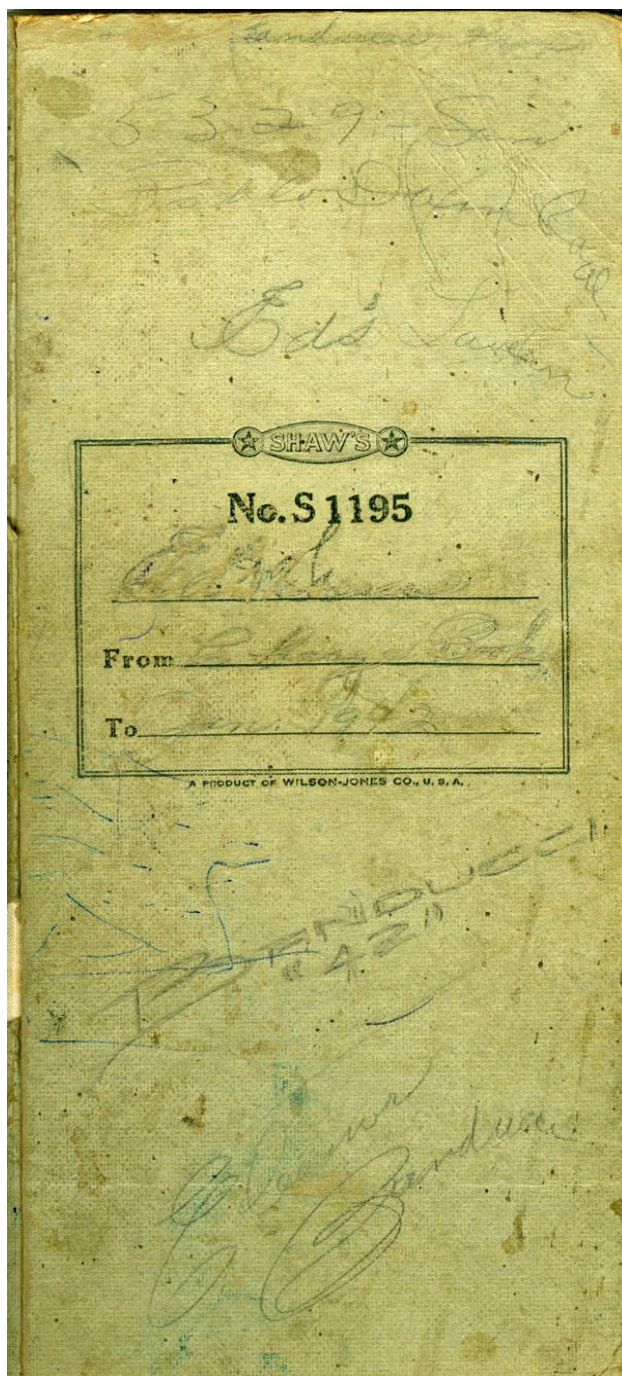
Steve James

The Banducci family has been very kind to us by donating items that highlight the history of El Sobrante. There are several great items, but for me this 1942 ledger book on sales is pure history gold. Ed's Tavern sold a little bit of everything from gas to groceries and then of course adult beverages. The year was 1942. America, newly out of a depression, was at war with Japan and Germany. Credit card transactions were not available until 1950. The concept of credit in a local community was based on pure trust.

Do I know you? What do you do? How long have you lived in this community? Those were the thoughts that ran through Ed Banducci's mind before running a tab on an individual at his Tavern. His ledger lists customers and a running tab on their purchases by date. Items purchased were gas, beer, grocery items, and drinks. On top of this Ed would loan money, a dollar or two. The tabs were paid off or down in a timely manner.

The list of names goes on. Some had no name. They were identified by their job, such as "phone guy". This was a classic example of how America and the communities survived during this trying time. Ed's faith in the community and the people in it tell a story of how America grouped together, neighbor helping neighbor. The Ledger list names that link to the activities in the El Sobrante valley.

"Soldier Boys" - We know that Army soldiers were stationed locally. We have a photo of Ed and his wife with the soldiers. They bought gas, wine and Ed loaned them money as well.



George (Cutter Labs) - We know and have had an article on Cutter Labs having a research facility in the now Carriage Hill area working on a Polio vaccine.

Paul at Castro's – Paul must have been a ranch hand at the Castro ranch.

