

Denial of Faria House restoration and museum is a stain on the city's credibility and reputation

— See President's Message, page 3

Pinole Historical Society Newsbriefs



P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564

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info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org

VETERANS DAY CEREMONY RETURNS NOVEMBER 11

After a one-year hiatus due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Pinole Historical Society will present the 13th Veterans Day Memorial and Flag Retirement Ceremony on Thursday, November 11, from 11 a.m. to noon in Fernandez Park.

We hope you can attend as the society and the City of Pinole honor the brave men and women who have served — and continue to serve — to protect the freedoms we treasure.

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

Boy Scout Troop 86, West Contra Costa Girl Scouts, St. Joseph School students, Pinole Valley High School Marching Band, Pinole Valley High School Concert Choir, and elected officials, including Pinole Mayor Norma Martínez-Rubin, among others, will participate.

Please bring your worn and tattered American 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 or e-mail info@pinolehistoricalsociety.org.

*PVHS cornet player
Aidan Parsons blows taps
on Veterans Day in 2019.*



Published quarterly by the Pinole Historical Society

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Newsbriefs 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.

**Call to see if business is open.

If you're interested in advertising, contact **Jeff Rubin at info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org or (510) 724-9507.**

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THE PINOLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS A REGISTERED 501(C)(3) NONPROFIT. TAX ID: 23-7441316

PHS at Pinole Farmers' Market

The Pinole Historical Society has resumed its booth at the Pinole Farmers' Market. We'll be there twice every month through December.

Please stop by and share some Pinole history — and tell us how you've been since we last saw each other.

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President's Message

Jeff Rubin, President, Pinole Historical Society and Pinole History Museum

MUSEUM DENIAL IS SELF-INFLICTED WOUND ON THE CITY OF PINOLE

The value of history is that it teaches us the importance of knowing how and what came before us so we understand why life and circumstances are like they are today.

History can be especially instructive for the many new families and residents of our city, and for young adults in their 20s and 30s who were very young back in the day and are now becoming politically and socially involved in our city. They may not be aware of how events that took place more than a decade ago are shaping the political and social climate in the city today.

History can also help explain why the historic Faria House sits unoccupied and slowly rotting, and why, despite decades of promises by previous city councils, there is no museum in the City of Pinole.

History connects the dots. I'll connect a few historical dots here.

THE PINOLE RECALL

In 2007-08, there was a recall election targeting three candidates on the Pinole City Council; one of them, David Cole, resigned. The others, then-mayor Maria Alegria and Stephen Tilton, a new councilman only 14 months into his first term, were recalled in a special election on February 5, 2008, both with nearly 60% of voters removing them from office.

There's not enough space here to discuss all the reasons for the recall; you can learn about one of the few successful recalls in California's history at www.PinoleRecall.com.

CONCERNED CITIZENS OF PINOLE

The Pinole Recall was sponsored by the Concerned Citizens of Pinole (CCOP), a grass-roots community group advocating for quality-of-life issues in Pinole. CCOP was organized as a General

Purpose Committee with the California Secretary of State. I was part of that group. I remained deeply involved until CCOP was dissolved a few years ago.

On February 5, 2008, Ivette Ricco ran in the special election to fill the 2½ years remaining in Cole's council term; she lost by more than a 2-1 margin to Debbie Long.

Eight months later, in the regular election on November 4, 2008, Ricco ran for treasurer against the incumbent, Judy Lee.

She lost by nearly a 2-1 margin. Alegria also ran in that election, trying to reclaim her council seat. She got less than 20% of the vote and lost.

In 2012, Ricco ran for the council again, this time against incumbents Pete Murray and Roy Swearingen for one of two seats. She finished third. Also in 2012, Alegria ran for the BART Board of Directors, to represent District 7. In a four-person race, she finished third overall; she also finished third in Pinole.

In each of those elections, CCOP opposed Ricco's and Alegria's candidacies.

POLITICAL SHENANIGANS

In recent years, Ricco founded Pinole 4 Fair Government (P4FG), registered with the California Secretary of State as a political organization. Among Ricco's P4FG supporters and confidants are recalled former Mayor Maria Alegria and recalled former Councilman Stephen Tilton. Much of the opposition to

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Jeff Rubin



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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.

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the museum comes from P4FG and its acolytes.

It's no wonder then, that because of my involvement in CCOP, and now as president of the Pinole Historical Society and the Pinole History Museum, Ricco and her P4FG followers oppose the Faria House renovation and its use as a museum.

