

Pinole Historical Society Newsbriefs



P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564
www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org



The exhibit room at the Contra Costa History Center in Martinez.

MAY 13 PROGRAM

GOT HISTORY?

THE CONTRA COSTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND HISTORY CENTER HAS HISTORY,
AND THEY WILL BRING IT TO US AT OUR QUARTERLY MEETING

The Contra Costa County Historical Society (CCCHS) operates a major archival collection documenting the history of the county at its Contra Costa History Center at 724 Esobar Street, in Martinez.

At our May 13 meeting, CCCHS

representatives will describe the collection, consisting of letters, diaries, manuscripts of writings, legal records, photographs, maps, newspapers, periodicals, and books.

The History Center is not a museum or a place where yester-

day's artifacts sit mute in dusty corners. Rather, it is designed to be primarily a living archive, a treasure trove of the records, the letters, the pictures, maps, and books — the thousand and one

Continued on page 2

Published quarterly by the Pinole Historical Society

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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.**

GOT HISTORY?

Continued from front

records that tell the story of our past.

It is intended as a focus for scholarly activity, offering valuable resources available for serious students and writers of history and a place where teachers can find prime source material on the county's past to

share with their students.

The center is the place where all the county's community historical societies can search for additional materials to add to their individual collections.

Moreover, it is planned as a workshop where educational programs and interpretive exhibits on various aspects of

PHS CALENDAR

PROGRAMS AND BOARD MEETINGS

May 13 program: "GOT HISTORY?" The Contra Costa County Historical Society (CCCHS) operates a major archival collection documenting the history of the county at its Contra Costa History Center at 724 Escobar Street, in Martinez. CCCHS representatives will describe the collection, consisting of letters, diaries, manuscripts of writings, legal records, photographs, maps, newspapers, periodicals, and books. 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.

May 11, June 8, July 13: Monthly PHS 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 April 30, May 14 and 28, June 11 and 25, July 9 and 23.

PinoleHistoricalSociety

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

county history can be put together for loan to schools and businesses.

One of the main objectives is to get as many of the society's historical materials out where they can be seen and enjoyed by all of the citizenry.

PHS members and the public are 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.

President's Message

Jeff Rubin, President, Pinole Historical Society

CITY TAKES FIRST STEP TOWARD A PINOLE COMMUNITY MUSEUM

Pinole has a very interesting history. Interesting characters have lived here and interesting things have happened here — and continue to happen here.

Nevertheless, there are generations of Pinole residents who know nothing about their city's history, in large part because there's no place for them to go to learn about it.

The Pinole Historical Society has done its best to fill this void by publishing books, conducting walking tours and inter-

views, and sponsoring events.

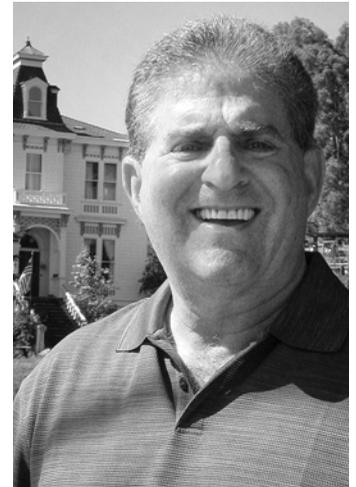
We have a website, a Facebook page, and we publish two newsletters — one a quarterly printed newsletter focusing on the city's history and the other a monthly electronic newsletter focusing on history events in the city and area.

Local history isn't part of our schools' curricula, so the PHS tries to introduce our young people (and not-so-young people) to our city's heritage via books, tours, lectures, and community TV broadcasts.

But, the city lacks a museum people can visit to see our city's history on display.

The society's mission is to promote awareness and appreciation of history through preservation and education, and chronicle the city's heritage for current and future generations. This is what a museum can do.

On March 1, 2016, the Pinole City Council agreed to have the Faria House appraised for possibly buying it and establishing a city museum in the building.



Jeff Rubin

The Faria House was moved to its downtown location at 2100 San Pablo Avenue in 2005 from the site now occupied by the Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Building.

At that time, it was a Redevelopment project, and the then-city council planned that it would become a museum to house and display the many artifacts that

Continued on page 4



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 3 document our history.

