

Pinole Historical Society Newsbriefs



P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564

www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org

KAISER PERMANENTE TO HOST FEBRUARY 16 PHS MEETING

A new venue and a program featuring two interesting topics will greet an audience of Pinole Historical Society members and the general public at the society's first quarterly meeting of the year on Thursday, February 16.

We'll be meeting in Conference Rooms 2A and 2B in the Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Building, 1301 Pinole Valley Road. We'll begin at 6:30 p.m. and end around 8 p.m.

Commander Matt Messier of the Pinole Police Department will present *The History of Law Enforcement in Pinole*, and author Donald Bastin will do a short presentation and a book signing for his just-published Arcadia book, *Images of America: El Sobrante*.

Many of you will remember Commander Messier's first PHS program in 2010, which chronicled the 1929 murder of Pinole Constable Jerry McDonald and the subsequent capture of members of the Fleagle gang, which robbed the Bank of Pinole branch in Rodeo, during which McDonald was machine-gunned to death.

Bastin is also the author of *Images of America: Richmond*, published in 2000.



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Published quarterly by the Pinole Historical Society

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It's also posted on the PHS website.

FOR ADVERTISERS: 3,000 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 call him at (510) 724-9507.

PHS CALENDAR

MEETINGS

February 16, 2012: Quarterly membership meeting: *The History of Law Enforcement in Pinole*, presented by Commander Matt Messier of the Pinole Police Department, and a book signing by Donald Bastin, author of the new book, *Images of America: El Sobrante*, Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Building, 1301 Pinole Valley Road, Conference Rooms 2A and 2B, 6:30 to 8 p.m.

ONGOING

Pinole Library history exhibits. Two exhibits 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're taking the winter off. We'll be back in April.

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President's Message

Marcia Kalapus, President, Pinole Historical Society

DON'T GIVE UP SEARCHING FOR YOUR ANCESTORS

I am dedicating this article to all the "missing-person" ancestors who have eluded all of us doing family history. Generally, a forgotten entity, most folks abandon searching for them after a period of time. Keep looking. Mine is a success story.

My family began looking for Alonzo "Lonnie" Kinningham (my grandfather's older brother, my great-uncle) around 1899.

He had returned to Texas with an honorable discharge after serving in the Spanish-American War, but then disappeared. The family feared that he had taken off to

pursue Sterling A. King, a rustler/train robber, who had murdered Lonnie's father, Dr. William Kinningham, in 1885. King was acquitted at trial and did not serve jail time; there were no witnesses. Lonnie, born in 1872, was just a boy when his father was killed.

My relatives wrote to the United States Department of War in 1917, but there was no current enlistment record for Lonnie.

My grandmother, Effie McCarty, asked me to promise to keep looking for him in 1972, before she passed. "You have to see he's laid to rest," she told me.



Marcia Kalapus

From 1972 to 2000, I found nothing. I wrote to a message board on *Ancestry.com* looking for information about Lonnie. I received e-mails from two of his granddaughters who were also

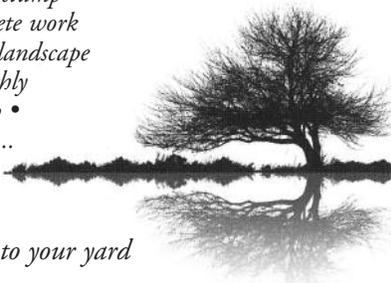
looking for him. I learned that in early 1900, while hunting for King, Lonnie ended up in Arkansas, where he married Ella Avery and had two little girls. These were the daughters of those girls. The family moved to Oklahoma in 1905.

The granddaughters' story was their mothers never knew Lonnie. Their grandmother, Ella Avery, refused to share any information about what had happened to him. There were no records of him.

In August 2010, I received an e-mail from Cathea Curry, one of Lonnie's descendants on Ella Avery's side of the

Continued on page 4

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SEARCHING FOR ANCESTORS

Continued from page 3

family. She had found him. (We never thought to look under Lonnie's wife's name during our research.)

Cathea had discovered an old newspaper article in Hugo, OK, archives that said "Ella Kinningham was arrested for the murder of her husband in December 1906 in Grant, OK." The article called "Mrs. K." a holy terror and was hard to get along with.

Lonnie worked for the railroad in Oklahoma. He and his wife were separated, and he went to see his daughters. Ella shot him in the gut, point blank. The newspaper article about the killing didn't mention Lonnie by name. There were no witnesses.