(Ricco sent the Pinole History Museum a \$50 donation in July 2020

with a note in the memo line that read, "I support the museum." Then, she continued making public comments against the museum project during city council meetings. The Pinole History Museum board returned her money.)

It's no stretch to surmise that opponents of the museum — most of whom have written or spoken in public or posted comments on social media and were also opposed to the Alegria/Tilton recall — are engaging in retribution stemming from the recall.

It's also no coincidence that P4FG endorsed and supported the three council members who voted against the Faria House renovation in June 2021 — Anthony Tave, Vincent Salimi, and Devin Murphy. It seems Ricco and Alegria, though un-elected, want to control politics in Pinole by controlling the members of the council through P4FG's support.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

For nearly two decades the city has declared its intent to create a museum in the Faria House. This was documented in a report presented to the council in June 2021 by City Attorney Eric Casher.

The council raised expectations in the community that this was going to happen. The museum board has raised tens of thousands of dollars because previous councils — several times — led the community to believe this project was going to be a partnership



The Faria House sits empty, and deteriorating in Heritage Park on San Pablo Avenue.

between the city and the museum board.

There were 240 people at the last Pinole History Museum fundraising dinner in 2019. Even without a facility, the museum still has more than 200 donors.

Pinole community members have clearly showed their support for a museum.

In 2019-20, the city paid Interactive Resources, an architectural firm, approximately \$100,000 for renovation

plans and a cost estimate for the Faria House project **specifically** for its use as a museum. The city's intent was clear.

THREE RENOVATION/MUSEUM VOTES

The council has considered a resolution to renovate the Faria House three times, once in November 2020, and twice in June 2021.

On June 15, 2021, during the first of two sessions to finalize the 2021-22 budget, 70 people wrote to the council supporting a museum in the Faria House, and the council included the renovation in the 2021-22 budget. Mayor Norma Martínez-Rubin and Councilmembers Vincent Salimi and Maureen Toms voted YES. Tave and Murphy noted NO.

On June 29, when the council met to approve the budget, Salimi rescinded his vote, citing an unspecified "common law" conflict of interest. He still has not disclosed what the conflict was.

The resolution to renovate the Faria House failed. Seventy public comments in favor of renovation, AND STILL THE COUNCIL VOTED AGAINST IT.

Whose interests are Tave, Murphy, and Salimi representing?

THE FIRST VOTE

In the summer and fall of 2020, Councilman Tave headed a council ad hoc committee established to

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MUSEUM DENIAL

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learn about the museum board's fundraising and exhibit plans — and negotiate a lease between the city and the museum board.

The committee consisted of Councilmen Tave and Pete Murray, City Manager Andrew Murray, Assistant City Manager Hector De La Rosa, and City Attorney Eric Casher. The committee negotiated with Pinole History Museum board members Jeff Rubin, Belinda Espinosa, and Diane Dyer.

All of the committee's questions were answered, the museum board provided the committee every document it asked for, and City Attorney Casher prepared a lease agreement for the museum board to approve.

Then Tave killed the deal by voting against an agreement he helped create. Tave negotiated in bad faith on behalf of the city.

How the deal came to be killed by one person is another matter.

NEGOTIATIONS

It was clear during the negotiations that Tave was against this project. He would not budge from his belief that the museum would not be able to sustain itself financially.

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Dolores Lucas, the eldest of the three Faria sisters, wrote and recorded a video on the Pinole Historical Society YouTube Channel:

<https://youtu.be/yuEau33nyn0>

It recounts 25 years of broken promises by the City of Pinole to establish a museum in her family's home, which the city purchased in 1996 and moved downtown Pinole.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO CONVINCING THE CITY COUNCIL TO HONOR ITS WORD, DO THE RIGHT THING FOR THE CITY, AND RENOVATE THE FARIA HOUSE — WHICH IT OWNS?

• **SPEAK AT COUNCIL MEETINGS.** Members of the public may submit a live remote public comment via Zoom video conferencing. Zoom also allows you to join the meeting by phone.

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Speakers will be asked to provide their name and city of residence, although providing this is not required for participation. Each speaker will be afforded up to 3 minutes to speak. Speakers will be muted until their opportunity to provide public comment. When the Mayor opens the comment period for the item you wish to speak on, please use the "raise hand" feature (or press *9 if connecting via telephone) which will alert staff that you have a comment to provide.

• **SEND EMAILS** to all five councilmembers:

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Despite providing the ad hoc committee members with the museum board's fundraising plans and income and expense projections comparable to other museums' financial reports — museums in Contra Costa County and those of a similar size in other areas of the state — Tave was not satisfied.

The city owns the Faria House and has to renovate it to the current state building code to use it for any purpose.

