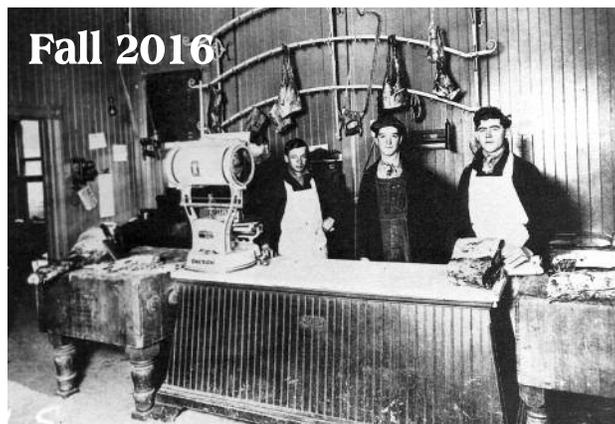


Pinole Historical Society Newsbriefs



P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564

www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4

HELP DESIGN THE PINOLE HISTORY MUSEUM

On November 4, the work to establish a museum in the Faria House will begin with a community brainstorming session at the Pinole Historical Society's quarterly meeting.

"Let's Design a Museum" will be held from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in conference rooms 2A and 2B of the Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Building, 1301 Pinole Valley Road.

PHS members and guests will break into small groups with floor plans of the first and second floors of the Faria House.

The goal will be to generate ideas of what the community would like to see in the Pinole History Museum.

Over the next several months, PHS board members will be exploring funding options, visiting other museums, attending museum workshops, and establishing relationships with regional and state museum organizations that may assist us.

Please join us on November 4. The PHS wants to hear from you.

The originally scheduled program, "Growing Up Fernandez," with guest speaker Susie Fernandez, has been postponed until 2017.

The Pinole Historical Society is considering a sitting area in front of an electric fireplace in this space in the Faria House as part of the Pinole History Museum.



Published quarterly by the Pinole Historical Society

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Pick up *Newsbriefs* at these locations:

AccuTech Auto Care, A.D. Dern Insurance, The Alley Cafe, Antlers Tavern, Bank of the West, Bay Park Retirement Residence, The Bear Claw, Big O Tires, Blue Sky Sports, Cafe Soleil, China House, Cindy's Shear Cuts, Coldwell Banker Bartels Realtors, Crocketts Premier Auto Body, East Bay Coffee Company, George A. Egan, CFP, The Embers, Farmers Insurance (Carol White), Garden of Gems, Good Butter Bakery, Douglas Gordon, D.D.S., Grocery Outlet, Happy Sashimi, Headquarters Salon, Hercules Fitness, Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Building, K & L Automotive, Kendall Financial Services, Ladies Workout Express, Mechanics Bank, Douglas Oliver, D.D.S., Oliver's Hardware, Park Pharmacy, Attorney Donald E. Patterson, Pinole City Hall, Pinole Creek Cafe, Pinole Hearing Aid Center, Pinole Library, Pinole Paws, Pinole Police Department, Pinole Senior Center, Pinole Senior Village, Pinole Valley Community Church, Lawrence Radcliffe, D.D.S., Realty World (Viktor Manrique), Ristorante Due Rose, Joel Ross, M.D., Sam's Dog House (Pinole and El Sobrante), Sequoia Real Estate, State Farm Insurance (Mark Bucklew), State Farm Insurance (Rick Chalk), St. Joseph School, Sunshine Floor Covering, Taqueria Sanchez, Tenax Law Group, 10th Inning Baseball Cards, The New Deli, The Red Onion, The UPS Store, Tina's Place, TMF Accounting Services, Top Floor Salon, Albert M. Tsang, D.D.S., West Contra Costa Transit Authority, Windermere Rowland Realty, and Wilson & Kratzer Mortuaries.

It's also posted on the PHS website (click on NEWSLETTER in the menu bar).