The railroad took Lonnie to its hospital in Sedalia, MO, for extensive care. He died there in January 1907. The Averys refused his remains. He was buried near the hospital.

Ella was convicted of manslaughter but was released from jail in 1907; Oklahoma was trying for statehood and didn't want any negative publicity.

The United States National Archives, after hearing from Cathea Curry about the circumstances of Lonnie's death, sent the Curry family a military monument with his name and rank to be placed on his grave.

The Averys never notified the Texas families (McCarty (my people) and Kinningham) of Lonnie's demise, and the two families looked for him for 111 years.

Lonnie is now resting in a marked gravesite, and my family is grateful to have found him.

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CARQUINEZ HIGHWAY BRIDGE CONNECTING SOLANO WITH CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, CROCKETT, CALIFORNIA '27

The Carquinez Bridge in 1927. It was the world's longest highway bridge.

DAYS GONE BY: HOW THE CARQUINEZ BRIDGE WAS BUILT

By Nilda Rego

Aven J. Hanford may have been in his early 20s, but he already owned three rather successful grocery stores, one in Vallejo, one in Oakland, and the third in Alameda.

However, there was a problem. Hanford trucked his own merchandise, buying from a farmer or a jobber and delivering the products to his stores. It would take him a full day to get

from the Vallejo store to the other two. Not only was his time consumed, but the long, arduous trip was wearing out his truck.

It was 1917. There were no bridges. Hanford bought a barge and would go across the Carquinez Strait in his truck, taking along a few passengers to help defray the costs.

Also traveling the same route day after day was Oscar H. Klatt, a young salesman for a San Francisco wholesale grocery com-

pany. The two met and determined to find a better way to get from Vallejo to other East Bay cities.

They came up with the idea of a ferry and started the Rodeo-Vallejo Ferry Company, which was a good idea, except for the fact there was a war going on. All the shipyards were way too busy to build a ferry. So if the two couldn't get a new boat, what about a used one? Hanford heard of a little steamer called the Issaquah that ferried people around Lake Washington near Seattle.

Hanford went up to Seattle, bought the Issaquah and had it refurbished. Then he hired a crew, and even though he had no seafaring experience, he took command of the ferry. It was a harrowing trip. Hanford sailed the Issaquah through a fierce storm with a crew that was close to mutiny. But he made it.

It was a very popular ferry. Hanford gave up the grocery business. The company bought more boats. But there were always long lines of cars waiting to board. Sometimes, people had to wait for three hours, and the lines kept getting longer.

Hanford and Klatt realized a bridge was the



Nilda Rego

answer. Then they heard that someone else was seeking a franchise to build a bridge across the Carquinez Strait. Hanford went looking for a lawyer and found A.F. Bray, of Martinez, who later became the presiding justice of the District Court of Appeal in San Francisco.

Bray suggested that Hanford ask the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors for a franchise because, according to the law, the governing county was the one situated on the "left bank descending the stream or arm of the Bay."

Hanford and Klatt got the franchise and organized the American Bridge Company. Hanford became the company's president. The stock sold rapidly. However, both Hanford and Klatt had to mortgage their homes and all their personal property to add to the earnings of the ferry company for the construction fund.

Construction on the Carquinez Bridge started in February 1923 and was completed in May 1927. Hanford never got to see the completion of his project. He died at the age of 40 at his home in Berkeley.

His obituary in the *Oakland Tribune* reported, "His death was caused by a brain hemorrhage due to overwork." Klatt took over Hanford's job as president to complete the bridge.

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PHS SEEKING FAMILY FILMS FOR HISTORICAL ARCHIVE

Got film?
 The Pinole Historical Society is embarking on a major project to archive the city's history — family by family and event by event. Our objective is to establish a permanent, digitized collection of Pinole's history.

Do you have film of past Holy Ghost parades, Pinole Valley High School Homecoming parades, Memorial Day or July 4 parades?

How about important athletic events, such as a high-school football, basketball, baseball, softball, or volleyball game?

Perhaps you have film of an important event that took place in Fernandez Park, or a ribbon cutting or an event that has a place in Pinole's history—such as the 1958 flood?

We're looking for any video or film you have—VHS,

Beta, camcorder, DV tape, 8mm, Super 8mm, 16mm, 35mm, motion picture.