There are eight rooms in the Faria House; if the museum failed after a certain number of years and was forced to abandon the Faria House, the city would have a eight-room building with modern amenities suitable for occupancy by multiple businesses.

MORE STUNTS

On October 26, 2020, just a few weeks before the resolution to approve a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to renovate the Faria House and a lease with the Pinole History Museum came up for a vote on November 17, two P4FG supporters — attorney David Ruport and Franke Martinez, now a Pinole Planning Commissioner — formally challenged the eligibility of Councilmembers Norma Martínez-Rubin and Vincent Salimi to vote on the resolution, claiming each had a conflict of interest.

Norma Martínez-Rubin is my wife.

Both challenges were filed on October 26. A



Severely damaged second-floor room in the Faria House.

coincidence? I think not.

Recalled former mayor Alegria also made a public comment on November 17, the night of the vote, claiming Martínez-Rubin and Salimi had conflicts of interest.

At the time, both Martínez-Rubin and Salimi were likely YES votes and would have joined Swearingen and Murray in a 4-1 majority to approve the resolution.

It can take several months for the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC), the state agency that regulates campaign financing, conflicts of interest, lobbying, and governmental ethics, to investigate and rule on conflict-of-interest challenges.

It appears Ruport and Franke Martinez strategically waited until the last minute before the council was to vote to file their challenges.

NO CONFLICT

On the advice of City Attorney Casher, Councilmembers Martínez-Rubin and Salimi recused themselves from voting until the FPPC could rule, leaving only then-Mayor

Swearingen, Murray, and Tave to vote.

To pass, the museum resolution needed three YES votes. Swearingen and Murray voted YES, and Tave voted NO. The resolution failed.

(Murphy and Councilmember Maureen Toms replaced Swearingen and Murray on the

council in December 2020; Swearingen and Murray were termed out, Murphy and Toms ran unopposed. Toms has long supported the establishment of the Pinole History Museum in the Faria House.)

In the first quarter of 2021, the FPPC issued

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Having the right connections in the community makes all the difference. I grew up in the Pinole-Hercules area, where my ancestors settled more than 150 years ago, some farming the fertile soils from Pinole to Rodeo, while others helped build the communities we now call home. The benefits of my longstanding connection to and detailed knowledge of the community are the foundation for the outstanding service I deliver to my clients.



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its ruling — neither Councilmember Martínez-Rubin nor Councilmember Salimi has a conflict of interest and are permitted to vote on using the Faria House as a museum. Both could have voted YES in November 2020, and the Faria House renovation would likely be under way right now.

NAME CHANGE

Two P4FG supporters — David Rupert and Franke Martinez — eliminated the YES votes needed to pass the resolution to renovate the Faria House.

If this is P4FG's idea of "fair" government, a more fitting name for this organization would be "Pinole for **OUR** government," as it appears that's what their goal really is.

Are P4FG and its representatives on the council acting in the public's best interests, or is this merely payback for their past grievances?

FALSE NARRATIVE

The city owns the Faria House. The city has the funds to do this project, It's the city's responsibility to renovate it so it can be used. The architect's estimate is approximately \$1.2 million. That cost will likely rise every year.

The Faria House is a liability that's deteriorating more every year. Council approval to fund its renovation will transform it into an asset.

P4FG and its followers have created and spread



Interior room in the Faria House.

a narrative that this project is a million-dollar gift to the Pinole History Museum. THIS IS NOT TRUE.

The Pinole History Museum board has not asked the city for funds to build out the interior of the Faria House and create the exhibits.

The museum board will raise the money; if we don't, the city will have a usable building

to rent for office space or any use it desires.

PRIDE IN OUR CITY

I believe Pinole deserves a museum. It's clear that many people believe this, too.

This city's fascinating history is worth preserving for its residents.

We are a city that's dramatically changing, as evidenced by the diversity of its population.

There's new history being created, history that needs and deserves to be celebrated, chronicled, and preserved.

I know of no community that does not benefit by having a museum. A museum in the Faria House would be a source of civic pride and encourage downtown development. Now it's just a political issue.

And, that's disgraceful.



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(L-R) PHS President Jeff Rubin, Justin Trujillo, Mentor Mitzi Pérez-Caro, Devin Dinh, Lizzy Duarte, Mentor and Program Coordinator Dyana Wing So, and Pinole Mayor Norma Martínez-Rubin.

DIVERSIFYING PINOLE HISTORY COMPLETES FIRST PROJECT

On July 31, 2021, three Pinole Valley High School students shared the outcomes of their Diversifying Pinole History projects.