FOR ADVERTISERS: 2,000 printed copies of *PHS Newsbriefs* are distributed every quarter, generating readership among thousands of Pinole and West County residents. Hundreds more receive the newsletter directly from the PHS via its database and website. **If you're interested in advertising, please contact Jeff Rubin at info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org or (510) 724-9507.**

PHS CALENDAR

PROGRAMS AND BOARD MEETINGS

November 4 program: "Let's Design a Museum." This will be a community brainstorming session to generate ideas of what the community would like to see in the Pinole History Museum.

The public is invited to this FREE event from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in conference rooms 2A and 2B of the Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Building, 1301 Pinole Valley Road. Refreshments will be served.

November 30, January 11, February 8: Monthly Board of Directors meeting. The public is invited to attend and speak on any of the items discussed at these meetings. Pinole Senior Center, 6:30 to 8 p.m.

ONGOING

Pinole Library history exhibits. Two exhibits are at the library, 2935 Pinole Valley Road. Library hours are: Monday (10 a.m. to 6 p.m.), Wednesday (2 to 8 p.m.), Friday and Saturday (12 to 5 p.m.).

PHS booth at Pinole Farmers' Market. We are at the farmers' market every other Saturday from April through December. Upcoming dates are October 29, November 12 and 26, and December 10 and 24.

PinoleHistoricalSociety

Board of Directors: Jeff Rubin, President; George Vincent, Vice President; Mary McMains, Treasurer; Jo Ann Gannotti, Secretary; Marcia Kalapus, Melissa Lawton, Norma Martinez-Rubin. **Director Emeritus:** Jack Meehan. **Newsletter Editor:** Jeff Rubin.

PHS VIDEOS ON CITY OF PINOLE WEBSITE

Miss one of our history programs on Pinole Community TV? Don't despair. The city's website has a dedicated section devoted to PINOLE HISTORY on its "Videos Online" page.

You can view the numerous PHS programs right on your computer. Go to the city's website www.ci.pinole.ca.us/about/videos.html and scroll down to PINOLE HISTORY.

You'll find our interviews, Veterans Day programs, George Vincent's two walking tours of historic downtown Pinole, and the very fine PCTV-produced, 12-part series based on the Historic Walking Tour brochure. It's great TV!

The historical society has recorded interviews with several prominent Pinole citizens. Among the videos on the city's website are interviews with Ed LeFebvre, Charlotte (Fernandez) Shea, for-

mer fire chief Alex Clark, and former mayors Jack Meehan and Tom Cutino.

PHS program videos include:

- School Bell dedication.
- Japanese-American internment.

- Bars, Barbers, and Characters.
- A Flood of Memories.
- School Bells and Ink Wells.

We thank Bob Kopp, who recorded most of these events for the society.

President's Message

Jeff Rubin, President, Pinole Historical Society

FIRST STEPS ON ROAD TO MUSEUM

Now that the Faria House has been designated as a site for the Pinole History Museum, work to make the museum a reality has begun.

This will be a many-faceted campaign involving fundraising, design, architects, contractors, consultants — and community input.

What do you want to see in the Pinole History Museum? Lots of artifacts? Advanced technology? A combination?

The Pinole Historical Society, which will operate the museum once it's open to the public, is having a community meeting Friday, November 4 to receive input

from its members and guests. See the front-page story in this newsletter for details.

Museums serve many purposes. What do you envision for the Pinole History Museum? Please share your thoughts with us.

☆ ☆ ☆

On Friday, November 11, the Pinole Historical Society will produce its 9th annual Veterans Day Memorial and Flag Retirement Ceremony in Fernandez Park.

The event begins at 11 a.m. — the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, the precise time in 1918 when the armistice that ended

World War I was signed.

This event draws hundreds of people to celebrate the service to our country rendered by our military veterans to ensure our freedoms.

It's especially fitting that the mix of people at the event range from the young (the entire student body of St. Joseph School, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts) to the old (World War II and Korean War veterans) — and young people and adults of all ages in between.

It's an opportunity for people of all ages to learn about — and celebrate — the history of our country, which, after all, is part of the mission of all historical societies.



Jeff Rubin

This year, Representative Mike Thompson, Pinole's voice in the United States Congress, will be among our speakers.