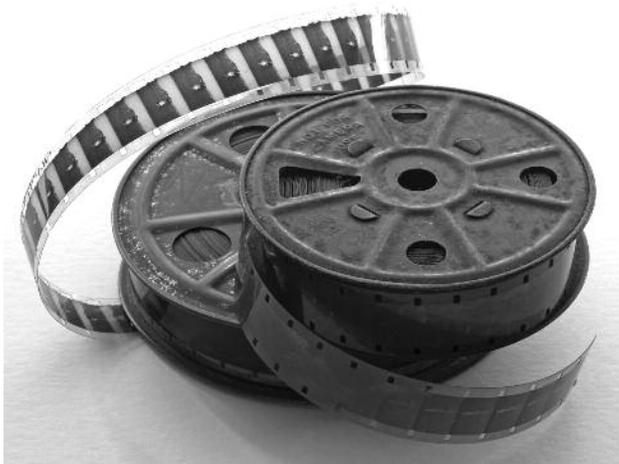
Nearly everyone has taken home movies. That makes everyone who has taken film a historian.

We want to collect, digitize, catalog, and preserve old movies on DVD (and whatever formats are to come) to exhibit, educate, and entertain.

The PHS will share these videos on a film archive that we will establish, similar to the The Pioneers Film Archive on YouTube created by the California Pioneers of Santa Clara (www.youtube.com/sccpioneers).

Film connects with the past in a unique way. It's immersive, educational, and entertaining for young people. It's a way to get young people interested in history.

Got film? Please contact us at info@pinolehistorical.com



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PHS interviews on city of Pinole website

Miss one of our programs on Pinole Community TV?

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You can view the numerous PHS programs right

on your computer. Go to www.ci.pinole.ca.us/about/videos.html and scroll down to PINOLE HISTORY. You'll find our interviews, Veterans Day programs, both of George Vincent's 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!

PHS THANKS THESE DONORS:

Pinole Historical Society Director Emeritus **JACK MEEHAN** donated the funds to enable the society to purchase this handsome greeting-card and postcard display rack (photo, right) for our farmers' market booth and other events.

LAWRENCE RADCLIFFE, DDS, 2000 Appian Way, Suite 203, donated a copy

of Ignacio Martinez and the Rancho El Pinole 1823-1868, the master's thesis written by former Pinole Mayor Egdar Vovsi in December 1970. Vovsi submitted it to the College of Holy Names, Graduate History Division.



DORIS MCPHERSON-SALMI, whose late father, John McPherson, was a member of the Pinole Historical Society in the 1970s, and served as secretary, donated a file of her father's papers, notes, and articles.

"My father was not an 'old-time' Pinole person like so many I know from years past," says Doris, who lives in Rodeo. "We moved to Pinole in 1955, but he was very committed to his city and loved every square inch of it!"

LYN AND TED KELLER, of El Sobrante, donated a 1906 Punett Brothers cloth map of the Bay Area counties, featuring all of the ranchos of that era.

CHRIS TREADWAY AND TOM LOCHNER, of the *West County Times*, donated numerous newspaper articles and photos from the paper's archives, including information about the Pinole Spring Festival, Oktoberfest celebrations, home construction in Pinole Valley, a 1991 oil spill, and events and programs at the Pinole library.

Pinole Police Commander Matt Messier requests photos of the city's constables from the late 1800s and early 1900s. Please contact him at 724-8946 if you can help.

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Back in the day

By George R. Vincent

PINOLE'S RURAL ROOTS: INTO THE 20TH CENTURY

Second of two parts

The late 19th century saw Pinole emerging from a sleepy rural outpost based on farming to the elevated status of a promising village.

Noted as a "small hamlet" in an 1880 county history, Pinole's character was changing from its surrounding agricultural base to a recognized urban community, with a central downtown and family institutions.

St. Joseph's Church was built in 1881, and in 1886 the first downtown school was erected—both on land donated by the Samuel Tennent family.

Pinole's population



Cattle drive on Railroad Avenue.

increase had come with the 1879 industrial stimulus of new jobs at the California Powder Works in Hercules, as well as the transportation facilities provided by the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe Railroads. Newcomers built Italianate and Queen Anne-style

clapboard homes and barns along San Pablo Avenue on lots sold by Tennent family heirs.