Justin Trujillo, Devin Dinh, and Lizzy Duarte each selected a minority-owned business in Pinole to research and produce a story about it.

Not only did their work enrich the Pinole Historical Society's digital archives by highlighting new voices which reflect our city's cultural diversity, but it also brings our community closer together through the journey of digital storytelling.

Students cultivated their creativity and communication skills. Small

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businesses got a spotlight on their business within a cultural and historical context.

Pinole benefits from youth civic engagement and history-making. A win-win for all involved.

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Help us preserve Pinole's history

The PHS welcomes donations of objects and memorabilia significant to the history of Pinole.

Though we do not have a museum, we have two exhibit spaces at the Pinole Library, and our volunteers 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 artifact you'd like to donate.

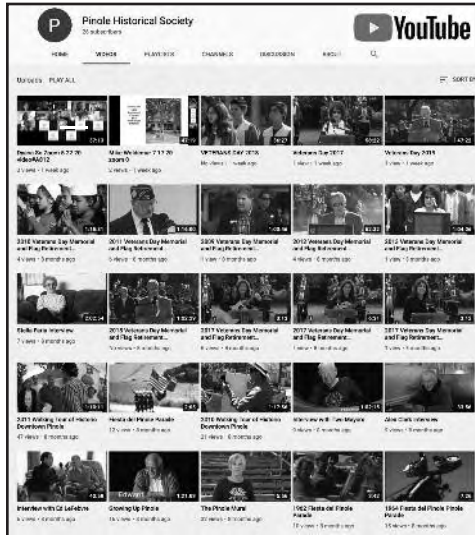
MORE VIDEOS UPLOADED TO PHS YOUTUBE CHANNEL

More videos have been uploaded to the Pinole Historical Society's YouTube channel, including Mike Woldemar's terrific July 2020 presentation on the many Pinole buildings he designed during his long career as an architect.

All of the programs we've recorded since 2008 are on our YouTube channel for your enjoyment. Our thanks to Pinole History Museum board member Alec Jason, who reformatted more than a decade's worth of PHS programs and uploaded them to YouTube.

Among the 30-plus videos include:

- **George Vincent's** two walking tours of historic downtown Pinole.



- **The Pinole Mural:** Wells Fargo Bank produced this video about the history of Pinole. The mural hangs in the bank's Pinole office on Fitzgerald Drive.

- **An Interview With Two Mayors:** Former mayors Jack Meehan and Tom Cutino tell how they saved Fitzgerald Drive — and the sales-tax dollars its shopping centers produce — for Pinole.

- **What's in a Name?:** How Pinole streets got their names, and the characters behind those names.

- **1962, 1963, 1964 and 1965 Fiesta del Pinole parades,** courtesy of PHS member Jim Payne.

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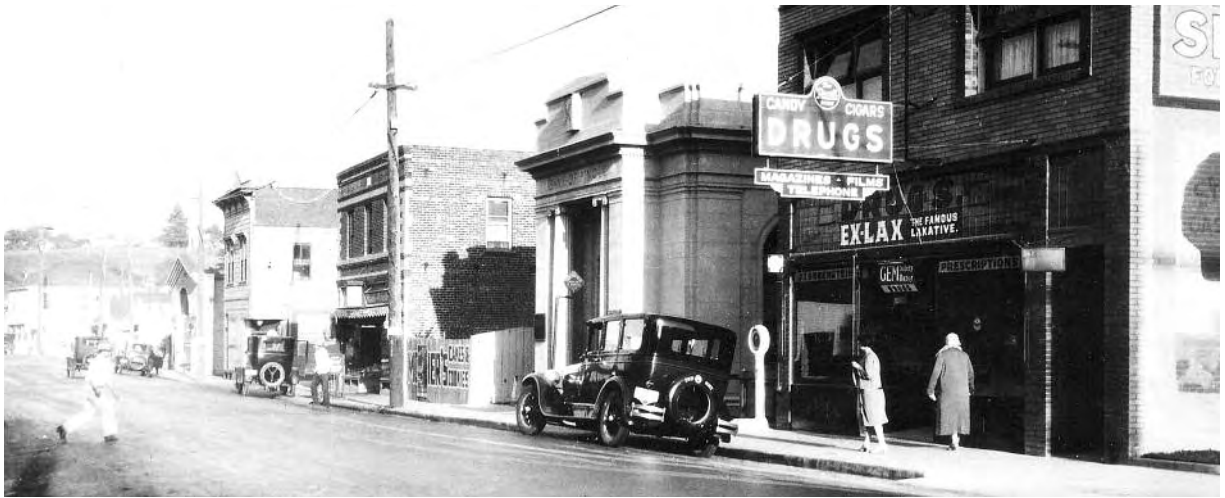
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SUPPORT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PHS BY BECOMING A MEMBER IN 2022

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.

