

# Pinole Historical Society Newsbriefs



P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564

[www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org)    [info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org](mailto:info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org)

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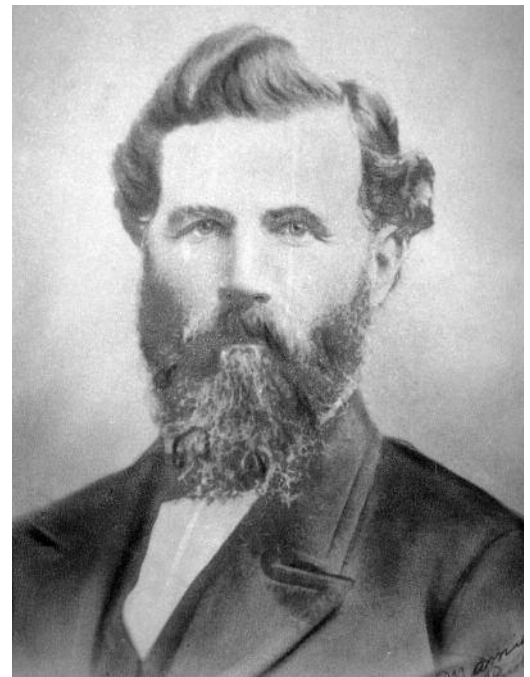
## MAY 12 PROGRAM

# THE LIFE AND TIMES OF BERNARDO FERNANDEZ

**T**he life of Bernardo Fernandez, one of the business and civic pioneers in the early history of Pinole, will be the subject of the Pinole Historical Society's Friday, May 12, meeting from 6:30 to 8 PM in conference rooms 2A and 2B of the Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Building, 1301 Pinole Valley Road. The public is invited to this free event. Refreshments will be served.

Susan Fernandez, the great-granddaughter of her family's patriarch, who arrived in Pinole in 1853 and was a giant of the business community for nearly 60 years until his death in 1912, will be the presenter.

The program will cover Bernardo's boyhood and early life in Portugal, his journey to America, and his life and marriage to Carlotta Cuadra.



*Bernardo Fernandez, age late '30s.*

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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, contact Jeff Rubin at [info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org](mailto:info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org) or (510) 724-9507.**

## PHS CALENDAR

### ONGOING

**May 12 program: "The Life and Times of Bernardo Fernandez."** Susan Fernandez, Bernardo's great-granddaughter, will present this program highlighting the life of one of Pinole's pioneers and leading businessmen. 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 10, June 14, July 12: 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.p.m.

**PHS booth at Pinole Farmers' Market.** We are at the farmers' market every other Saturday from April through December. Please stop by and say hello.

## PinoleHistoricalSociety

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

## 2017 PHS MEETING DATES

**September 8:** Author John Robinson presents the history of the Carquinez Bridge

**November 3:** To be announced

All meetings are held from 6:30-8 PM in conference rooms 2A and 2B of the Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Building, 1301 Pinole Valley Road.

For more information, call (510) 724-9507, e-mail [info@pinolehistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@pinolehistoricalsociety.org), or visit our website at [www.pinolehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.pinolehistoricalsociety.org).

## PHS VIDEOS ON CITY OF PINOLE WEBSITE

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

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

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

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

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

PHS program videos include:

- School Bell dedication.
- Japanese-American internment.

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

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

# President's Message

**Jeff Rubin, President, Pinole Historical Society**

## A MISSION FOR OUR MUSEUM

**I** will admit that I've never thought much of mission statements.

Add business plans to the list, too.

I've been more of a fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants type of guy who made adjustments as needed.

That's easier to do when you're running a one-person business.

But, when you're part of a larger organization, one that's looking to establish a community museum that needs to be many things to many people, it's helpful to have a road map.

A well-crafted mission statement can help your organization focus on its

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**The Pinole History Museum enhances the preservation and collection of artifacts that represent Pinole history and culture. Museum exhibits and research opportunities educate and inspire Pinole residents' community affiliation and civic pride.**

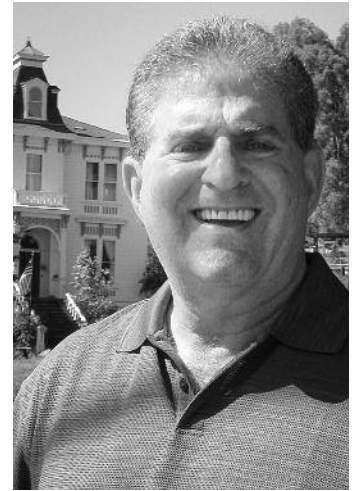
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core objectives, and will provide the framework to make decisions that will advance those objectives.