Klemeth at Skow's – Another ranch hand. This one at the Skow's Richmond Farm Creamery located at San Pablo Dam Road and Clark Road.

All this tells a story of what made El Sobrante a tight-knit community, that after the war grew in population with the post-war baby boom. Housing tracts, new high school, and shopping centers, but still retained that rural horse town feel, where neighbor helps neighbor. Thank you, John, and Janet Banducci, for this classic piece of El Sobrante history.

Filling in the Details:

Donald Bastin

As Steve has pointed out, this little ledger is a gold mine of information; the more we look at it, the more we learn.

This ledger covers a roughly 8-month period from late January to early September, 1942. All of the names are regular customers, but some are more “regular” than others. For instance, Mr. Santos has a tab running for 17 pages, most of which are very similar to the single page on the right. The amounts suggest that he may have been paying for several people. As noted by Roxy Miravalle in a previous article, Frank Santos leased the ranch that was used by Cutter Labs in the area now covered by Carriage Hills North. Perhaps he was ferrying workers to and from the ranch, including George (above)? In any case, for whatever reason, he was a very regular customer of the Banduccis.

As far as we can tell, there is not a single woman's name that appears in this ledger; this is probably not surprising, considering the time, but it is a reminder that Ed's Tavern was a primarily male environment.

112

Frank L. Santos		66.13
Bal. fow.		
8-10	drinks	1.05
	drinks	30
8-11	drinks	60
	cola	10
8-12	egg	15
	cola	10
	drinks	1.05
	drink	25
	drink	25
		69.98
	By Cash	50.00
		19.98
8-13	drinks	1.35
	drinks	60
	drinks	45
8-14	drinks	60
8-15	drink	25
	drink	30
	drinks	45
8-16	drinks	30
	Paper	12
		15
8-17	drinks	75
	drink	15
	Candy	10
	Match	10
	drinks	45
	Ice cream	15
	Cola	10
	drinks	75
	gas	1.35
	drink	30
8-18	drinks	45
8-19	drinks	60
	drinks	75
	drinks	1.05
	drinks	45
	gas	1.35
Car on Page 18		

The listing of several names identified as “Soldier Boys” is also illuminating. We have a large

photograph of thirteen soldiers having dinner at Ed's Place, with Ed and his wife, Teresa, smiling broadly. While the soldiers have signed the photo, we could only guess at the date; now we have good reason to place it sometime in 1942, early in the war. Virtually all of the soldiers whose names appear on these pages are pictured in the photo, as well as a few others whose names appear on subsequent pages.

Where these boys were stationed is still a mystery. The Banduccis have always identified the site of the base as the area now covered by the Sherwood Forest housing development. But we can find no evidence that any kind of military installation was ever there. Perhaps more likely would have been the then unused CCC barracks just down the road at what is now Kennedy Grove Park. But we have more digging to do on

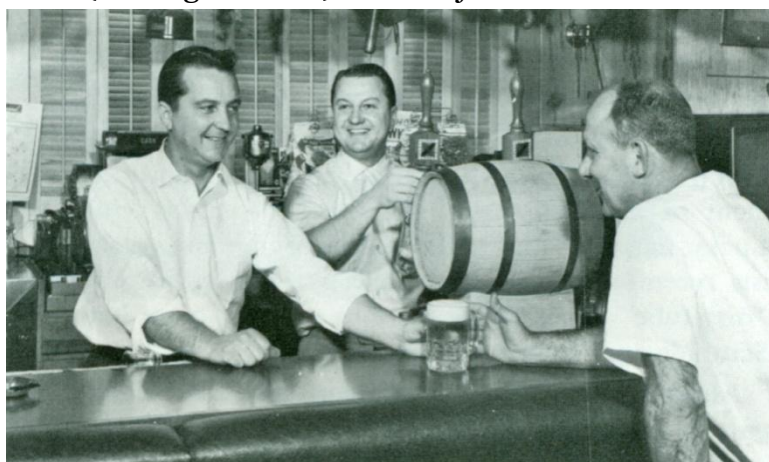
this. What seems clear is that at least a small group of soldiers was stationed nearby, and regularly visited Ed's Tavern, and became, in some small measure at least, part of the Banducci family.