Congressman Thompson is a Vietnam veteran and a longtime advocate for veterans' benefits.

The Fifth Congressional District he represents includes parts of Contra Costa, Solano, Napa, Sonoma, and Lake counties. I'm happy that this year he's chosen to spend Veterans Day in Pinole.



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The Pinole Historical Society promotes awareness and appreciation of history through preservation and education, and chronicles the city's heritage for current and future generations.

VETERANS DAY MEMORIAL FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11

The Pinole Historical Society will conduct its 9th annual Veterans Day Memorial and Flag Retirement Ceremony on Friday, November 11, at 11 a.m. in Fernandez Park.

The event will feature Boy Scout Troop 86, West Contra Costa Girl Scouts, Veterans of Foreign Wars, St. Joseph School students and choir, the Pinole Valley High School Marching Band, Pinole Youth Commissioners, and elected officials, including Pinole Mayor Roy Swearingen, Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia, and United States Congressman Mike Thompson.

Songs, speeches, remembrances, tributes, and the retirement of worn U.S. flags by the Boy Scouts will highlight the hour-long ceremony.

Please bring your flags to the ceremony, where they will be retired with proper respect. There is no charge to retire a flag.

For more information, call (510) 724-9507, visit www.pinolehistoricalsociety.org, or e-mail info@pinolehistoricalsociety.org

*The Pinole Historical Society
and the
City of Pinole*
invite you to participate in the
9th annual
**VETERANS DAY MEMORIAL AND
FLAG RETIREMENT CEREMONY**
Friday, November 11, 2016
11 a.m.-noon, Fernandez Park, Pinole

Please join us as we honor our veterans,
past and present, living and deceased.

*To donate a flag for the retirement ceremony,
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Back in the day

EXCUSE ME, SIR. CAN I ASK YOU ABOUT...

By Jack Meehan

It's said the old days go back to when you moved in. Here's an anecdote from a mere 58 years ago.

An immigrant's contact with police can be unnerving, to say the least. Moving furniture from a Berkeley flat into our new home in Pinole, from a trailer backed up to the front door, a police car glided to a stop at the curb. That was August 1, 1958. Our new home was at the corner of Doidge and Wright, streets named after Allan Doidge and Chester Wright, current and former city council members and mayors.

"Oh, oh! Can't drive a car and trailer on the lawn," we guessed. Or maybe the officer wanted to see some evidence of ownership or citizenship (remember, we were leaving Berkeley after coming from the Midwest).

My wife and I turned our attention to the tan-uniformed officer coming toward us, stern-faced but not threatening. He reached...to his shirt pocket, and drew...a business card. Offering it to us, he welcomed us to Pinole, and said we should call on him if we ever needed him or had any questions about our new town. And then, smiling, Police Chief Hugh Young left, with a friendly wave and drove off.

That's how we met Pinole on our first day of residence. How could I have known that a few years later I'd be privileged to be his boss.

That was a period of rapid, often wrenching, growth — in size and maturity — of the Pinole so often described by real old timers as quiet, friendly, orderly, and respectful.

None of today's police officers was even born then. Now, they wear blue uniforms (they wore tan in 1958), and no longer carry classic six-shooter revolvers; now they carry semi-automatic handguns.

But, some things never change. Stop by and have coffee with a cop — a great local program on the second Wednesday every month, where you can share recollections with our "Young Blues."

☆ ☆ ☆

EDITOR'S NOTE: Jack Meehan was elected to the Pinole City Council in 1962 and served as mayor in 1964-65.



Jack Meehan



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Fond Memories

Stella (Freitas) Faria

WORLD WAR II AND THE RICHMOND SHIPYARDS

I grew up in the small town of Pinole in a family of four girls.

Since there was only an elementary school in Pinole at the time, we were bused to Roosevelt Junior High after graduating from the eighth grade, and then went on to Richmond Union High School. We always complained about having to catch the bus at 7 a.m. at the bridge over Pinole Creek on San Pablo Avenue.

We became very familiar with Richmond and the sudden changes that were taking place around 1940. Henry Kaiser was building Liberty Ships in his shipyards on the Richmond harbor.