It's with this in mind that the Pinole Historical Society has been developing a mission statement for the Pinole History Museum, which will be located in the

Faria House on San Pablo Avenue.

One of our board members, Norma Martinez-Rubin, after researching several museum mission statements online, and with guidance from the *American Alliance of Museums' Alliance Reference Guide*, has



**Jeff Rubin**

developed a preliminary mission statement (at left) for our museum.

We are forming a non-profit corporation with a separate board of directors that will be responsible for museum development, including fundraising.

So, we're making progress.

It will take a couple of years, but when the Pinole History Museum opens it will be everything our mission statement says it will be.



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# In memoriam

## ALFRED ANTHONY RAMOS

December 10, 1932 — March 29, 2017

Age 84

Al was a Pinole boy through and through who loved his lifetime hometown.

The youngest child of Manuel and Olinda Ramos, Al was born into a Portuguese family who had immigrated to Pinole from Madera. He was raised on a ranch in the Pinole Valley with three sisters and two brothers. The ranch is where the new Pinole Valley High School is being constructed.

Al was no stranger to hard work. As a young man, he worked on the Hercules Powder Company's "Bull Gang," and spent summers on the dangerous job of handling horses on the hay presses and bailers in the Pinole Valley.

Al graduated from Pinole's old Hill School and from Richmond High School. It was at a high-school bus stop where he met his lifetime love, Shirley Campbell, at age 16. Shirley was a Pinole girl. They were married in 1954 at Pinole's new St. Joseph's Church and

**Al Ramos**



would have celebrated their 63d anniversary in August.

Al worked as a machinist and tool and dye maker before spending 25 years in the Alameda Fire Department.

He loved the outdoors and was an avid hunter and fisherman. He was a catcher for the Pinole American Legion and Tri-City League baseball teams that played at Fernandez Park. He belonged to the Pinole Sportsmen's Club and the Portuguese I.D.E.S. Society.

Al is fondly remembered by longtime Pinoleans for his welcoming smile and hugs, his millions of jokes and stories, and his talent for fixing things for friends.

His family was the most important part of Al's life, and he was devoted to them. He is survived by his wife Shirley, four children (Ross, Greg, Patti, and Brian), and six grandchildren. Al will be deeply missed on the streets and bayfront of Pinole.



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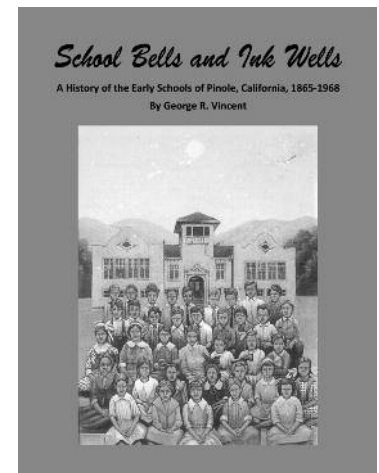
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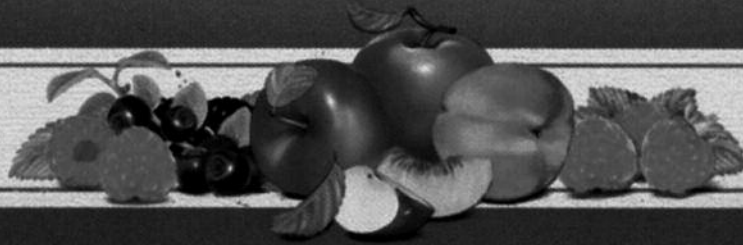
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# Fond Memories

**Stella (Freitas) Faria**

## CAN YOU LIVE WITHOUT YOUR IPHONE?

**T**he classic example of early communication was the children's toy that consisted of two tin cans or paper cups, strung together with a tautly held string.

Credit for the invention of the electric telephone was fiercely battled, but Alexander Graham Bell was successful in getting the first patent. In 1915, he made the first transcontinental call from New York City to his former associate, T. A. Watson in San Francisco.

Since that time, the telephone has evolved into an almost unbelievable hand-held electronic wonder.

My family could not

afford a telephone in our home until about 1935.

At that time, our telephone was mounted on a wall in the corner of the kitchen. It was a brown wooden box with a speaker and two brass bells on the front, a hand crank on the right side, and an earpiece attached to a cord that was placed in a bracket when you "hung up."