As Steve has pointed out, documents such as the Banducci ledger are pure gold. They represent a slice of time that has been frozen and, without any conscious intent, reveal to us the little details of that bit of time. These details are the coloring of history and help to bring life to what otherwise are bare facts. This little ledger has only been skimmed as yet, and as we examine its pages ever more closely, we will share our insights with our readers.

And Yet Another Banducci Donation:

Lucky Lager Brewing Company Publication: August, 1962

Do you remember Lucky Lager beer? According to Wikipedia, the beer was first brewed in San Francisco in 1934. At the time, it was distinctive in that it was fully aged, unlike most other popular beers of the time. The heyday of Lucky beer was the 1950s and 1960s, with sales peaking in 1962. It was in this year that Ed's Tavern was featured in the publication that you see at right. Below are the Banducci brothers, John (serving the beer) and Ed jr.



The article includes historical information about the founding of the business, which has answered a particularly nagging question as to when, exactly, the tavern and gas station were built, and what, if anything, was there before. This is what the article, written

by Bob Wylie, apparently a writer for the beer company, has to say:

In 1939, Ed and Teresa Banducci made up their minds to go into business for themselves. This was no easy decision. Ed worked at the hard job of ice man, and there were four children to support.

The Banduccis bought a plot of real estate at a bend in a two-lane dirt road in El Sobrante – miles north of Oakland. With their bare hands and with help from their friends, Ed and Teresa built two wooden frame buildings, one, a gas station, and the other a small wine and beer tavern with living quarters in the rear for themselves and their children.

Ed worked for the ice company days and as tavern operator at night. Mrs. Banducci tended the gas station and tavern during the daytime (Honk Horn for Gas). But during the next few years El Sobrante's population of 150 began to grow, so did the Banducci children. Ed Banducci devoted full time to the tavern now, and added to the tavern building a handsome downstairs banquet room, launching a restaurant operation. Ed Jr. and John served their cooking apprenticeship, both are excellent cooks today.

When Ed Jr. returned from military service after World War II, the Banduccis began to dream of an expansion that would give them not only a new tavern and gas station, but also a complete shopping center.

This came true, but not until after the death of Mr. Banducci in 1959. As their father would wish, Ed and John pushed ahead with the construction that today makes them proprietors of one of the most popular taverns in this part of the country – and a complete suburban shopping center to boot.

The story that we had always heard about Ed's Tavern is that before the tavern was built, there had been something called a "road house" at the site, and that the Banduccis had either torn it down and replaced it with their own structure, or remodeled the original building. But we could never find any evidence of what, exactly, this road house was or how long it had been there. Now we know the truth –there was nothing there. Mr. Wylie's story, written in 1962, had to have been based upon information provided by members of the family who had much more intimate knowledge of the Banducci story than a later generation. So another little mystery is solved, with the help of an obscure bit of ephemera that had no business surviving to the present day. And we know a little more about the history of this El Sobrante icon, which has recently passed into the hands of new owners. We don't know if the tavern will survive, but it has been painted recently, so perhaps the plan is to keep it going. We'll let you know.

Ed's Tavern has long been a part of El Sobrante's history. My family lived here in the 1960s. I turned 21 in 1964 and, with my high school friend, Ken Romano, who turned 21 four days prior, I stepped up to Ed's bar for my first legal drink in a public establishment. It was beer, and I assume that it came from the same tap that appears in the photograph with the Banducci brothers. So it was probably Lucky Lager, and it was probably either Ed or John who served me. Good times.

Oh yes, Lucky Lager beer. The following information has been gleaned from Wikipedia: Lucky Lager beer was first brewed and sold in San Francisco, in 1934. It gradually grew in popularity, peaking in the 1960s, but it was always a west coast beer, with breweries in the western states and Canada. Sales began to decline in the 1970s, with increased competition from eastern beers; the San Francisco brewery closed in 1978. Production ceased in 2003. In 2019, the Pabst company announced that the beer would be revived, and produced by the 21st Amendment Brewery, in San Leandro. However, as of this date, it is not clear that production has resumed.