One of my first jobs, sometime in 1941, was working at our local drug-store soda fountain, which was popular in those days. Every weekday afternoon around 3:30 a couple of carloads of grimy workers stopped by, eager to cool off with a soda or milk shake before heading home to east Contra Costa County.

Highway 40 was the main thoroughfare that ran through Pinole, which became famous for its motorcycle cop who handed out tickets without mercy. Those carloads of workers were an indication that there was a lot of hustle and bustle going on with the

creation of the Kaiser Permanente Shipyard empire in Richmond.

In 1942, while I was a sophomore at Richmond High, something happened that left a lifelong impression on me. During a French class, the telephone rang and our teacher asked a sweet young student named Junko to go down to the main office. Between classes, I encountered her near my locker. She was in tears and told me that she had to leave and would not be coming back.

I really did not understand the severity of what was happening, but soon found out that her family, along with all the other Japanese families in the area, were being relocated to "camps." At the time, there was little or no publicity about it,

but we later found out why.

The shipyards were booming and jobs were abundant. There was a huge influx of people from the Midwest who had struggled to survive the drought. Richmond was like an oasis in the desert, and they arrived in droves with little more than the clothes on their backs and some meager worldly possessions.

Housing was at a premium, and workers were known to sleep overnight in the movie theaters. Government-financed housing projects started cropping up on most of the available empty land south of Macdonald Avenue.

Schools were also being built to accommodate the new students. This created a teacher shortage, so the state



Stella Faria

started issuing emergency and provisional credentials as a temporary solution to the problem.

Jobs were plentiful and you could get a special work permit at age fourteen. During the summer of 1942 and on weekends, I worked at the National Dollar Store at 8th and Macdonald, which catered to the newcomers with bargain-priced household goods and especially work clothes. Businesses of every type were thriving in the area.

In January 1943, there was not a dry eye in our household, as my newly married sister Arlette's husband and my sister Celeste's fiancé, plus my boyfriend, were all inducted into the service and left for relocation camps of an entirely different type.

We were at war, and everyone's life on the home front changed dramatically. There were ration stamps for meat, butter, sugar, and certain other foods, plus shoes, gasoline, tires, etc.

We girls would rush to any store that was rumored to be getting a

Continued on page 7



Kaiser Richmond Shipyards.

WORLD WAR II AND THE RICHMOND SHIPYARDS

Continued from page 6
shipment of nylon stockings, and stood in long lines, hoping to be able to buy at least one pair. We kept busy writing letters and sending care packages to our servicemen.

ENTERTAINMENT

Our main source of entertainment was going to the movies, where the newsreels gave us censored reviews of what was happening on the various war fronts. The USOs were popular at the time for servicemen to go for social activities and refreshments.

Occasionally, letters from overseas were censored if they contained any information that might be of interest to the enemy. We had to deal with blackouts and air-raid alerts and drills, which were signaled by sirens at fire departments or local plants and factories. There were Civil Defense Coordinators and designated captains to keep the public informed.

On July 18, 1944, there was a terrible explosion at the Port Chicago Naval Ammunition Depot, where two ships blew up, killing 322. It rocked the area badly, and many thought we had been attacked by the enemy. There was also an explosion at the Hercules Powder Company that year; sabotage was suspected but never proven.

In the summer of 1943, between my junior and senior year of high school, I went to work at Kaiser Shipyard No. 1.

I worked in the housing office for a gentleman named Dirk Feenstra, and besides trying to find housing for workers, we also helped get exemptions for people doing critical jobs. Another part of my job was picking up time cards in the field offices, so I got a lot of exercise walking the route.

When I returned for my senior year, many of my male classmates started enlisting in the service, as they knew they would be eligible for the draft at age eighteen, and wanted to serve in the branch of their choice. By the time of my graduation in June 1944, the class had lost quite a few of its male members.

After graduation I went to work at Shipyard No. 2 in the tax and accounting office until I started classes at UC Berkeley. Tax records were kept in huge accounting ledgers and a Marchant calculator was the business machine of the day.