JOIN THE PINOLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY (OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP) AND HELP PROMOTE AND PRESERVE THE HISTORY OF OUR CITY.

Please mail the membership application in this newsletter today!

Pinole Historical Society
2022 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(PINOLE RESIDENCY NOT REQUIRED FOR MEMBERSHIP)

PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION AND SEND THIS FORM TO PINOLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, P.O. Box 285, PINOLE, CA 94564

MEMBERSHIPS ARE FOR THE 2022 CALENDAR YEAR (EXCEPT LIFETIME MEMBERSHIPS)

NAME: (each member): _____

ADDRESS: _____

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CIRCLE ONE: Annual-new (\$30) Annual-renewal (\$30) Business (\$50) Life (\$150)

METHOD OF PAYMENT: Check (Payable to Pinole Historical Society)

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Credit Card # _____ Expiration Date _____ CVV _____

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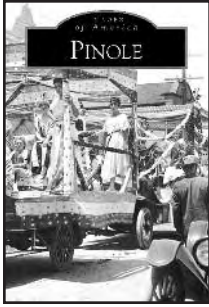


Gary Lalley

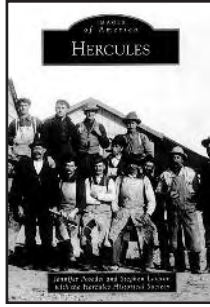
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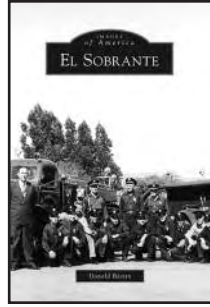
Pinole



Hercules



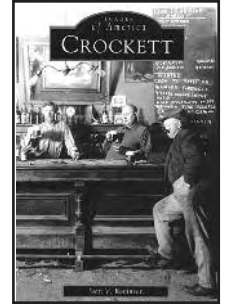
Richmond



El Sobrante



El Cerrito



Crockett

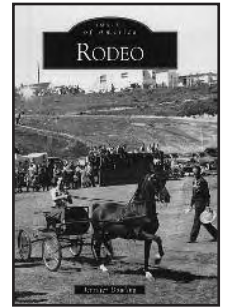
LOCAL HISTORY BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM THE PINOLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Pinole Historical Society sells these Arcadia books at the Pinole Farmers' Market every other Saturday through December.

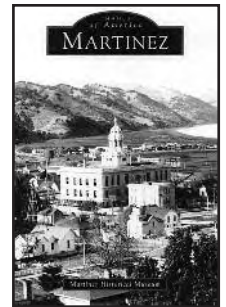
The Pinole, Pinole Through Time, Hercules, Richmond, El Sobrante, El Cerrito, Maritime Contra Costa County, East Bay Hills, Tilden

Park, and Napa Valley books are \$25, including sales tax. The Crockett, Rodeo, Martinez, and Port Costa books are \$23, including sales tax.

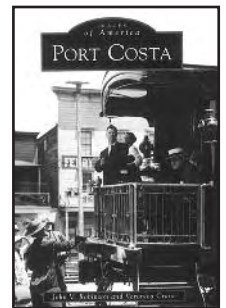
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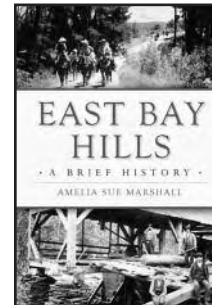
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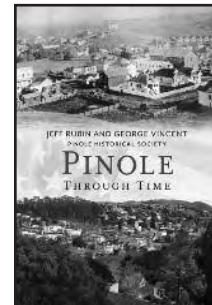
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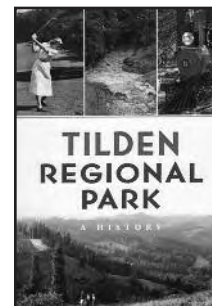
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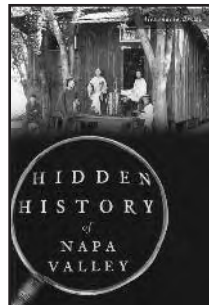
East Bay Hills



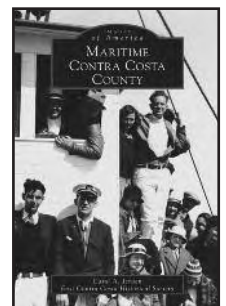
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