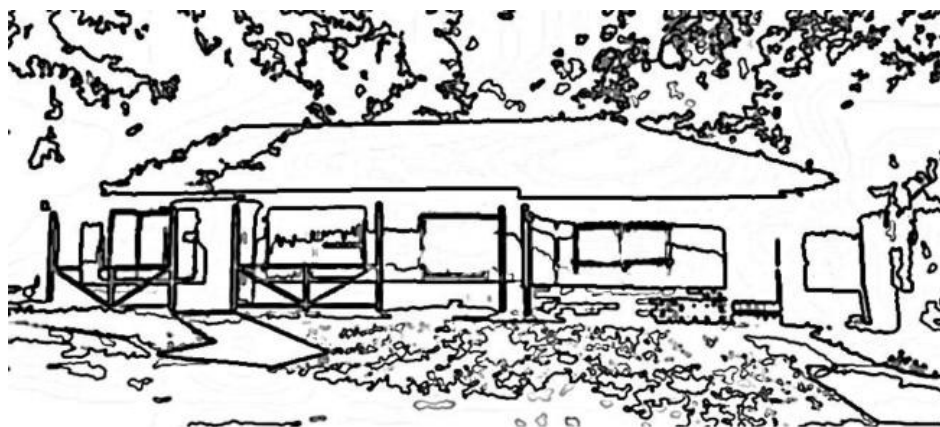
Antique Vacuum Cleaner

Donated by Friends of the Library volunteers Susan and Tom Wright, this odd technological wonder was made in England from 1910 until 1938. To operate, one pumped the bellows, which sucked up the dust. Unfortunately, the pump action tends to blow dust out as well.

While this artifact has little or no connection to the history of El Sobrante, the fact that it made it to our town is remarkable. And the fact that it still works (sort of) is even more remarkable.

See it at our History Center.





Friends of the El Sobrante Library

Book Sale in the Fahden House, First Saturday of the Month

As many of you know, the El Sobrante Historical Society shares space in the Fahden House with the Friends of the El Sobrante Library. This worthy organization holds regular book sales on the first Saturday of every month, from

10 am until 2 pm. This is an all-volunteer organization and all of the proceeds go to support El Sobrante Library programs. As a member of the group (memberships available at the door) you will be entitled to browse and purchase from 10 until noon. Sales are open to non-members from noon until closing time. The History Center is open every Saturday, so after browsing the books, drop by and take a look at our displays; we also have documents, maps, and photographs that may be of help in researching the history of your own piece of El Sobrante.

One Building, Two Men: Ray Vogel and Logan Fowler

Roxanne Miravalle



ESHS Photo Collection

Located at the triangle of Valley View Road, Sobrante Ave., and Appian Way, more commonly referred to as the El Sobrante "Y" is a well-known building at 425 Appian Way (seen here in the aerial photo taken in the 1940s). Many remember this place as being Vogel's Grocery & Market, as well as being a Big Three Market. While others remember it as Fowler's Dept. Store, the latter being the more popular. El Sobrante Historical Society records indicate Ray Vogel opened his grocery store in the mid-1940s, and in 1965, Logan Fowler moved his clothing and variety store to

this location, where it remained until 1993. Since then, it has been home to many different businesses but is currently empty. You can find many memories of both places posted by current and former residents of El Sobrante on social media. Everyone remembers something different, yet each post will always trigger another memory that had long been forgotten.

However, not much is mentioned about the owners of these two businesses. So, my curiosity led me to find out who these merchants were, that were an important part of everyone's childhood growing up in El Sobrante. What I found was as surprising to me as I'm sure it will be to you.

Vogel's Grocery & Market

Raymond Vernon Vogel, seen here in a photo from 1949, was born on July 9, 1898 in Melbourne, Australia to William Arthur Vogel [1870–1915] and Rosetta Saunders [1869-1970]. His parents and



ESHS Photo Collection

grandparents arrived in California in the late 1890s settling in the Bernal Heights Park area of San Francisco. He married Miss Isabel "Bessie" Barbara Moffatt in 1918. His first job was as a Teamster driver for a candy manufacturer in San Francisco. He and "Bessie" had three children. He was divorced by 1930. He later married Miss Leta Pearl Campbell in 1931; they had two children. In the 1940 US Census, he, his wife, Leta and two sons were living on Crescent Avenue in San Francisco. His occupation is listed as "Automobile Dispatcher." He had many occupations throughout his early years, which were far-removed from the grocery business. He briefly lived in Richmond where he was running La Honda Bowl of El Sobrante in 1945, and a few years later, was owner/operator of the St. Francis Grocery Market on Washington Street in Pt. Richmond. Today, it's still standing as the Point Richmond Market.