As Pinole entered the new century the township was still a place of horse troughs and hay wagons, now sharing space with telephone poles and fire-plugs. The old heritage of

ranch and farm influence did not disappear. Instead, the new urban face blended with the farming tradition in a unique way.

Even the new downtown homes had barns and livestock. Dusty cattle drives and cowboys came through central Pinole to and from the valley ranches to the Southern Pacific Depot until 1945. Pinole's economy would continue to benefit from its love affair with agriculture even as it competed with the new industrial machine at the Hercules Powder Company.

By the late 1870s, Bernardo Fernandez had acquired many of the ranch properties in the

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PINOLE'S RURAL ROOTS: INTO THE 20TH CENTURY

Rodeo and Pinole valleys. Fernandez made regular trips in his black buggy to supervise his holdings. When he died in 1912, he had become one of the wealthiest men in Contra Costa County. Much of his wealth came from his waterfront enterprises at the mouth of Pinole Creek. Here, he had a thriving home, long wharf, schooners and warehouses called Pinole Landing.

Hay and grain wagons and livestock came down Tennent Road to the bay to unload their cargo. The ranchers surrounding Pinole, as well as those deep in the valley, depended on Fernandez to buy and store their wares. Fernandez had a monopoly of the trade from both ends.

This practice continued until the late 1950s, when the last remaining warehouse burned down

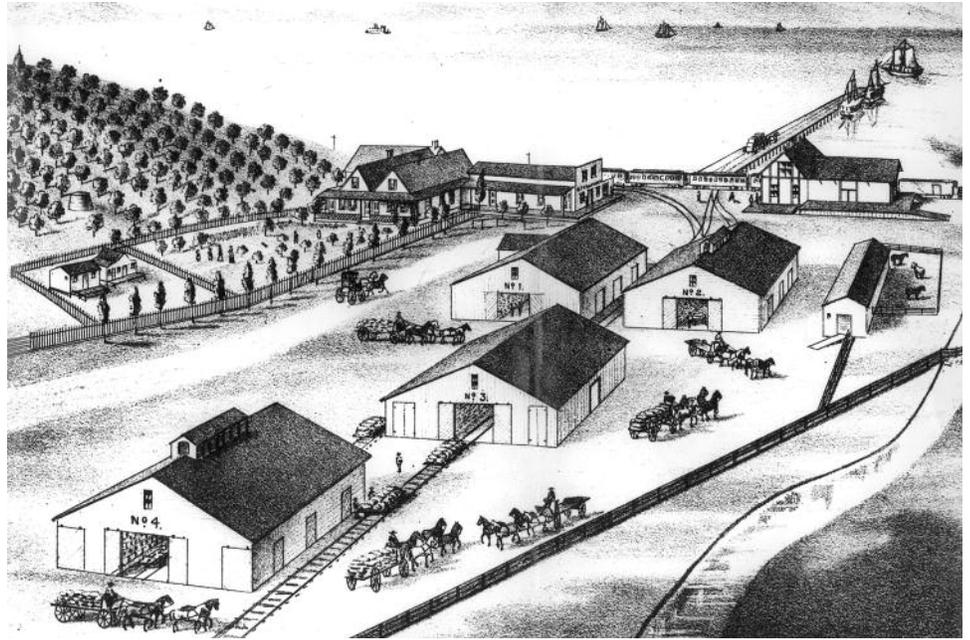
one evening. A favorite trick for young farm hands bringing high bales of hay on wagons was to jump up and hang from the Santa Fe overpass on Tennent Road until another wagon passed under for them to drop

down upon.

The 1880s saw a large influx into California of Portuguese immigrants from the Azores. Many took up ranching and farming as their livelihood or worked at the Hercules Powder Compa-

ny. Fernandez, who was also Portuguese, leased dwellings and farmland to the newcomers, including the old Martinez Adobe Ranch home and premises.

All in all, there were some twenty farms and



PINOLE LANDING: Residence, warehouses, wharf and vessels of Bernardo Fernandez.

Lawrence Radcliffe,

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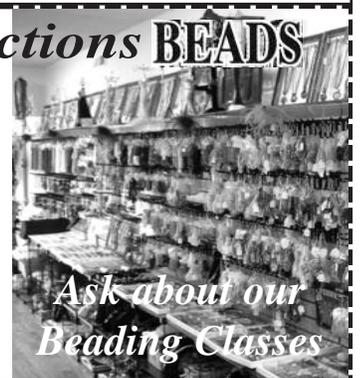
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PINOLE'S RURAL ROOTS: INTO THE 20TH CENTURY

ranches in the valley alone, mostly worked by itinerant Portuguese farm hands. Hay presses labored from dawn to dusk in the summer and fall. Steam-powered tractors and horse-powered hay presses and balers would cut, bale, and press hay into 250-pound bales to be stored and sold as winter livestock food up and down California.