But the state, in dissolving and taking over all Redevelopment assets, now controls it and other such properties. If the city, or anyone else, wants to buy it at market value, the state will get most of the proceeds. Thus the appraisal, a necessary first step.

Do we need a community museum?

Did we need a library when we forked up the money to build it?

What about the new Pinole Skate Park for those who enjoy that activity?

Our Community Playhouse is undergoing an interior rebuilding to better serve its audiences.

The Senior Center opened in 1990 to meet senior citizens' activity needs, and is undergoing

a quarter-million-dollar re-roofing project.

The money spent on these projects demonstrates how the city addresses the lifestyles and interests of all people who live in Pinole.

The society's goals are shared by many citizens, and the Pinole City Council desires and intends to satisfy another segment of the local population and support a resource for all citizens to enjoy by

preserving and protecting the city's heritage.

While it's still early in the process, the council's action is the first step in what the PHS hopes will result in a community museum to house the many artifacts that document our wonderful city's history.

In memoriam

DEAN ALLISON October 28, 1956 — March 4, 2016

Dean Allison, former Public Works Director of the City of Pinole and a lifetime member of the Pinole Historical Society, died March 4. He was 59.

Dean was well-liked and respected by everyone with whom he came in contact — elected officials, fellow engineers, and members of the community.

"Dean Allison stood for all that was good," said Pinole Mayor Roy Swearingen. "He was always willing to help and work with everyone in our community.

"I met Dean nine years ago and instantly bonded with him as a friend. He felt very good about his new career opportunity in San Rafael. I will miss our Friday evening recaps of the week's activities."

Dean was Pinole's Public Works Director from October 2005 to September 2015, when he left to take a similar position for the City of San Rafael.

"Dean embodied everything a Public Works Director

should be — he was a technical expert with an exceptional ability to collaborate; he could relate to absolutely everyone and each individual would walk away feeling heard and understood and impressed with Dean," said San Rafael City Manager Jim Schütz.

Dean, a native of Dobbs Ferry, NY, graduated from the University of California at Irvine with an MBA. He also held two bachelor's degrees, one from University of Buffalo in civil engineering and the other from the State University of New York at Oneonta in physics. He loved baseball and was a loyal New York Mets fan.



Dean Allison

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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.

In memoriam

LOVIE AMOS
September 6, 1920 – February 10, 2016

A resident of Pinole since 1953, Lovie was always active, with an outgoing personality and wonderful sense of humor, Lovie was energetic in community affairs and an independent thinker who was never shy in expressing herself.

During World War II, she worked as the only woman on a seven-man team at the Richmond Shipyard. She became the first woman Division Manager for the EBMUD during her 36 years there. She was proud to have been named in the top 400 women in the country in the "Who's Who of American Women." Lovie was especially interested in preserving Pinole's history and was a lifetime honorary member of the Pinole Historical Society.

Those who knew her, remember Lovie as a wonderful friend and neighbor whose familiar face will be missed along her Tennent Avenue home.

REBECCA GUTIERREZ
September 12, 1940 – January 18, 2016

Rebecca Gutierrez, a lifetime member of the Pinole Historical Society and a former PHS vice president, died January 18 in Las Vegas. She was 75.

Rebecca and another PHS lifetime member, Gail Snyder-Von Aspern, were responsible for setting up the Pinole history displays at Pinole City Hall.

Rebecca was formerly Becky Kanalz, an older movie actress with a host of movies to her credit. She was also a U.S. Navy nurse and then a registered nurse in the private sector for the remainder of that career until she retired nine years ago.

She moved to Las Vegas and decided to get back into the movies. At her death she had just finished filming a movie with Nicholas Cage.



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Fond Memories

Stella (Freitas) Faria

THE HOLY GHOST FESTIVALS IN PINOLE

One of the most enjoyable events during my childhood was the annual Holy Ghost Festival, which was usually held in mid summer.

Its Portuguese origin dates back to the reign of Queen Elizabeth (Isabel), who lived from 1271-1336.

During the 13th century, the Azores Islands suffered from many earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, so the people were plagued with drought, famine, and crop failures. In response, they gathered and prayed to the Holy Ghost for help. Queen Isabel responded with help, and celebrated in the Cathedral in Lisbon by starting a tradition of feeding the poor at Pentecost time. That is basically the background for the religious reason for the celebration.