Since I was trying to pay for my college education, I worked every job I could get and rode the Greyhound Bus from Pinole to Berkeley. Since it was wartime, servicemen had priority for seating, so I often stood from Pinole to Berkeley and back.

Each year I seemed to get a better job at the shipyards, and in the summer of 1945, I was hired to work in Henry J. Kaiser's administrative office at Shipyard No. 3. This job involved working on progress reports on all of the Liberty ships

being built in Richmond. The reports were typed on long carriage typewriters and were very detailed. Mr. Kaiser made an occasional visit to his upstairs office to meet with his administrative assistants.

DIFFICULT COMMUTE

In addition to Fred Bechill, Chief Administrative Assistant, for whom I worked, that office was also occupied by K. J. Samuels and L.A. Smith Jr., and others, who went on to hold positions in other Kaiser enterprises after the shipyards closed.

Commuting to Berkeley became harder and harder, so after 2+ years I went to work as a dental assistant for Dr. Edward F. Collins in downtown Richmond. We worked long hours on weekdays and until 1 p.m. on Saturdays to handle the heavy patient load.

Richmond's population skyrocketed and jobs were plentiful until the war ended.

Looking back, those were difficult years, but we were united in the cause of the war effort and felt that we were all in the same boat and doing our share.

ADDENDUM: While working on my Richmond High School 50-year class reunion in 1994, I went to my husband's reunion. Going over the guest list, I noticed the name Maita. I assumed it might be a relative of Junko Maita, and it was. I told her my story and gave her my name and address, hoping that I would hear from Junko. She did call me and said she was married and back living in Richmond.

MUTUAL FRIEND

I invited her to our upcoming reunion, but I could sense in her voice that same sadness that we felt back in 1942. It was a short-lived friendship that came to an abrupt ending; our lives had gone in entirely different directions.

She did ask me about a mutual friend named Jean Heilman, so she evidently did have memories of those days at Richmond High.

All I could tell her was that we had not heard from Jean since she had moved to Texas many years before.

That day at our school lockers in 1942 is still vivid in my memory, as it must have been for Junko.

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Back in the day

George R. Vincent

WHEN THE HUB OF PINOLE WAS LOUIS RUFF'S GROCERY STORE

Early Pinoleans had a choice of grocery stores from which to choose. Grocers kept personal customer accounts and made home deliveries. Customers put in their orders in the AM and deliveries were made in the PM by horse cart.

Downtown business locations were favored. At the southeast corner of Pinole Valley Road and San Pablo Avenue (Main Street) was the Joseph Lewis grocery store. At the northeast corner of Tennent and San Pablo avenues was the Central

Grocery. But, in the center of what was known as Main Street at the time stood the imposing two-story brick building that housed Ruff's grocery store.

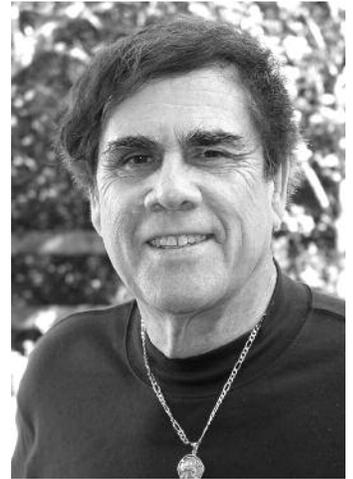
This was Pinole's first brick building, constructed in 1914 on the southwest corner of Fernandez Street and San Pablo Avenue.

Carl Ruff, a German immigrant, arrived in Pinole in 1900. Ruff had lost most of his eyesight in a work accident and opened his first store between today's Antlers Tavern and the Pinole Opera House, which

burned down in 1931. He had three daughters, a son, and nephew to support.

All of them worked in "Carl Ruff's Candy, Notions, Tobacco, and Cigar Store."

Ruff had witnessed the great Pinole fire of 1908, as well as the burning of the Pinole Hotel on Main Street in 1914. Pinole's wooden buildings frequently went up in smoke, and Ruff built his new brick store and upstairs living quarters next to the burned-out lot that was once the Pinole Hotel and would later, in 1915, become



George Vincent

the stone Bank of Pinole.