Vogel's Grocery also had a Post Office upstairs in the early 1940s. In 1955 he purchased property in Alhambra Valley with plans to build a \$40,000 home and moved to the town of Martinez where he lived for many years.

Ray was a previous captain and charter member of the Contra Costa Sheriff's Posse Mounted Riding group for fifty years. As a member of the mounted group, he participated in many activities, including the inauguration when Alaska became a state. He was a grocer for 40 years and owner and builder of various supermarkets, not only El Sobrante, but in Martinez and Point Richmond. This ad for an auction of Vogel's Market appeared in the Napa Valley Register for 27 Feb 1963.

AUCTION

**GROCERY STORE AND
MARKET**

All Late Model Equipment

DON'T MISS THIS SALE

MONDAY, MARCH 4th

10 A.M.

Vogel's Market

425 Appian Way

El Sobrante, Calif.

Mel Ellis Auctioneer

Ray moved to Grass Valley in 1993 and passed away July 7, 1995, at the age of 96.

Fowler's Dept. Store



Photo: Oakland Tribune - 24
Oct 1940

Logan Fowler, born Cyril Esmond Wallace Logan Fowler in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, was the son of David Fowler [1876-1957] and Elizabeth Hastie Logan [1856-1929] both of Scotland. In his 1940 petition for Naturalization, Logan shortened his name to Wallace Logan Fowler, eventually dropping Wallace. He attended SF Junior College and the University of California.

Early in his career, he was employed with the Pacific Coast buying office of the Montgomery Ward Company (1930s). By 1940, he was at Swan's 10th Street Market and Dept. Store in Oakland, first as store manager, then merchandise manager, and later as department head. In 1947, he was named vice-president of Swan's. Living in Oakland at the time, he moved to El Cerrito after the war. He definitely had a long background in the clothing industry. He was married

twice; first in 1937 to Miss Jenella Moreen Patten [1917-2013] of San Francisco, and then to Miss Mary Ellen Ingram [1921-1977] in 1950, who was from his hometown of Alberta, Canada. He only had one child, a daughter, from his first marriage. Logan was also very active in the community and committed to improving business relations by giving talks at his various Lodge affiliations and coordinating panel discussions on employment and business practices. In 1952, he was elected as

vice-president of the Downtown Merchants Association for Oakland; the following year he was elected president. His accolades are numerous and his list of memberships in various community organizations could fill several pages. Suffice it to say, he was always in the headlines.

EL SOBRANTE

Oakland Tribune
06 Mar 1959

Dry Goods, Fabrics & Yarn

Fowler's Junior Dept. Store, 3736 Dam Rd.



He opened his first store in 1958 at 3736 Dam Road next to Lo-Ray's market. In 1965, he moved his business to Appian Way in the former Vogel Market building seen above. Fowler's was a popular place to work for many attending nearby De Anza High. However, it was also THE place to purchase clothes for school including gym clothes, Levi blue jeans, and more importantly, Big Bell Bottoms. Fowler's was said to be headquarters for everything Levi; it was one of the only places that carried the old fashion straight leg 501s which were popular among teens, including Levi's one-of-a-kind, yet risqué "zip around" jeans, worn by the ladies, popular with the guys. After Fowler's closed in the late 1970s, it became, for a brief period, home to a slot car track. Logan Fowler passed away in August 1975 at the age of 60.

The Leftovers is published quarterly. Articles for publication are encouraged, as are comments. See e-mail address below.

The El Sobrante Historical Society is a formal nonprofit organization, and donations may be tax-deductible. We are dedicated to the preservation and display of the history of the community of El Sobrante. We depend on our members and local residents for the information, artifacts, and photographs that make up the society's collection. Become a member and help out! It's free and simple. Just visit the website, at elsobranthehistoricalsociety.com.

Visit us on **Facebook**:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ElSobranteHistoricalSociety/>

Mission Statement

To promote the awareness and appreciation of El Sobrante Valley history through preservation and education, and chronicling of the community's heritage for current and future generations.

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Donald Bastin: President; Historical Researcher and writer. Newsletter editor.

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Lyle Miller: Secretary; Community Liaison; Researcher/writer.

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Visit us on-line at:

www.elsobranthehistoricalsociety.com

Questions, Comments, and other communication? Send to:
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