The I.D.E.S. (Irmandade do Divino Espirito Santo; the Society of Divine Holy Ghost), a fraternal organization, was the backbone of the event. Its members collaborated to raise enough money to build a hall, which is the present day site of Christ The Lord Episcopal Church.

The celebration in Pinole dates back to about 1911, but became a more prominent part of community activities in the 1930s.

The celebration started on Saturday evening with a short parade and fireworks. There was Portuguese dancing in the hall, with fiddlers playing for the *chamarita*, which is similar to a square dance with a caller directing the moves. The younger crowd sat on the sidelines, getting a big

kick out of the old folks.

Across the street at the Eagles' Hall, the present day Community Playhouse, a swing band played the latest Glenn Miller and Benny Goodman tunes until after midnight.

Large crowds were attracted to our little town. There was teen



1938 Holy Ghost Queen Celeste Freitas.



Stella Faria

rivalry between the boys from Crockett, Rodeo, and Richmond; you could always expect a fight going on outside over somebody dancing with his girlfriend.

Sunday was the highlight of the event. It started with a big parade from the hall down Tennent Avenue, Pinole Valley Road, San Pablo Avenue, and back to St. Joseph's Church.

There were drill teams, marching bands, and representatives from all the Portuguese groups within traveling distance.

The center of attraction was the queen, who represented Queen Isabel. She was chosen in a sort of contest, and was elegantly dressed in white satin and lace, and wore a long cape, held off the ground by little girls. On her head she wore a jeweled tiara, and she carried a solid silver crown which was to be blessed by the priest during the Mass. That crown is now on display in a Portuguese museum in Hayward.

Previous to the Sunday parade, the crown was on display at the home

Continued on page 7

HOLY GHOST FESTIVALS

Continued from page 6 of a parishioner who had made a *promesa* and donated money to the celebration. A *promesa*, or promise, was a plea to the Holy Spirit for inter-vention on behalf of something such as a criti-cally ill family member. This was part of the religious tradition.

May Vincent Silva was the first queen in 1911. Two of my older sisters, Arlette and Celeste, had the honor of being queens.

I was an attendant to Celeste in 1938. I remember wearing a



Pinole Portuguese Band in the Holy Ghost Parade.

pretty rose-colored organ-za dress with matching brimmed hat, which was made by Mary (Rose) Faria, who became my mother-in-law nine years later. Children were included in every possible way.

After the Mass, the parade reorganized and went back to the hall, where the tradi-tional meal of *sopas* was served to the entire crowd.

The meat for the feast was donated by local farmers, and was cooked all night by experienced cooks. The beef broth was poured over sliced French bread with a sprig of mint in bowls and served with plat-

ters of meat.

Crowds waited anx-iously outside to be in the next group to be seated. It was estimated that at least two thou-sand people were served each year.

Later in the afternoon there was an auction to make money to help defray the costs. Tony Enos was our well-known local auctioneer who called for bids on a multi-tude of items that had been donated. Everything from livestock to artwork to handmade items was offered, along with big loaves of Portuguese sweetbread, which was sold in huge quantities.

Monday evening was reserved for all the peo-

ple who had worked so hard to put on this glori-ous celebration for the entire community. They enjoyed food and drink, but mostly they had a good time talking about what a wonderful thing they had been a part of, contemplating what they would do the next year.

As they got older, there were not enough young people willing to tackle such a big project; the last Holy Ghost cele-bration in Pinole was held in 1959.

It was a sad day, but lots of pleasant memo-ries live on among those who were fortunate enough to be a part of that memorable occasion.

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Back in the day

MEET PINOLE'S FIRST FAMILY

By George R. Vincent

Don Ygnacio Martinez and his wife, Doña Maria Martina Arelanes, settled with their large family in the Pinole Valley in the 1820s.

Here they built a big adobe home as the centerpiece of their 18,000-acre Rancho El Pinole.

The land was granted to Don Ygnacio for his 41 years of service as a soldier to Spain and Mexico.

The expansive rancho had some 8,000 cattle and 1,000 horses.

Pinole Valley was then a wild place of dangerous grizzly bears and marauding bands of Indians who attacked the rancheros and stole

horses. The Martinez family kept a brass cannon for protection in front of their adobe home.

Don Ygnacio and Doña Martina had 13 children. Nine daughters and two sons survived early childhood — 10 married and nine had families with many descendants.