Service in Pinole was through a switchboard in a little room at the back of Louis Ruff's grocery store on the corner of Fernandez and San Pablo avenues. We had one of the more common party lines, and I still remember our number was 143W. It was not unusual

for someone to rudely listen in on, or interrupt, your conversation.

All calls out of the city were considered long distance, which we rarely made. My high school friend, Dorethi, lived in Richmond, and had extended service, so she always called me. We discussed homework, boyfriends, and social plans endlessly on the telephone.

Pacific Telephone and Telegraph became AT&T, and San Francisco's first automated dial system opened on March 23, 1929. The old wooden box became obsolete when the automated dial system came to our area. In the late 1950s, I



**Stella Faria**

worked in a law office as a records-clerk/receptionist and operated a small switchboard at my front desk. With four attorneys and four secretaries, I had my hands full at times, which made me appreciate those operators who handled that large switchboard in the back of Ruff's grocery store.

From the rotary dial phone of the 60s to the cellular revolution of the 80s to Apple's introduc-

*Continued on page 7*



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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.**

## CAN YOU LIVE WITHOUT YOUR IPHONE?

Continued from page 6  
 tion of the iPhone in 2007, followed by Google's Android in 2008, we are now living in a world of smart-phones. The following are just some of the things that your iPhone can do for you: take photos, play music, send and receive e mails, send texts, shoot

videos, navigate GPS, do math calculations, browse the Web, etc.

All of this can be done on a multi-touch screen on a 3" x 6" hand-held unit. At an Apple conference in 2015, CEO Tim Cook reported a total of 700 million iPhones had been sold to date. I am not one of those mil-

lions, and have warned my sons to not even think of gifting me one.

I learned how to drive a car at the age of 16, how to operate a TV in the 1940s, and struggled with my first computer in the early 90s. Electronic marvels were not meant for my 90-year-old brain, so I will just continue to

carry my simple little cell phone in my purse in case of emergency.

I know that my three-, five-, and seven-year old great-grandchildren would be happy to teach me the intricacies of the iPhone, but that is certainly something I can live without.



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# Back in the day

**George R. Vincent**

## HISTORY IS WHERE YOU FIND IT

**I**n the mid 1960s, a beach walker spotted some old books in the landfill at the Pinole waterfront. He pulled out three large ledgers from a pile of decaying documents. His curiosity saved some of Pinole's early history of vital records.

The books that he salvaged were city tax ledgers from 1910-1911 and 1925-1930. Apparently, some city official had disposed of a treasure-trove of Pinole's history while cleaning house, thinking that the books were just trash from the past.

This event took place at a time when Pinole was not yet awakening to

the necessity of preserving its disappearing heritage.

A few years later, I witnessed a similar destruction of Pinole memorabilia when the Hughes family home at the intersection of Pinole Valley Road and Henry Avenue was slated to be burned for fire-training purposes.

The Hugheses were early downtown residents. Two of Marie Hughes's sons were well-known Pinoleans.

As a child, Clifford was best man at a school mock wedding. His brother, Gordon, was killed in combat in World War II.

My cousin was on the Pinole Fire Department, and he let me go quickly

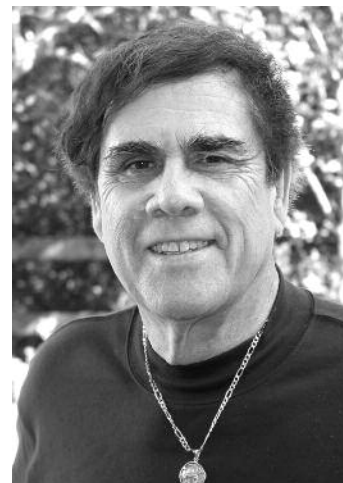
inside the Hughes home to look around. Room after room was covered in photos, letters, town newspapers, and debris of all sorts.

A whole family's history went up in smoke that day, and some of Pinole's past with it.

This was a time when few saw historical value in old things that stood in the way of progress.

What can be learned about Pinole's history from such artifacts as the books that were saved from bay waters?

The books are an economic history of the town's early dwellers shortly after incorporation and through the Great Depression.



**George Vincent**

Each Pinole family is enumerated with a description of exactly where they lived.

The lots and block numbers of residents are given with a dollar value of their real estate and improvements and tax assessments.

Of great interest are the names of the sections of Pinole where residents settled: El Rancho Pinole (valley area), Villa Sites, Fernandez

*Continued on page 9*

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# HISTORY IS WHERE YOU FIND IT

Continued from page 8

Addition, Cousins Addition, Nob Hill Subdivision, Town of Pinole, and Brandt Subdivision.

