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- P R E F A C E -

The following material is about The Sacred Heart Novitiate of Los Gatos. I decided to choose The Novitiate because it is so close to where I live and I thought that not many would write about it as their subject, but also because I wanted to find out more about The Novitiate.

Before I start with The Sacred Heart, I believe I should first acquaint you briefly with the history of the Jesuits and the Company or Society of Jesus.

The Jesuits made their first apparition in Europe in 1540 when Ignatius of Loyola, a Spanish Basque gentleman, had attracted a handful of young Catholic men to be of service to the Pope by forming a religious order which he called the Company of Jesus or the Society of Jesus and which the people of the time nicknamed "Jesuits".

By 1556, when Ignatius died, there were already over a thousand Jesuits. They had opened 33 colleges and set missionaries in India, Congo, Ethiopia, Brazil, Japan and China.

The Jesuit Fathers who founded the Los Gatos Novitiate were originally from the province of Turin, Italy, where they were exiled in 1848 by a group of irreligious and anti-clerical.

As for their education, the novices are trained on a basis of religious and ascetical life, they learn the full history of the religious order, and after two years of vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, they spend two more years

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studying of Humanities, Latin Classics and some Greek until they are sent to Jesuit seminaries on the East Coast or Europe for science, philosophy and theology. Then, they are finally ordained to the priesthood after 13 or more years, still keeping the same motto from the time of St Ignatius, "for the greater glory of God".

I was able to write this essay because the Los Gatos Library is rich enough to start my researches, the newly opened Forbes Mill Museum has some very informative displays and a very nice and learned guide.

Above all, Father Cullen, the Province Secretary, was kind enough to let me talk to him, visit part of the Novitiate including the library and archives and gave some special written documents for me to keep.

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It is by a spring Sunday that I had the privilege to have an appointment with Father Cullen at the Novitiate. With him the time flew and didn't seem to count. It was really a very special moment where I also appreciated the fantastic view and the sweet smell of the air.

Before moving to Los Gatos in 1888, the Jesuit novices used to study at Santa Clara College.

In January 1886, the Jesuits having a sufficient sum of money to buy a good piece of property decided to start looking for a more suitable place to train their novices because the Santa Clara facilities were quite small, to avoid tuberculosis, and also because the Jesuits wanted a quieter place.

The western part of the Santa Clara Valley was the Jesuits' first choice for their new location, however when they found no satisfaction, they went south to Los Gatos and the neighborhood. The first property they visited was on a small hill on the South-East outskirts of town, almost in it and therefore of easy access. Although the Father in charge of finding the proper place, Father Alosius Masnata, was greatly in favor of the property, the Father Superior found it unfit. The search continued, and the next property to be visited was the one of Mr. Charles Wilcox, on the top of the main hill facing town. Still not pleased the Jesuits then looked at Mr. Hilderbrand's estate in March, three months after

their initial search. The Father were so impressed by it that although the soil was poor, the water scarce and the area greatly exposed to winds and fog they would have bought it for the agreed \$7,000 if Mr. Harvey Wilcox hadn't contacted them to buy his beautiful property on the southern hills overlooking Santa Clara Valley at an altitude of 700 feet.

The Harvey Wilcox estate consisted of a good size vineyard, an orchard with a number of peach, prune, apricot and many other kinds of fruit trees including 1200 grown orange trees. There were a number of spring, therefore water was quite abundant on those 39 and a half acres of land.

The Father Superior accompanied with three other fathers visited the place on the 11th of March and all four being charmed, they resolved to secure it. The next day Father Superior concluded to buy the Harvey Wilcox property. The deeds were drawn and signed on March 17, 1886. The price of 15,000 Dollars agreed upon was paid to Mr. Wilcox on the 18th.

The Santa Clara County Jesuits who own the Santa Clara College, mission and St Joseph's Church in San Jose were not newcomers to the then very small town of Los Gatos since the Jesuits visited in horse and buggy for Sunday Mass and were the ones to take care of the Catholics' pastoral needs until 1888. Then, the Fathers from the Novitiate ministered until 1912 when St Mary's received its first resident Pastor.

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After asking permission to establish the Novitiate, the Father Superior had a temporary chapel and altar built on the 23rd of August 1886. The next day Father Superior opened the new residence celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and gave the new Novitiate its name: Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Father Masnata was left in charge as the minister of the Novitiate while the only thing left to do was to build the permanent Novitiate. Therefore, Father Superior hired an architect giving him a sketch of the future building with all the details. After a few changes, the architect drew the plans while bids were taken from brick layers for the work to be done. The most inexpensive, Messrs. McGowan and Butler of San Francisco received the contract.

On January 23, 1887 workmen began the necessary procedures to make the mortar. It was not until March 24 of the same year that the brick work started, while the "middle building" was finished in April 1888, more than a year later.

On April 30, 1888, Father Superior came to Los Gatos to sleep for the first time in the new Novitiate and he "found it perfectly dry and ready to be occupied", as Father Nicholas Congiato wrote the following day on the History of the Foundation of the Novitiate.

The novices arrived from Santa Clara on June 18, 1888. The next day at 5:30 A.M. the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was celebrated in the first mass in the permanent building,

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the Novitiate, by the first superior and Master of Novices, Father John Pinasco who was soon replaced by Father Paul Mans who served until his death two years later.