Ruff purchased the corner lot that before him housed the Vincent Brothers' Meat Market, and later the Smith and Hemleb Butcher Shop. Carl's first store on Tennent Avenue also had Pinole's first telephone switchboard service. In 1912, it handled 20 telephones. Abraham Greenfield's department store, on the southwest corner of Tennent Avenue and Pear Street, had the

Continued on page 9

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RUFF'S GROCERY STORE

Continued from page 8 honor of being the first subscriber and his number to call was "Pinole 1."

After Carl's death in 1935, his nephew Louis J. Ruff became the store's owner. He became involved in town politics and was a councilman for 31 years, as well as mayor. The store became a city hall for town gossip as well as city business.

At one time, eight telephone operators worked in a glass-enclosed switchboard in the back of the new store. Jessie Clark, who became Pinole's first historian, worked there, as did Carrie Moore, who was Pinole City Clerk. The Pinole Telephone Exchange took your number when you cranked the handle for the operator. Our family phone was "133." Atop the store was the fire siren that

From right to left: Greenstein's Pharmacy (the Downer Building), the Bank of Pinole, and Ruff's Grocery, around 1930. The two brick buildings (Ruff's and Downer) were severely damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake and were demolished.



wailed all over town to summon the volunteer fire fighters when a call was made to the switchboard.

The store had a 19th-century homey atmosphere. Two big plate-glass display windows beckoned passersby with fruits, vegetables, candies, and notions of all kinds. A very old screen door opened to plank

wooden floors leading to a big central counter with a large green scale by the cash register. There stood a short, bald man with a gruff demeanor who was all business.

Louis Ruff's store was the only bus station and

Greyhound bus stop in town. You bought a 25-cent ticket from him to go to the Rio movie theater in Rodeo. Ice cream was scooped from old-time round tins for ten cents. Cracker barrels

Continued on page 10

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RUFF'S GROCERY STORE

Continued from page 9
 were used as stools, bolts of calico cloth filled shelves, and tobacco and penny candies were under glass and Louis's watchful eyes.

Bad boys risked capture pilfering Duncan Yo-Yos and bottles of maraschino cherries. To the right of the doorway were the newspaper and magazine rack and a bench. The store was also the distribution point for Bay Area newspapers. Kids read ten-cent comic books until Ruff's assistant clerk, Mel Marcos, kicked them out with great loud fanfare for not buying anything.

Louis Ruff lived upstairs with his niece, Katie Wagoner, and her



The Pinole Food Center, formerly the Joseph Lewis grocery store, in the 1950s.

little daughter, Barbara. Katie worked next door at the Bank of Pinole. Between Ruff's store and the bank was a lot protected by a low green fence. In the back was the envy of every child in Pinole. Louis Ruff had a white playhouse built for

Barbara, with windows and all kinds of toys inside.

When Louis Ruff passed away in 1953, Melford "Mel" Marcos took over the store. A native of Pinole, he was one of seven brothers of a prominent Portuguese

family. Mel had worked at the store since he was seven years old, wrapping and delivering newspapers. He stayed on for 40 years and bought out Ruff's heirs.

The store now became Mel's Grocery, open seven days a week. For 49 years, Ruff's store had been a home away from home for Pinoleans.

But the 1960s found Pinole's 9,000 new subdivision dwellers flocking to new shopping centers away from the old downtown. The little city had become a big city, and the mom-and-pop grocery stores became a casualty of this new growth spurt.

Continued on page 11

Pinole **Historical** Society 2017 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(PINOLE RESIDENCY NOT REQUIRED FOR MEMBERSHIP)

**PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION, AND SEND CASH OR YOUR CHECK,
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TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

You can help us preserve the history of Pinole

Always seeking to improve and add to the society's collection, the PHS welcomes inquiries from individuals owning objects which are significant to the history of Pinole.

Though we do not have a museum, we have three exhibit spaces at the Pinole Library and conduct history programs for service organizations, retirement residences, and schools.

