

Pinole Historical Society Newsbriefs

Spring 2018



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

— MAY 4 PROGRAM — WHAT'S IN A NAME?



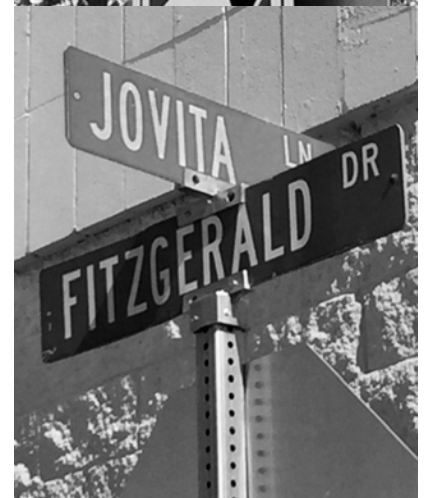
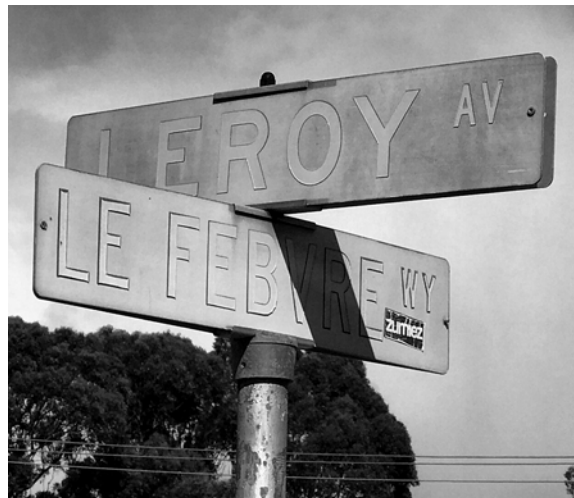
At the intersection of Leroy Avenue and LeFebvre Way lies the history of several generations of a family that has unselfishly contributed to the rich history of our city.

Did you know that an obscure street off of Fitzgerald Drive is named after a person whose actions were largely responsible for the fiscal health of the city?

Who were the people behind the street signs of Pinole?

Pinole Historical Society co-founder and historian George Vincent will explore the history of some of the people whose names

Continued on page 2



Published quarterly by the Pinole Historical Society

WHERE TO FIND NEWSBRIEFS

Pick up *Newsbriefs* at these locations:

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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 or (510) 724-9507.

PHS CALENDAR

ONGOING

May 4 program: "What's in a Name?" 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 9, June 13, July 11: 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.

PHS booth at Pinole Farmers' Market. We're at the Pinole Farmers' Market on alternate Saturdays through December (May 12, 26; June 9, 23; July 7, 21; August 4, 18; September 1, 15, 29; October 13, 27; November 10, 24; December 8, 22).

PinoleHistoricalSociety

Board of Directors: Jeff Rubin, President; Mary McMains, Treasurer; Jo Ann Gannotti, Secretary; Norma Martinez-Rubin, Carol White.

Directors Emeritus: Marcia Kalapus, Jack Meehan.

Newsletter Editor: Jeff Rubin.

2018 PHS MEETING DATES

May 4: "What's in a Name?"

September 7: Program to be announced.

November 2: Former Contra Costa Times columnist **Tom Barnidge** will be our speaker.

All meetings are held from 6:30-8 p.m. 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, or visit our website at www.pinolehistoricalsociety.org.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Continued from front page adorn the signs of Pinole's avenues, streets, roads, ways, and courts at our May 4 program.

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.

As with all of George's presen-



tations, be prepared for lots of never-before-heard stories and sharing from the audience.



President's Message

Jeff Rubin, President, Pinole Historical Society

MUSEUM PLANNING PROGRESSING

Planning for the Pinole History Museum continues to make progress. The City of Pinole issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to four architectural firms for the rehabilitation of the interior of the Faria House.

Two proposals were received. They are being reviewed, and the museum board of directors and the city have requested additional information from the architects.

The board is working on a business plan and voted to hire Firespring, an Omaha, Nebraska-based organization that helps non-profits with online fundraising, to design a website for the museum.

Firespring provides integrated marketing solutions to non-profits, specifically beautifully functional websites and all the tools needed to thrive, from donation processing to social media.

The board has also begun interviewing potential grant writers to advise and assist us in

applying for funds from public and private entities – state, federal, corporate, foundations, and endowments.



Jeff Rubin

The Pinole History Museum will have a booth at the June 24 car show. Please stop by and find out about the plans for the museum and how you can help make it a reality.

SUPPORT LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Several local events are on the schedule in May and June.

The annual **Pinole Garden Club Plant Sale** will be held Saturday, May 5, at the Pinole Farmers' Market. This is the club's major event every year.

Continued on page 4

Pinole's Classic CAR SHOW

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 3

The Friends of the Pinole Library Spring Book Sale will be held May 19 and 20 at the library, 2935 Pinole Valley Road.

From 10 AM to 4 PM on May 19, thousands of books will be organized into dozens of categories for easy browsing.

