

Pinole Historical Society Newsbriefs



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

DR. JOSEPH MARIOTTI, 1931-2013

THANK YOU, DR. JOE

By George R. Vincent

The names of Martinez, Tennent, Fernandez, and Downer stand out in the historical record of "Old Pinole." Now, those names are joined by a founder of "New Pinole," Dr. Joseph Mariotti, who died October 5 at the age of 82.

The preservation of so much of Pinole's history and community recognition owes its existence to Dr. Joe and his wife, Gretchen.

They did not just *live* in Pinole; they *lived for* Pinole, becoming highly visible enthusiasts for the town they loved.

There was Gretchen, always smartly dressed, riding proudly down Tennent Avenue on horseback. There was flamboyant Joe in his 1920s jalopy or his electric car or red railroad caboose.



Dr. Joseph and Gretchen Mariotti.

They were not a conventional couple and were exactly the new tonic and what the doctor ordered for Pinole at the time of their arrival.

Their home in 1970

became the bayside Fernandez Mansion, which they saved from destruction. From there, they launched their campaign to beautify the city, revive its colorful history,

and to give a needed spirit of community pride to Pinoleans.

They set to work bringing back the glory days of their 1894 home. Gretchen renovated the rooms with period furniture and wallpaper. Joe brought back life on the outside by painting the structure and beautifying the grounds.

Each Christmas, Pinoleans could see from afar the colorful lights on the tall redwood tree by the house. The Mariottis reared their four young children in the old home, giving it a warmth of family joy and happy laughter not seen since the days the Fernandez children ran up and down the high, front stairs.

Most of all, Joe and Gretchen wanted the people of Pinole to know the home belonged to

Continued on page 4

WHERE TO FIND NEWSBRIEFS

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It's also posted on the PHS website.

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PHS CALENDAR

MEETINGS

November 13, December 11, January 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.

November 15 membership meeting: Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Building, 1301 Pinole Valley Road, Conference Rooms 1A and 1B, 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Program: Veterans Day program featuring World War II veterans and a movie about the USS Gambier Bay, an escort carrier sunk by the Japanese during the Battle off Samar in the Philippines. Pinole resident Herman W. Privette, who served on the Gambier Bay and survived its sinking, will speak.

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 are at the farmers' market every other Saturday from April through December.

PinoleHistoricalSociety

Board of Directors: Marcia Kalapus, President; Jeff Rubin, Vice President; Mary Drazba, Treasurer; Jo Ann Gannotti, Secretary; Norma Martínez-Rubin, Mary McMains, George Vincent.

Director Emeritus: Jack Meehan

Newsletter Editor: Jeff Rubin

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The PHS welcomes these new advertisers:

- **C&H Construction**, 2471 Clare St., San Pablo.
- **Freedom Mobility Home Medical Equipment (Unit-A)**, **Medina's Auto Restoration (Unit-B)**, and **K & L Automotive (Unit-C)**, all at 586 Parker Avenue, Rodeo.

PHS interviews on city of Pinole website

Miss one of our interview programs on Pinole Community TV?

Not a problem. The city's website now 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 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!

President's Message

Marcia Kalapus, President, Pinole Historical Society

SO LONG TO A SPECIAL FRIEND

Some of us are very lucky in our lifetime that we can meet a special person who makes a difference in what we do, say, or how we live our life. I am one of those lucky people who had the privilege of knowing a special person, Dr. Joseph "Dr. Joe" Mariotti.

I first met Dr. Joe in 1969 when he joined the medical staff at Brookside Hospital in San Pablo. He had recently moved his family to the Bay Area and completed his residency in orthopedics. Joe had studied podiatry, which is treating ankles and feet only, but decided to further his medical career.

In the 1960s there was an increase in new physicians of all specialty types coming to West Contra Costa County to practice their skills. This was mainly due to the explosive growth in population and construction. It soon became clear that the 250 beds at Brookside weren't enough,

so Doctors Hospital was built in Pinole.

Dr. Joe joined a medical group of other orthopedists—Dr. William Lyon, Dr. Joseph Ford, Dr. Charles Eberle, and Dr. Henry Eddington. They provided call coverage for each other and all of them were busy. I was the Evening Nursing Director on one of the

nights that Dr. Joe worked the ER. All new physicians took ER call, as this helped build their patient base.