Rancho life in pre-American California centered on social interaction and marriages among neighboring Spanish-speaking "Californio" Rancho families and some approved English immigrants as well.

The marriages of the Martinez children were:

- Maria Antonia, the oldest, married William Richardson;

- Juana Maria married Jose Joaquin Estudillo;
- Maria Encarnacion married Jose Altamirano;
- Jose Jesus (eldest son) first married Carmel Peralta, and after her death, married Catherine Tennent.

- Vicente Martinez first married Guadalupe Moraga, and after her death, married Nieves Soto;

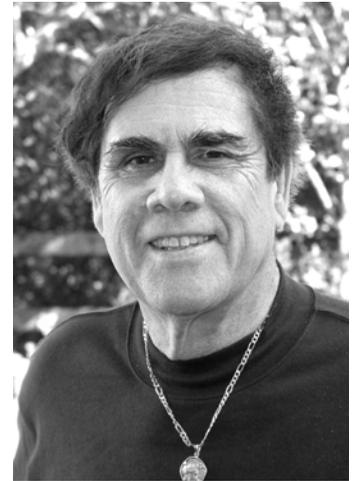
- Maria Luisa married Victor Castro;

- Susanna Martinez's three marriages were to William Hinkley, William Smith, and Benoit Vassero Merle;

- Maria Rafaela married Samuel Tennent in 1849;

- Maria Dolores married Pedro Higuera.

Family lore recounts



George Vincent

the Martinez daughters as exceptional horseback riders who roped grizzly bear for sport.

Don Ygnacio's eldest son, Jose, died of blood poisoning from a steer-roping accident, while legend has it that son Vicente was horse-whipped by his mother for his second marriage to an unapproved mate below the family's social station.

All the marriages were extravagant and gala

Continued on page 9

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PINOLE'S FIRST FAMILY

Continued from page 8 occasions, with feasting and dancing and games that went on for days.

Don Ygnacio fired his cannon to celebrate his eldest son's first marriage. Gold Mexican utensils decorated the tables, with Indian servants serving all types of foods.

It was a time to show off skills of horsemanship and wealth. Every rancho had its own race track.

Besides horse racing, a favorite sport to show one's skill as a vaquero was to bury a live rooster so only its head was showing. The rider at full gallop would lean down and "snatch" the rooster's head from the body.

This was the sequence of events of love and courtship before marriage in early California:

Parents were in charge. First, the son would ask



Don Jose Martinez

his father if he approved of his lady fair. If the father approved, he wrote a letter to the girl's father asking if his son may marry the daughter.

If the girl's parents approved, they discussed with the daughter if she liked the young fellow. If so, a letter was written to the young fellow's father accepting the marriage proposal.



Doña Martina Martinez

If the offer was rejected by the girl and parents, a letter was also sent turning down the offer.

When Don Ygnacio's son, Jose, married, the celebration lasted a week at El Rancho Pinole.

Don Ygnacio invited 100 guests and had to add extra rooms to his house for them to sleep over.

Dancing went on all night long with only short naps. Each morning guests went on picnics and in the afternoon there were bullfights and horse racing and betting.

Feasting and dancing went on continuously.

Don Ygnacio Martinez was so proud of his sons' marriages to prominent neighbors that he built two adobe homes next to his large casa for the newlyweds.

These became known as the three adobe homes of El Rancho Pinole, later called "Pinole Viejo" or "Old Pinole."

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PHS RACKED UP 1,375.5 VOLUNTEER HOURS IN 2015

The PHS profoundly relies on its volunteer board and others who donate their time to plan, implement, and promote its programs and activities.

What does it take to preserve and enliven history and make those programs and our communications to you possible?

In calendar year 2015, we tallied 1,375.5 volunteer hours of board meetings, quarterly membership meetings, a presence at the Pinole Farmers' market from spring to fall, newsletter and E-News writing/design and delivery, educational programs, historical research, special events (e.g., book signing

events, Veterans Day celebration), library displays, and the marketing activities and behind the scenes work of our president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.

Let's heighten the tally, shall we? We welcome PHS supporters and

prospective new members to join us at our monthly board meetings on the second Wednesday from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Pinole Senior Center. Your donation of time is priceless and keeps this organization alive.