The young men who entered the Jesuit course of studies paid no tuition, therefore the Society of Jesus needed funds to cover their expenses. At first the Jesuits' funds mostly came from freewill offerings. The Fathers used the existing vineyards harvested for sacramental wines. Soon the Fathers used the same vineyards to do their commercial wines and still utilised the small winery built during the original period of construction.

The first grapes were harvested on October 11, 1888, with the California Jesuit winemaking history dating back to 1875 at the Villa Maria Vineyards in Cupertino.

Brother Constantine Valducci was the first winemaker at the Sacred Heart. A native of Italy born June 16, 1837, Brother Valducci was an incredible man. A college professor, he was sent to Bastia, Corsica, and was listed as the guard of the vinecellars and vineyards. After living in Corsica for several years he was transferred to California at St Ignatius College and finally to Los Gatos.

When Brother Constantine Valducci first came to the winery it was a simple wood frame building which could only hold 1,740 gallons but by the next vintage it held 8,500.

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The same year, Brother Louis Olivier of St Julien, Department of Aveyron, France arrived in August. Son of a winemaker, he began the harvest on September 27, 1889 with a **Red Muscat** crop, and he, himself became a winemaker from 1890 until 1897. During his stay at the Novitiate Brother Louis Olivier was sent back to France to get cuttings to bring back to the winery.

St Ignatius College in San Francisco bought from the Novitiate 322 gallons for \$80.50 on November 30, 1889 and less than two weeks later, on December 12, the college bought an additional 235 gallons for \$58.75. The **sale** amounted to about one third of the production of the winery capacity.

As a result to the winery's growing business the Jesuits bought more land, horses, and plow while increasing their winery capacity to 12,000 gallons.

As one can see, under the **direction** of Brothers **Valducci** and Olivier the winery enlarged and prospered which is one of the best proofs that the wine was of very good quality and that the Italian and French Brothers were excellent winemakers.

The Novitiate winery is still small in comparison with some of the larger commercial wineries in California and all the wines bottled under the Novitiate label are made from selected grapes grown in the Novitiate vineyards or bought but always made from their special recipes.

The fact that the winery prospered ~~was~~ really good because we must not forget that the Jesuits started to produce wines in order to pay for the education of the future Brothers and Fathers.

The popularity of the Novitiate's wines did not end here. In 1891 the sales reached 6,500 gallons and the next year 9,800 gallons also selling to Fort Madison and Toledo, Ohio. That same year, needing more room, the Jesuits replaced the original wooden structure of the winery to a permanent one in concrete which was once again enlarged four years later.

The winery was not the only thing growing at the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the property holdings had increased to 247 acres by 1893, however the Fathers continued to buy. Once Brother Olivier evaluated the land of the Carlsen Ranch of Guadalupe as good for the wines, the Jesuits bought the ranch in 1910. Though the years more acreage was bought at different locations.

The only inconvenience of the Los Gatos Novitiate is that it is located only two miles away from the San Andreas Fault. When the big 1906 earthquake hit, it did extensive damage. Demolishing the third floor of the brick and wooden structure of the Novitiate, the novices actually had to camp during the restoration. Giant steel rods were added to make sure the building would not fall.

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Wings were added in 1914 with a chapel and dining room and also in 1927 on the East and West sides. These additions show the growing number of students. The 1888 part of the building was demolished in 1968 for safety, leaving the 1914 and 1927 wings. Naturally, to make all the buildings harmonious, a beautiful and useful facade was added with glass arches giving priority to the unique view of Santa Clara Valley. There, not only did I enjoy the spectacular view but I also had an incredibly peaceful feeling.

Previously, facilities were built in Montecito, in the outskirts of Los Angeles to serve as a second Novitiate since Los Gatos had become too small compared to the enrollment. Unfortunately, in the late 60's and early 70's when Montecito was completed less young men wanted to become Jesuits, therefore only Montecito was used as a novitiate. Which is why the Los Gatos Novitiate traded its ~~innitial~~ name for Sacred Heart Jesuit Center.

Besides the Novitiate, the Jesuits also have 3 universities, 5 high schools, a school of theology, 13 parishes, 2 retreat houses for laymen, missions in China, and Japan and other apostolic works.

Valerie Saiag

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Today the Sacred Heart Jesuit Center of Los Gatos, ex-novitiate is an important head office of the California Province of the Jesuits, which include California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, and Hawaii. It is also a retreat house for the senior Jesuits, and they still keep the winery running. Eventhough they buy most of the grapes, the Jesuits still keep their special art for winemaking. They were obligated to abandon the vine harvest because the production and maintenance was too expensive in comparison with the sales.

Still today the Jesuits of Los Gatos are very active. As one could have seen the Jesuits were in Rome in February 1982 to meet the Pope about the steps to be taken for the future.

To be a Jesuit is to be a very special person with an open mind and an open heart in order to go in any direction to meet people of any kind and bring hearts in the right way because in fact that is the purpose of the Jesuit works and their goal.

Valerie Saiag

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- MEMORANDUM -

Governor Jerry Brown is a graduate of Los Gatos Novitiate.

Some of his vows in Latin are proudly displayed at Forbes Mill Museum with the courtesy of The Sacred Heart.

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