There were so many accident trauma cases, some very serious. It was so overwhelming that night it looked like a war zone. These were the days before seat belts in automobiles.



Dr. Joe at his backyard work bench.



Marcia Kalapus

Extra staff had to come in to work. Dr. Joe needed all his triage skills that night, and calmly took care of the more severely injured so he could take patients to surgery more quickly.

Everyone liked Joe because he was even-tempered, and his patients loved him. He was well-respected by the medical staff, and served on many committees as a member and as the chairman.

He, like other physicians, didn't always like all the rules and regulations that they and hospital staff had to follow, and we had some heated discussions a few times over the years. My job required me to make sure rules were followed, and that is how I earned the nicknames "Mother

Continued on page 5

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www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org



THANK YOU, DR. JOE

Continued from front

the heritage of all the townfolk, and that the Mariotti family was only its caretakers. To this end, in 1972, they held their first open house, attracting more than 2,000 visitors.

In 1974, Joe and Gretchen founded the Pinole Historical Society. In 1976, they had the Fernandez Mansion dedicated "in perpetuity" as a California Point of Historical Interest. The mansion is also on the National Register of Historic Places, which Joe and Gretchen championed.

Joe's energy and creative outreach into Pinole's past as well as his community activism, knew no limits. Joe loved challenges.

In 1976, he organized the Martinez Adobe archaeological dig in Pinole Valley. Following this successful project came his eye-opening SLOP project (Ship Lifters of Pinole). Here he did the impossible, raising the long-sunken ship Carlotta, built by Bernardo Fernandez and named for his wife, from the bay mudflats. When my father's old garage was torn down in the 1990s

(built from the old Vincent Hotel lumber), Joe was there to retrieve the redwood planks.

Joe owned the old Pinole Reservoir atop a hill near the I-80 freeway. Here he proudly flew the American flag for all to see. Joe was also very patriotic. Today, the flag flies at half-mast in his memory.

A lasting tribute to Dr. Joe, one dear to his heart, would be for Pinole to soon have a dedication for a "Dr. Joseph Mariotti Museum." The name has a nice ring to it.

Thank you, Dr. Joe,

and your family, from a grateful historical society and public.

In 1973, Jessie Howe Clark, Pinole's pioneer historian, wrote a poem celebrating the saving of the Fernandez Mansion by the Mariotti family.

A few of her lines are a fitting epitaph in honoring Dr. Joe:

Newcomers here can always learn/From the footsteps of the past/ Where constant work and sturdy wills/Made history that will last.



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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.

So long to a special friend

Continued from page 3

Superior, "General Patton," and "The General." Those were the good old days!

In later years, I learned about Dr. Joe's love of Pinole's history and his dedication in trying to preserve the city's old buildings and artifacts.

The past several years, being part of the Pinole Historical Society and working with Dr. Joe, have been a real joy. I will always remember Dr. Joe—the person, the family man, the doctor, the historian, the environmentalist, the politician—as just being a really nice, special person to know, someone who made a difference in my life.

The Mariotti family requests donations in Dr. Joe's memory be made to the Pinole Historical Society, P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564, or the Pinole Garden Club, P.O. Box 25, Pinole, CA 94564.

PHS PRODUCTS FOR SALE

We have postcards, greeting cards, and refrigerator magnets—featuring photos from our book, *Images of America: Pinole*. You can order them at www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org.

To order on-line, print the order form and mail it with your check to the Pinole Historical Society, P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564.

All of the photos in our book—and others in our collection—are available for purchase in any size you want. These items make great holiday gifts. For more information, contact us at (510) 724-9507 or info@pinolehistoricalsociety.org.

Pinole Historical Society
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(PINOLE RESIDENCY NOT REQUIRED FOR MEMBERSHIP)

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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.