Children played

In the 1950s, the one remaining warehouse at the foot of Tennent Avenue was more than 100-feet high and jammed to the top rafters with hundreds of hay bales. Kids dangerously climbed to the top bales to look out the



ROSE FAMILY: Antone Rose Sr., Antone Rose Jr., Mary Agnes Rose (Faria), Manuel (Molly) Rose, and Florinda Rose.

missing shingles of the decaying roof.

Shafts of sunlight from the holes in the roof lit up the straw-covered floor. There was an eerie silence all around. It felt like being in an ancient cathedral, complete with a musty smell of long ago

and the statuary of white barn owls watching from their perches. In spring, the eaves of the old warehouse hummed with the wings of countless barn swallows building their mud nests.

Simas Ranch

The Nunes family ran a large dairy ranch in the valley that later became the Audrey and Tony Simas Ranch. More than 1,000 acres, it was the valley's largest ranch.

In 1956, the land boom changed much of the valley from cattle

grazing and tomato fields to tract homes. The Antone Rose family came from the Azores in the 1880s and settled on the west side of Pinole Valley Road several miles from town. Antone and Florinda Rose farmed and raised cattle and three children—Antone Rose Jr., Mary Agnes Rose (Faria), and Manuel (Molly) Rose. Their farm became the site of the new Pinole Valley High School in 1967.

Many ranches

Families of other nationalities also operated large ranches or farmed around Pinole.

West of First Avenue (now Appian Way), was the Tom Fitzgerald family ranch. Of Irish descent, the education-minded Fitzgeralds had Pinole's first one-room school, a converted barn, on their property. Also west of Pinole was the Joseph Pfister Ranch, which extended from First and San Pablo avenues south to today's former Doctors

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PINOLE'S RURAL ROOTS: INTO THE 20TH CENTURY

Hospital. This beautiful ranch setting was featured in a county history lithograph in the 1880s.

Pioneer families

The Krieger family, of German background, had a huge ranch running from Pinole's western city limits north to the bay. Krieger's Point (now called Point Wilson) was named for the family.

Closer to town, and running north of San Pablo Avenue to the Santa Fe tracks, was the Brandt Ranch, later the Buckley Ranch. The cattle roaming the hills east of downtown Pinole belonged to the Ellerhorst family, also of German ancestry.

Many of the earliest ranches changed ownership and names as the new century dawned. After Samuel Tennent died in the late 1880s, his heirs sold the ranch

estate, including son James Tennent's impressive two-story home on a hill across from the old homestead. This home would later be sold to the Faria family.

Three generations of Farias would be reared in the old house before the landmark was relocated to downtown Pinole in 2005.

Bill and Margaret Faria were the home's last occupants, and their three daughters—Dolores, Deanna, and Margaret—grew up there.

Tomato kings

Bill Faria, Antone Lopes and Manuel Duarte pioneered tomato growing on their properties, contracting with the Heinz Cannery in Berkeley. Overturned tomato trucks with housewives filling their bags were not an uncommon sight on San Pablo Avenue.

The Samuel Tennent Ranch was sold to the Joe Silva family, which ran a dairy there. His daughter, Albertina, married Jimmy Ceselini, and they built a Spanish-style stucco home that stood until the 1990s.

Early economy

The old Tennent barn, slaughterhouse, and bunkhouse remained on the property for many years as reminders of the huge, 1,500-acre Tennent spread of the 1860s.

Farming and ranching and the many workers who came into town to spend their wages on supplies, barbers, and bar entertainment fueled Pinole's early economy.