Thank you to our vol-

unteers and others who, with ongoing participation, enjoy the result of our efforts at various history-laden programming through the year. Keep reading this newsletter; please remain active and informed!

MEMBERS: PLEASE ATTEND MAY 13 ANNUAL MEETING

Our May 13 meeting will be our annual meeting, as well. Three seats on our seven-member board of directors will be up for election.

We invite our members to attend and vote. Please contact the society at **(510) 724-9507** or **info@pinolehistoricalsociety.org** if you are interested in serving a two-year term on our board. We are especially looking for someone with bookkeeping experience to take over as treasurer, but that is not a requirement to serve. We have other options for the treasurer position.

You must be a paid member for 2016 and a member of at least a year to be elected to our board.

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(PINOLE RESIDENCY NOT REQUIRED FOR MEMBERSHIP)

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At its March 9 board meeting, the PHS board voted not to enroll in the new eScrip program because board members felt this would create opportunity for eScrip to deliver unsolicited product promotions and program information to those who register.

However, at its April 13 board meeting, the PHS board decided to revisit its decision by asking its members at the May 13 annual meeting if they favor the PHS registering for the eScrip program.

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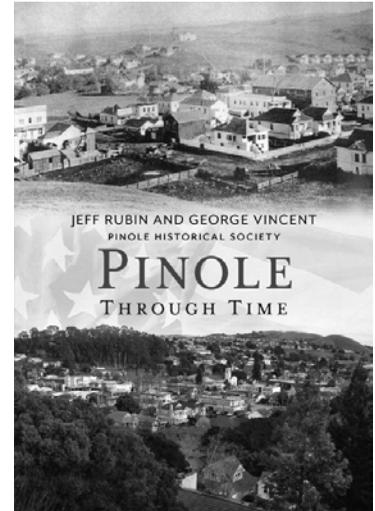
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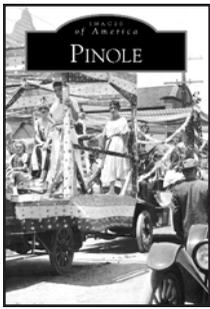
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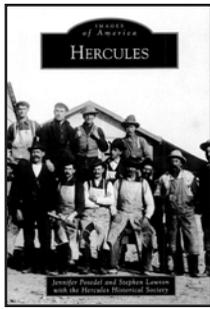
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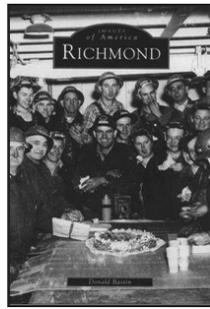
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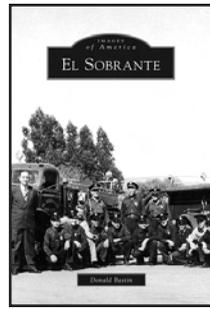
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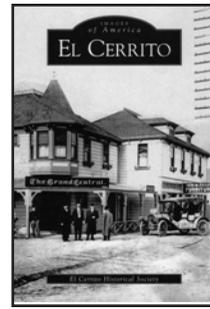
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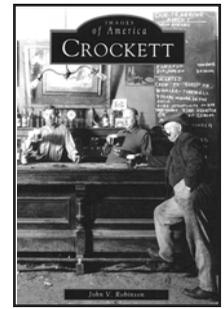
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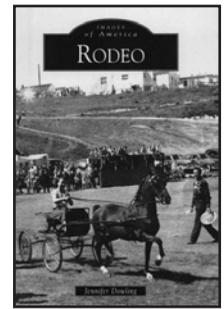
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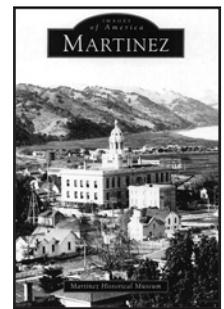
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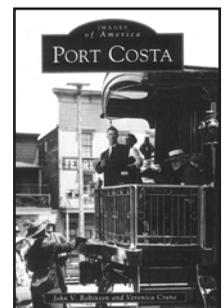
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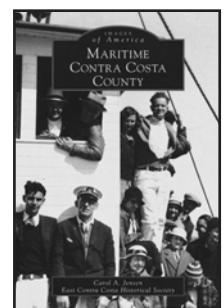
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