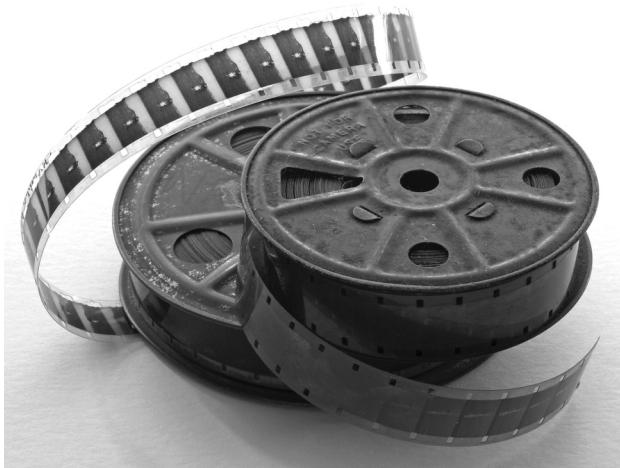
Nearly everyone has taken home movies. That makes everyone who has taken film a historian.

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



GOT HISTORY?

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How 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.

6TH ANNUAL VETERANS DAY MEMORIAL AND FLAG RETIREMENT CEREMONY NOVEMBER 11

The Pinole Historical Society will conduct its sixth annual Veterans Day Memorial and Flag Retirement Ceremony on Monday, 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, several

local schools, the Pinole Valley High School Marching Band, Pinole Youth Commissioners, and elected officials — plus a few surprises. Songs, speeches,

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

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

Hostilities between the Allied nations and Germany that ended World War I went into effect at 11 a.m. on November 11, 1918 — the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

For that reason, Veterans Day in the United States is commemorated at 11 a.m. on November 11 every year.

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Back in the day

By George R. Vincent

EARLY PINOLE WAS A DANGEROUS PLACE TO LIVE

By George R. Vincent

(Part 1)

Kathryn Burns Plummer was the granddaughter of Samuel J. Tennent and Rafaela Martinez Tennent.

Her mother was Anna Tennent, youngest of the 10 Tennent children, born in 1865 on the Tennent Ranch in the northern part of Pinole Valley.

Kathryn grew up listening to tales about life on Rancho El Pinole. Her mother's brother, James Tennent, was the source of much of her family folklore.

James Tennent's family home (most commonly

known as the Faria home), was moved in 2005 to downtown Pinole to one day house a city museum.

Kathryn Plummer wrote down the stories handed down to her from the Martinez and Tennent descendants about Rancho El Pinole in the 1820s to 1860s. Her accounts vividly trace the hardships and dangers in everyday life faced by Pinole pioneers.

Pinole Valley in the that era was described as a wild and remote valley with high encircling hills and herds of grazing elk and cattle, grizzly bears, and marauding Indians. It was into this unfriendly setting that her stories begin.



Anna Maria Tennent Burns (middle) and Kathryn Burns Plummer (right), ca. 1890.

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"Calves had been taken from the wild cows during a roundup and the cows were very angry. One cow hid in the bushes in a narrow canyon.

"As Dr. Samuel Tennent rode home from Oakland to his ranch after dark, the cow surprised and attacked the horse. The cow drove her horns into the horse's heart, narrowly missing Dr. Tennent's leg. The horse fell and died instantly.

"Dr. Tennent took off his saddle and put it up in a tree to save it from wolves and continued home on foot."



Rafaela Martinez Tennent



Dr. Samuel Johnson Tennent

"There were no fences back then. The men were preparing to slaughter the cattle at rodeo time.

"Once a year a rodeo was held (the town of Rodeo was named after the place in El Rancho Pinole where the cattle roundup took place) to

separate calves from their mothers in order to brand and earmark the calves.

"The wild cattle of early California became so angry they would stand still with feet planted firmly on the ground, and shake so with rage

until they fell dead."

"A child was about to be born to Dr. Tennent and Rafaela Tennent. The boys, Jim and John Tennent, were sent on the horse Caribou to the

Pinole Valley adobe home of Vicente and Nieves Martinez (Vicente was Rafaela Tennent's brother). Vicente's wife, Dona Nieves Martinez, was a midwife.

"The boys took with them a side of mutton as
Continued on page 10



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EARLY PINOLE WAS A DANGEROUS PLACE TO LIVE

Continued from page 9

a gift. Anna Maria Ten-
nent was born on Octo-
ber 12, 1865."

attacked him and tore
him to pieces. One bear
killed on the Pinole Ran-
cho weighed over 1,200
pounds."

"The wild Indians from
Mt. Diablo and the San
Joaquin Valley used to
steal horses from the
ranches.