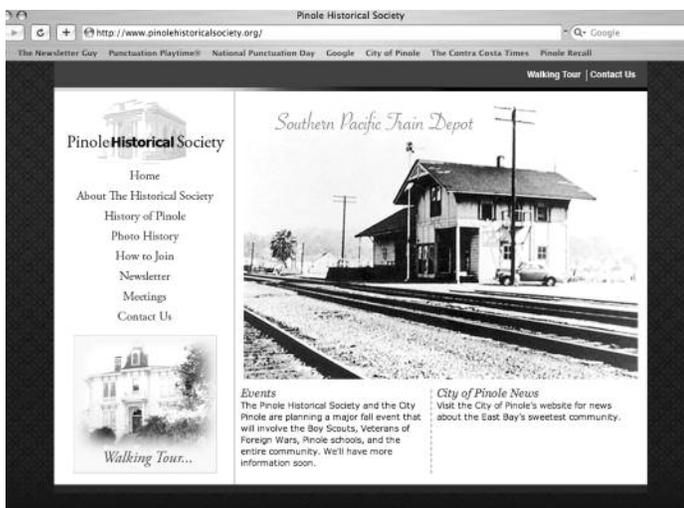
Though the farming culture declined after World War II, Pinoleans never really gave up their barnyard past. Well into the 1950s and 1960s chicken yards, crowing

roosters, and horseback riders along city streets were commonplace. Fresh eggs were sold door-to-door and every home had a garden patch and orchard.

Two remain

A fading glimpse of Pinole's once-rich rural history can be seen in the two remaining operating ranches just outside the city limits. Time stands still in the settings of the 100-year-old Mohring Ranch and barn in Pinole Valley and the older McLeod Ranch (once the Kate Tennent and Ellerhorst ranch) in Hercules.

Both are reminders of Pinole's romantic heyday of horse power, hay wagons, and hard-working ranchers.



Check the Pinole Historical Society website for information on PHS activities and events – and, of course, the history of the sweetest city in the East Bay.
www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org

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Historic Pinole: Pinole deputy captures cattle rustlers

Editor's note: This article is from the California Digital Newspaper Collection, Center for Bibliographic Studies and Research, University of California, Riverside <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/cdnc>.

These articles are featured weekly on Pinole Patch (pinole.patch.com). We thank Pinole Patch Editor Rob Shea for preserving and promoting the history of Pinole.

This article recalls a legendary law enforcer from Pinole, M.J. Scanlan. Deputy Sheriff Scanlan shows up in the archives as a superlative lawman often called upon to track down fugitives.

MARTINEZ, June 1—For some time past, cattle thieves have been helping themselves to fat cattle, belonging to Thomas Murphy, who has a ranch on Marsh Creek in the eastern part of this county, and a short time ago seven large

steers belonging to Hayes & Co. of the stockyards were stolen from Mr. Murphy's pasturage.

As soon as the firm was notified of their loss they sent word to Deputy Sheriff M. J. Scanlan of Pinole, and authorized him to take the trail of the thieves.

The latter, who is considered one of the best trailers of outlaws in this county, immediately went on his mission, and after a chase through portions of Alameda, Santa Clara, San Joaquin and Contra Costa counties, caught up with the thieves at Tracey (sic) and succeeded in arresting them.

The guilty parties proved to be August and Paul Harder, members of the firm of Harder Bros., butchers at Tracey (sic), and the stolen cattle had been slaughtered before Deputy Sheriff Scanlan reached there. He

secured evidence enough to warrant their arrest, and they were brought to Martinez this afternoon, and on examination were held to appear for trial on June 16 before Justice Smith of this place.

It is thought their arrest will stop the disappearance of cattle from Marsh Creek.

— From the June 2, 1894, edition of the San Francisco Call newspaper.

Editor's note: M.J. (Michael) Scanlan was a relative of Emily Scanlan, mother of Pinole Historical Society co-founder George Vincent.

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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.



Pinole Historical Society Director Emeritus Jack Meehan and Secretary Jo Ann Gannotti in front of the newly installed PHS exhibit, "Pinole . . . Then and Now," at the Pinole Library.

NEW LIBRARY EXHIBIT

Photographs from Pinole's past and present highlight the new Pinole Historical Society exhibit at the Pinole Library.

This exhibit joins our permanent exhibit featuring artifacts, photos, and memorabilia from our city's history. The PHS thanks the Pinole Library for the exhibit space.

"Pinole . . . Then and Now" features photos from the society's archives of buildings that existed at the turn of the 20th century—and recent photos of buildings on those sites today.

There are some surprises for visitors to this exhibit of the the-more-things-change-the-more-they-remain-the-same variety.