Current members, and new members who sign up that morning, may enter as early as 9 AM. A 10% discount will be applied to all members' purchases.

On May 20, the Friends will have a stuff-a-sack sale from 10 AM to 2 PM. Buy a double-strength bag for \$5 at the door and fill it to the brim with books.

The Pinole Classic Car Show will be held Sunday, June 24. Bob Kopp has taken over administration of the event from the Northern California Cruisers. This is one of the great events on Pinole's annual calendar.



The Pinole Garden Club will have its annual plant sale at the Pinole Farmers' Market from 9 AM to 1 PM Saturday, May 5.



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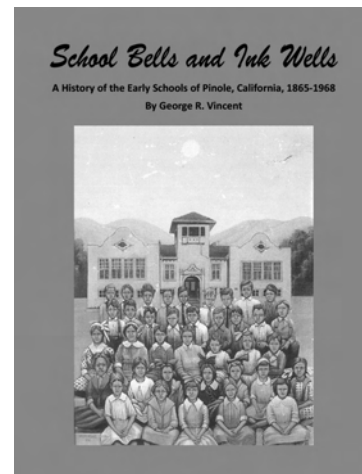
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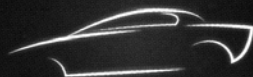
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The Pinole Historical Society promotes awareness and appreciation of history through preservation and education, and chronicles the city's heritage for current and future generations.

PHS VIDEOS ON CITY OF PINOLE WEBSITE

Miss 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 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, former 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.

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We're back at the Farmers' Market

The Pinole Historical Society is back at the Pinole Farmers' Market.

April 14 was our first day at our booth in 2018, and we'll be selling books, note cards, postcards, magnets featuring historical Pinole sites, and American flags and flag poles – and sharing the history of Pinole with everyone who stops by – on alternate Saturdays from 9 AM to 1 PM through December.

Thanks for your many years of support. Please stop by and say hello.



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Back in the day

George R. Vincent

A TORNADO TOUCHES DOWN IN PINOLE

In late October of 1945, Pinole was pounded by a fierce wind and rainstorm that generated a destructive tornado.

The local newspaper reported, "terrific destruction was left in its wake."

Pinole residents who had once lived in the tornado belt of the Midwest said the freak windstorm had "all the earmarks of a tornado with a warning sound before its arrival."

The outskirts of Pinole at the western city limits on both sides of San Pablo Avenue were most affected. The tornado, or "twister" as some Pinoleans called it, made its erratic way up to Tank Farm Hill outside of San

Pablo. It was here where Chevron had its huge oil storage tanks.

The tornado barnstormed through Pinole, doing thousands of dollars in damage, injuring several residents and scaring the life out of others. It was a miracle there were no fatalities.

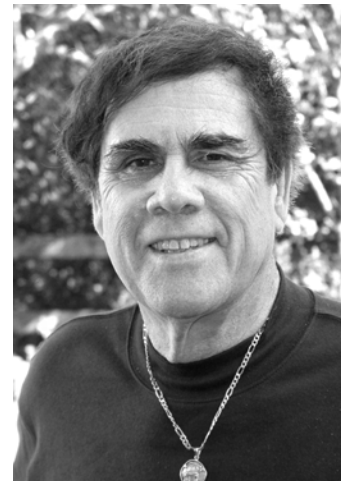
My grandmother Scanlan's ranch was on the north side of San Pablo Avenue extending down to the Santa Fe Railroad tracks. The area at that time was quite rural and I was quite young.

My family was visiting her and I was tired of hearing grown-ups talking, and like a little kid I was bored and wanted to go home. We were in the kitchen and it was raining

hard. I had nothing to do, so I looked out the big kitchen window toward the bay and watched it rain. It was then I saw a sight that would stay with me for the rest of my life.

A lightning flash lit up the outside, and in that moment I heard a roar and saw the large oak tree twist right out of the ground and the barn disappear into the air! Everything went dark in the house and we could hear power poles falling and sparking electrical wires were everywhere. We couldn't get to our old green Plymouth because of the darkness and the danger from falling poles and wires.

At that time, we didn't



George Vincent

know what had happened or the extent of the damage around us. We were so lucky the twister had narrowly missed my grandmother's home. Others, however, were not so fortunate.

At the Westman Ranch, a chicken house disappeared but the garage beside it remained intact. Sheets of corrugated iron from the roof of the chicken house were wrapped around trees and poles. The most

Continued on page 9



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A TORNADO TOUCHES DOWN IN PINOLE

Continued from page 8

damage in Pinole was at the popular nearby Hunters Inn along San Pablo Avenue. Hunters Inn was located near where The Embers restaurant is today.

The proprietor of the inn managed to save himself and his wife by throwing her to the floor and covering her with his body. The bar and its stools stood intact while the roof and walls were toppled. Farther up the avenue toward San Pablo and Tank Farm Hill, the huge steel high-tension towers were twisted like pretzels and "flapped like tilted hollylocks."