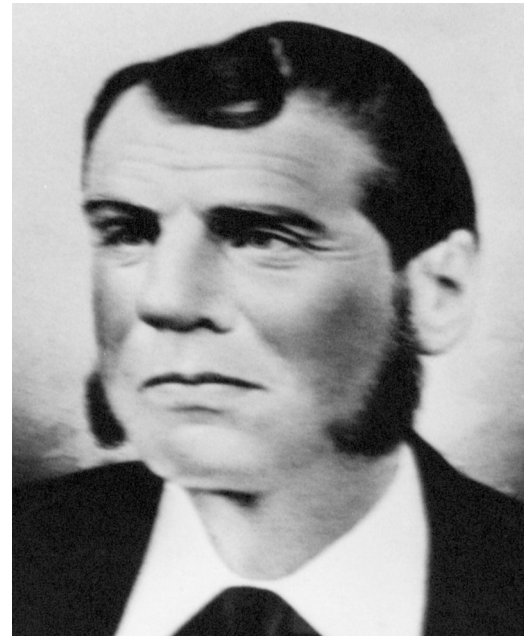
"They cut through the
adobe-brick corrals with
a hair rope called a
mecate. The rope was
made from a horse's
mane.

"Jose Martinez (oldest
son of Don Ygnacio Mar-
tinez) and a companion
followed the Indians who
had stolen the horses.
Jose's friend was killed
by the Indians and Jose's
horse was also killed.

"He got away on a wild
horse called a mesteno
(mustang). Having no bri-
dle, he got away by guid-
ing the horse by slapping
him on the nose."

"In 1848-1850, this
was the land of many
Osos (grizzly bears).

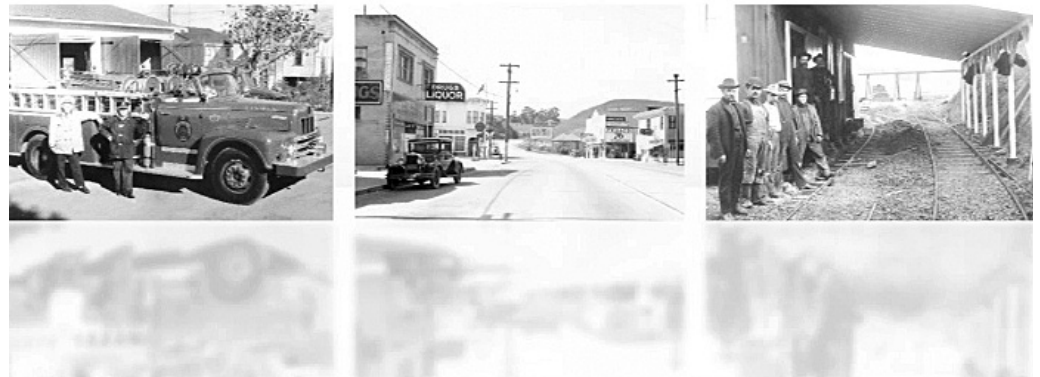
"A man was hunting
quail in a side canyon
and came upon a large
grizzly bear and shot him
with birdshot. The bear



Vicente Martinez

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Please send your submissions—maximum length 500 words—and any photos to illustrate your article, to info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org.

Newsbriefs is published quarterly (January, April, July, October). Submissions are due the first Friday of the preceding month.

E-News is published the first or second day of every month. The deadline is one week before publication.

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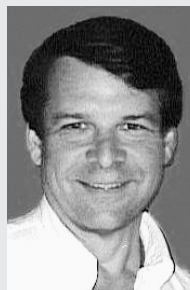
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SURVIVOR OF WORLD WAR II SHIP SINKING TO SPEAK AT NOV. 15 PHS MEETING

On October 25, 1944, the USS Gambier Bay (drawing below), a U.S. Navy Casablanca-class escort carrier, was sunk in the Battle off Samar in the Philippines after helping to turn back a much larger attacking Japanese surface force.

The majority of her nearly 800 survivors were rescued two days later by landing and patrol craft dispatched from Leyte Gulf. Sharks killed many drifting

crew members.

Among the Gambier Way survivors was Herman Privette Sr., an El Sobrante resident (photo right). In commemoration of Veterans Day earlier in the



week, Mr. Privette will be the guest speaker at the Pinole Historical Society's Friday, November 15, membership meeting and program in Conference Rooms 1A and 1B of the Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Building, 1301 Pinole Valley Road, from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

The program will include the viewing of a 30-minute DVD on the sinking of the Gambier Bay, part of the National Rifle Association's "Life of Duty" Series.