For example, John Collins in 1910 owned Lot 1 in Block J in the Fernandez Addition. His improvements were \$1,500. This would be the Klondike Saloon on Tennent Avenue. Collins died in 1909, but the family still lived above the business.

Another businessman, James Silvas, is listed in the Town of Pinole, Lot 1

in Block 3 with \$1,500 in improvements — The Golden West Hotel on the southwest corner of Tennent and San Pablo avenues.

In 1910, we learned how much the movers and shakers of early old town had as personal wealth.

Bernardo Fernandez had \$10,500 in improvements, Edward M. Downer (Bank of Pinole) had \$7,000 in improvements in the Cousins Addition, and Abraham Greenfield (Pinole Department

Continued on page 10

Assessment Book of the Property of  
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When Tax Paid	TAXPAYER'S NAME AND RESIDENCE	DESCRIPTION		Value of Real Estate	Value of Improvements	of Lots
		Lot	Block			
				\$	\$	\$
4/29	Marquez, Manuel R	In the Town of Pinole	6-7 8	225	950	
	Barrone, Mary To Geo. A. Barrone	In the Town of Pinole	1 9	175	125	
		See S. 390. With 1/2 years Exemption				
3/29	Deluca, Mary Antea	In the Town of Pinole	2 9	150	300	
4/29	Fernandez, J. B.	In the Town of Pinole	3 9	125	225	
4/29	Fernandez, J. B.	In the Town of Pinole	4 9	150	200	
4/29	Fernandez, J. B.	In the Town of Pinole	5 9	125	200	
4/29	Kokaris, Kostas	In the Town of Pinole	6 9	125	275	

Page from 1910-1911 city tax ledger.

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# HISTORY IS WHERE YOU FIND IT

Continued from page 9 Store) had \$2,435 in personal property wealth, excluding money.

On a personal level, I learned of the probable dates of the building of my family's homes, where they were located, and which members were living at that time.

For instance, my uncle, John Vincent, was still using the last name of Azevedo, before it was later dropped. And my grandfather, Charles Vincent, was still using the Portuguese first name of Seraphin before it was also later dropped for the English word Charles.

John Vincent in 1910 was living in the Fernandez Addition (by today's Fernandez Park. He had a

saloon worth \$600 in improvements in Block I, and a barn worth \$100 — The First and Last Chance Saloon. I found that later in 1925 he had \$1,500 in improvements on the same property. This was the family home in which I grew up. He built it in 1924 after the saloon burned down.

On my mother's Irish side, I found that her uncle, Michael J. Scanlan, was still living in downtown Pinole in 1910 in a home worth \$450 on Willow Street. He had been the town constable in the 1890s to 1900.

Of interest also is another Portuguese downtown businessman — Manuel R. Marcos and wife, Fugenia C. Marcos.

They had nine children — eight boys and a girl.

Their property in the Fernandez Addition, Lot 15 in Block E, had \$725 in improvements. This is in 1929, where Fernandez Park is today. We learn that his improvement was the Commercial Hotel, which was still in operation during the Great Depression.

Anyone doing genealogy will find these ledgers valuable. History is indeed where you find it, and sometimes it's in the oddest of places or circumstances.

I'm hopeful the day will soon come when these books will be found in Pinole's new museum for the public to enjoy.

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## Pinole **Historical** Society 2017 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 2017 CALENDAR YEAR (EXCEPT LIFETIME MEMBERSHIPS)

**NAME:** (each member): \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY/STATE/ZIP** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE:** ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

**E-MAIL (please!):** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Credit Card:     Visa     MasterCard     American Express     Discover

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVV \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL ENCLOSED:** \_\_\_\_\_

## You can help us preserve the history of Pinole

**A**lways 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](mailto:info@pinolehistoricalsociety.org) or call (510) 724-9507 if you have an object you'd like to donate.