Artifacts are an important part of these programs. Please contact us at info@pinolehistoricalsociety.org or call (510) 724-9507 if you have an object you'd like to donate.

Also, you can view the numerous PHS programs right on your computer. Go to the city's website www.ci.pinole.ca.us/about/videos.html and scroll down to PINOLE HISTORY. Several recent programs have been added.

RUFF'S GROCERY STORE

Continued
from page
10

Sadly, the Central Grocery and Mel's Grocery both closed. Mel's store was taken over by Bill's Liquors.

Although the brick building was fireproof, it was not quake proof. The Loma Prieta Earthquake of 1989 crippled the landmark, which was later demolished. Today, the Pear Street Bistro stands in its place.

A fitting tribute to the old landmark was given by Mel Marcos when he turned the key in his store door for the last time. He said that although he now lived in Rodeo, his heart was in an old brick building in Pinole.

Mel also spoke for the many citizens of Pinole whose memories were once upon a time fondly touched by that old brick building.



Bill's Liquors, formerly Ruff's Grocery and Mel's Grocery, in the 1960s. Built in 1914, it was Pinole's first brick building.

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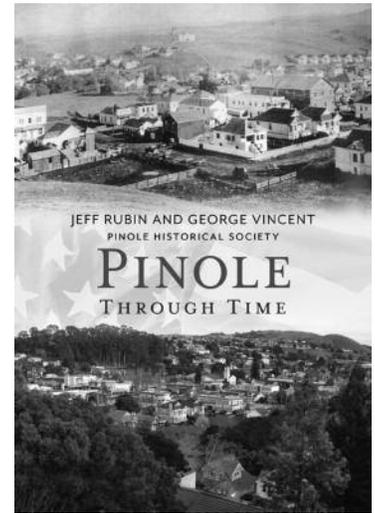
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For only \$30, you can help the PHS accomplish its mission of bringing the history of Pinole to our residents through exhibits at the Pinole Library, Pinole history programs in schools, Pinole Community TV programs, walking tours of downtown Pinole, the Veterans Day event in Fernandez Park — and you'll have the satisfaction of helping promote and preserve Pinole's history for future generations.

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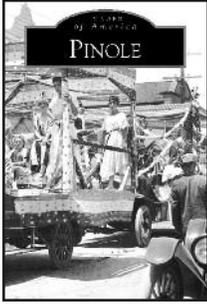


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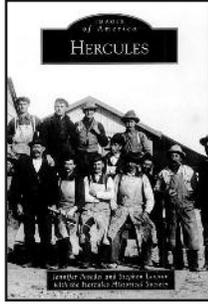
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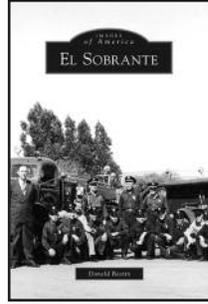
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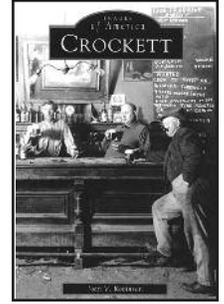
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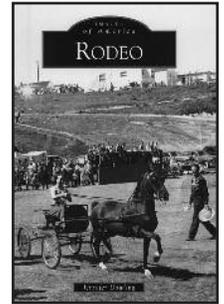
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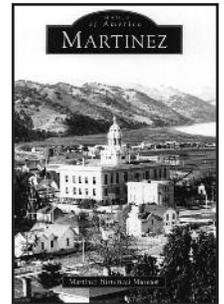
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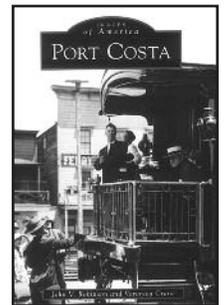
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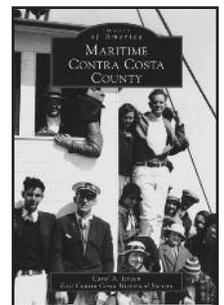
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