PHS meetings are free and open to members, their guests, and the public. Please join us.

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In memoriam

Don Henry Castro: August 15, 1936 – August 29, 2013 (age 76)

Pinole native, community activist and local businessman, Don was one of four children of Henry and Mary Castro of Pinole. He grew up in the friendly schools, streets and faces of small-town Pinole, which he loved.

A graduate of Richmond Union High School with service in the U.S. Navy, Don was energetic in promoting Pinole as a great place to live and dine. In 1968, he and a partner opened the popular C&C Continental Deli. For 35 years, Don, his wife Ida, and family treated Pinoleans to their specialties of family-style meals seasoned with Don's humor and Ida's cheerful smiles.

Don's continual pride in Pinole was reflected in his tireless charitable and civic-minded works in such organizations as the Pinole Jaycees, Rotary, Lions and Exchange clubs, among others.

His love for sports began early on the Fernandez Park field. He later coached baseball teams and also loved golfing, the Raiders, his Lake Tahoe retreat and fishing in the bay for stripers.

He dedicated himself to giving the young people of Pinole a voice and place in their community. To this end he promoted and served on the Pinole Youth Commission. His efforts resulted in the city saving the old downtown Mechanics Bank building as the Pinole Youth Center.

If a person's life can be measured by the many who loved and befriended him along the way, Don certainly met and exceeded the test. His standing-room-only memorial service was testimony to the fact that he personally knew everybody in town and out.

The shared times and special memories given by grandchildren and friends showed the depth of how well Don combined love of family and community. He always knew and greeted you by name, and not in a shy voice.

Don was a young Pinole old-timer whose big heart will be missed. Always a "Pinole boy," he was a rare individual who could always count the number of his friends by the population figures on the city's "Welcome to Pinole" signs.

Don is survived by Ida, two children, and four grandchildren.

– *By George R. Vincent*



Don Castro

The Pinole Historical Society honors the memories, families, and contributions of long-time Pinole residents who have passed away this year:

• **Larry (Hughes) Mariero:** 1940 – 2013 (age 73). Pinole native who passed away in Jackson, CA.

Larry grew up in old-town Pinole in his family home on Pinole Valley Road. Most of his childhood was spent playing in Pinole Creek and Fernandez Park. He attended K-8th grades in Pinole-Hercules schools #1 and #2 and was a 1958 graduate of the new DeAnza High School.

As a child, Larry will be remembered for dressing up as Uncle Sam accompanying the American flag in the Pinole Holy Ghost parades.

Larry served three tours in Vietnam as a Master Sergeant in the United States Army.

• **Raymond Bernard Spellacy:** April 29, 1929 – June 15, 2013 (age 84). Long-time resident and popular Pinole businessman.

Born in San Francisco and schooled at U.C. Berkeley and University of Wyoming School of Pharmacy. Ray and his wife, Dorothy, opened the Pinole Valley Pharmacy in 1960 at the site now occupied by Trader Joe's.

Ray was Pinole's genial pharmacist for 30 years. On his counter, Ray proudly displayed an old prescription written by Pinole's beloved Dr. Manuel Fernandez. He trusted the public to only admire it, until one day it walked away.

Ray attended St. Joseph's Church and was very involved in its activities. He also served as president of the Contra Costa Chapter of the California Pharmacists Association.

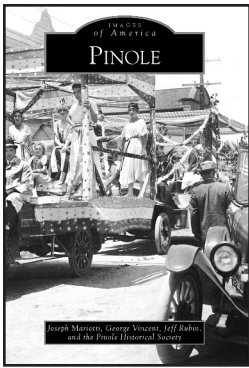
Ray is survived by three daughters and one son, four grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

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LOCAL HISTORY BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM PHS