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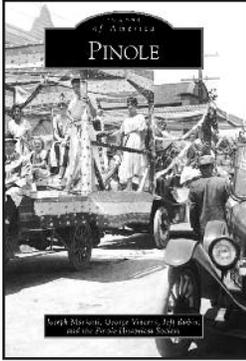
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LOCAL BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM PHS

The Pinole Historical Society stocks Arcadia books about Hercules, Rodeo, Richmond, El Sobrante, Crockett, Martinez, and Port Costa. And, of course, we have plenty of Pinole books in stock.

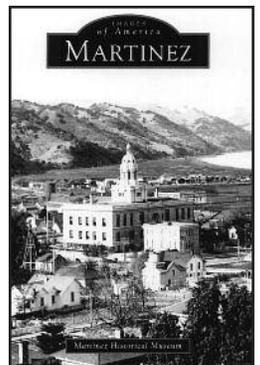
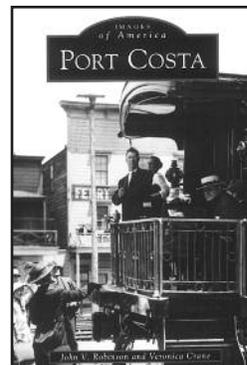
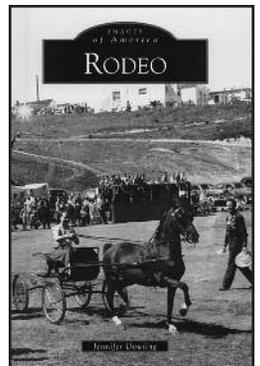
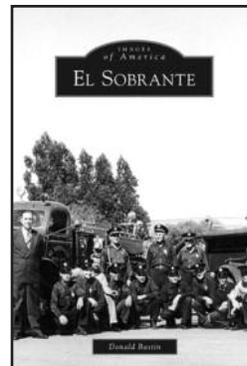
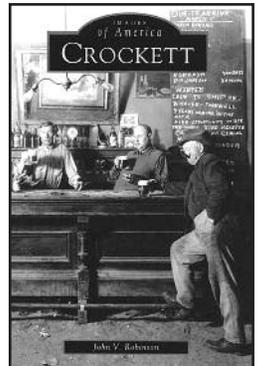
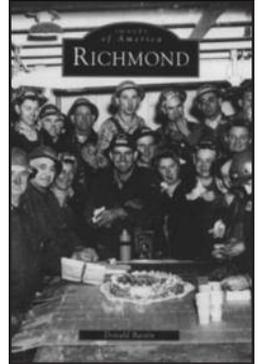
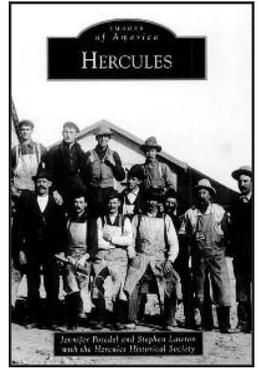
You may purchase one or more of these books from us at the Pinole Farmers' Market—we're there every other Saturday through the end of December.

The Pinole, Hercules, Richmond, and El Sobrante books retail for **\$24**, including 8.75% sales tax. The Crockett, Rodeo, Martinez, and Port Costa books are **\$22**, including 8.75% sales tax.

Or, you may order one or more by mail and we'll ship them to you. Send your order to **Pinole Historical Society, P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564.**

The prices via mail, including 8.75% sales tax and postage are: Pinole, Hercules, Richmond, and El Sobrante: **\$27**

Crockett, Rodeo, Martinez, and Port Costa: **\$25**



100 years ago — 1912

January 1: First running of San Francisco Bay to Breakers race (7.63 miles/12.3 km).
January 1: Sun Yat-sen forms Chinese Republic.
January 5: First National Hockey Association game.
January 6: New Mexico becomes 47th state.
February 14: Arizona becomes 48th state.
March 7: Roald Amundsen announces discovery of the South Pole.
April 15: Titanic, on its maiden voyage, sinks at 2:27 a.m. off Newfoundland.
May 7: Columbia University approves plans for awarding the Pulitzer Prize in several categories. The award is established by Joseph Pulitzer, former publisher of the *New York World*.
June 4: Massachusetts passes first U.S. minimum-wage law.

August 27: Edgar Rice Burroughs publishes "Tarzan of the Apes."
November 5: Arizona, Kansas, and Wisconsin vote for women's suffrage.

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