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



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PASTOR JOHN WRIGHT

# PINOLE THROUGH TIME

MAIL TO: PINOLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, P.O. BOX 285, PINOLE, CA 94564

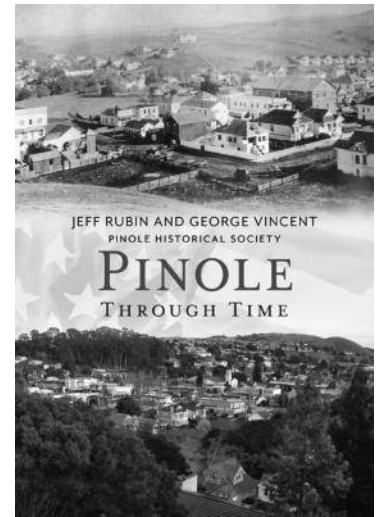
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 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone (    ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

# of books (\$30 per book, includes sales tax and postage) \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

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## SUPPORT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PHS BY BECOMING A MEMBER IN 2017

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!**

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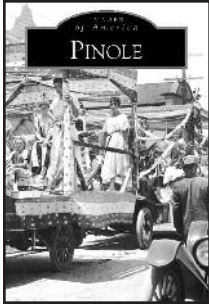


### Gary Lalley

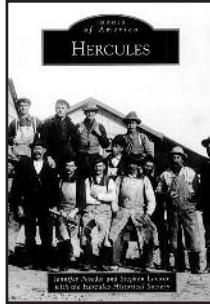
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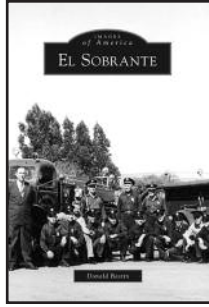
Pinole



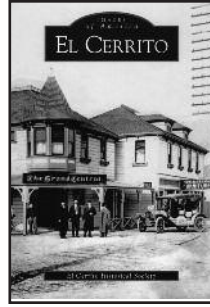
Hercules



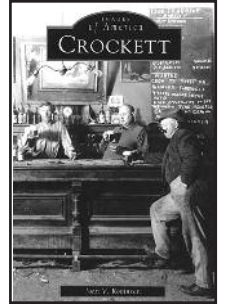
Richmond



El Sobrante



El Cerrito



Crockett

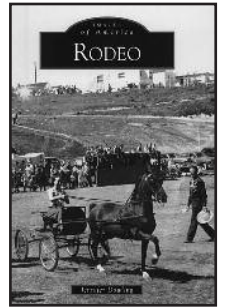
# LOCAL HISTORY BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM THE PINOLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Pinole Historical Society sells Arcadia books about Pinole, Hercules, Richmond, El Sobrante, El Cerrito, Crockett, Rodeo, Martinez, Port Costa, and Maritime Contra Costa County at the Pinole Farmers' Market every other Saturday through December.

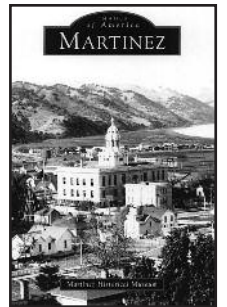
The Pinole, Hercules, Richmond, El Sobrante, El Cerrito, and Maritime Contra Costa County

books are \$24, including sales tax. The Crockett, Rodeo, Martinez, and Port Costa books are \$22, including sales tax.

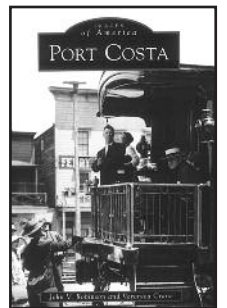
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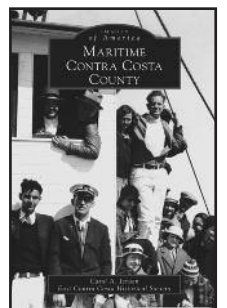
Rodeo



Martinez



Port Costa



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### METHOD OF PAYMENT

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## PINOLE THEN AND NOW

**T**he 1910 photo on the left was taken facing west on San Pablo Avenue, just east of the entrance to the Santa Fe train depot. San Pablo Avenue was narrow then, one lane in each direction for horse carts and the occasional automobile.

The home with the steeple-like cupola, built in



1895, belonged to William W. Mann and his wife, Elizabeth. Mann was a foreman at the California Powder Works.

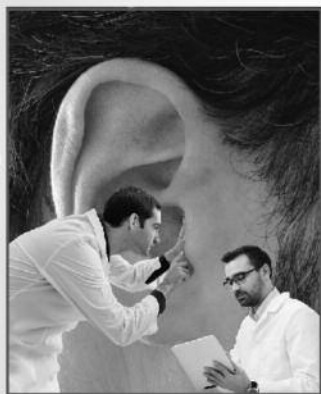
The now-developed hills in the background were unspoiled, save for a reservoir that diverted water from Pinole Creek to serve the needs of Pinole and Hercules residents and the powder works.



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