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

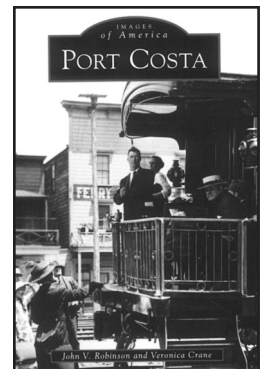
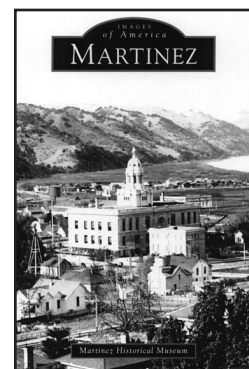
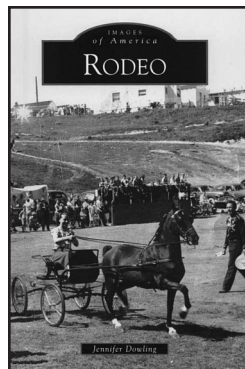
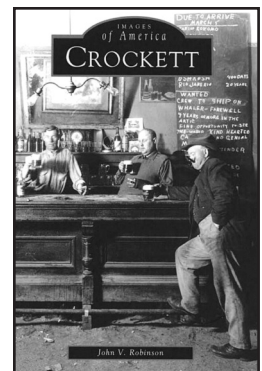
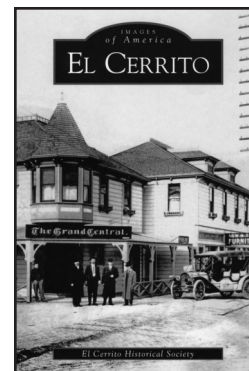
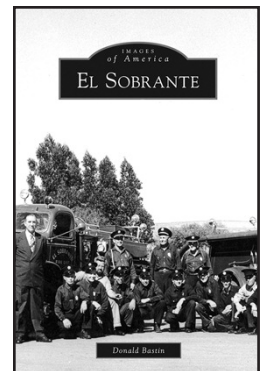
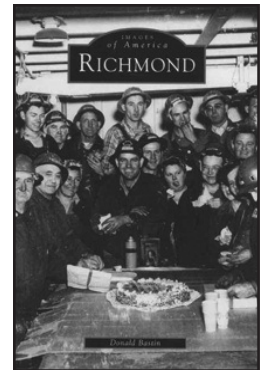
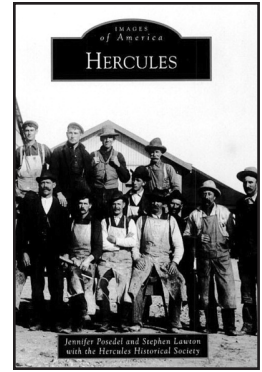
You may purchase one or more of these books from us at the Pinole Farmers' Market—we're there every other Saturday from April through December.

Pinole, Hercules, Richmond, El Sobrante, and El Cerrito books are **\$24**, including 8.75% sales tax.

Crockett, Rodeo, Martinez, and Port Costa books are **\$22**, including 8.75% sales tax.

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.**

Mail prices, including sales tax and postage are: Pinole, Hercules, Richmond, El Sobrante, and El Cerrito: **\$27**; Crockett, Rodeo, Martinez, and Port Costa: **\$25**



50 years ago — 1963



November 7: New York Yankee Elston Howard is first African-American ever voted American League Most Valuable Player.

November 18: The first push-button, touch-tone telephone is made available to AT&T customers.

November 22: President John Fitzgerald Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas, Texas. Lyndon Baines Johnson sworn in as the 36th president. All television coverage for the next four days is devoted to the assassination, its aftermath, the procession of the horsedrawn casket to the Capitol Rotunda, and the funeral of President Kennedy.

November 24: Lee Harvey Oswald, assassin of President John F. Kennedy, is shot dead by Jack Ruby in Dallas, Texas, an event seen live on national television.

November 26: The 29th Heisman Trophy is awarded

to Roger Staubach, quarterback from the U.S. Naval Academy.

November 29: Beatles release "I Want to Hold Your Hand."

December 7: Tony Verna, a CBS-TV director, debuts an improved version of instant replay during his direction of a live televised sports event, the Army-Navy football game in Philadelphia. It was the first instant-replay system to use videotape instead of film.



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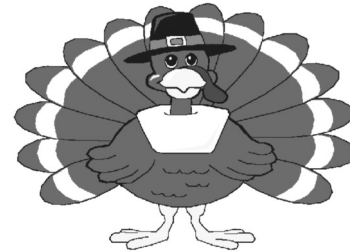
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