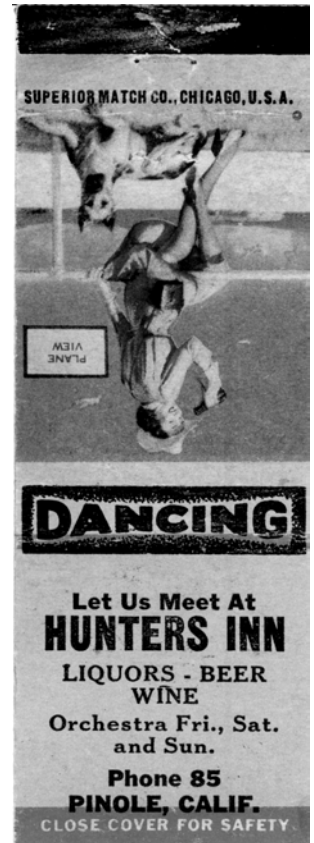
Hunters Inn was a dancing and entertainment club near the town city limits. It had an orchestra playing three nights a week and was a hugely popular gathering place for locals and nearby townsfolk, as

well. During the dark days of World War II, it was a place to boost morale for the war effort.

Its matchbook cover motto was, "Let Us Meet at Hunters Inn." Many tavern-goers did just that. And if you wanted to phone the inn to see what entertainment was there, you cranked the phone handle and asked for Pinole 85.

Unfortunately, two years after the tornado flattened a rebuilt Hunters Inn, another tragedy struck the place. In July 1947, a robbery occurred there at 3 A.M., after closing hours. The inn's owners, Mr. and Mrs. Rufus Morgan, were attacked and the inn robbed by an unknown person. Morgan was killed and his wife, Joyce, was seriously wounded.

Continued on page 10



The tornado severely damaged Hunters Inn, which was later the scene of a murder.



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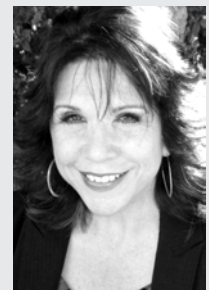
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A crowd gathered to watch the Wagon Wheel burn to the ground.

A TORNADO TOUCHES DOWN IN PINOLE

**Wagon Wheel
photos courtesy of
Carol de Young**

Continued from page 9

The invader also cut the telephone lines. When Joyce Morgan regained consciousness two hours later, she made her way across the street to the home of Tony Francis, who called then-Pinole Constable Eugene Shea.

The intruder was never caught and the case remains one of Pinole's most unsolved notorious criminal cases.

Many years later, Hunters Inn was remodeled into the Wagon Wheel, a popular dancing and drinking establishment, complete with nights of unique and colorful entertainment, with bouncers for the unruly.

The Wagon Wheel continued its contribution to Pinole's history into the 1980s.

EDITOR'S NOTE: On April 7, 1984, the Wagon



Wheel was burned to the ground during a training exercise that involved 40 firefighters from the Pinole, Richmond,

Rodeo, El Cerrito, and Kensington fire departments, to make way for what is now the Del Monte Shopping Center,

which houses The Embers and The New Deli, among other businesses.

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If you haven't already done so, please clip the membership renewal form on page 15 of this newsletter and mail it to us with your check.

The Pinole Historical Society thanks you for your many years of support as we work to preserve the history of the city, bring history programs to the community, and establish the Pinole History Museum.

Here are some of the things your membership dues allow the society to accomplish:

- Conduct Pinole history programs for fourth-graders in Pinole's schools, and for our members, service organizations, non-profits, and the public;
- Lead walking tours of historic downtown Pinole;
- Video-record interviews with Pinole citizens;
- Publish a quarterly newsletter (2,000 copies) distributed at more than 60 locations, featuring stories about the history of Pinole;
- Publish a monthly E-news, distributed via e-mail, featuring upcoming history events;
- Organize the annual November 11 Veterans Day Memorial and Flag Retirement Ceremony in Fernandez Park;
- Staff a Pinole Farmers' Market booth from April through December; and
- Coordinate an annual essay contest in Pinole schools. All participants receive certificates, and the grand-prize winners in each school receive a gift card to a local store.

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NEW PINOLE VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL PROGRESS



These dramatic aerial photos by Earl Combs show the extensive progress of the construction of the new Pinole Valley High School from March 2017 (left) to March 2018 (bottom).

The March 2018 photo at right shows the theater in the foreground and the three-story, double-section classroom building behind it. The March 2017 photo above shows the beginning of the theater construction and the front section of the classroom building.



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

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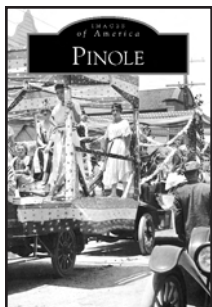
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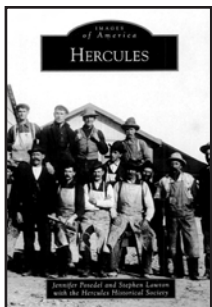


2800 Pleasant Hill Road, Suite 210
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
Tel 510.724.7070 Cell 925.408.2166
glalley@farmersagent.com
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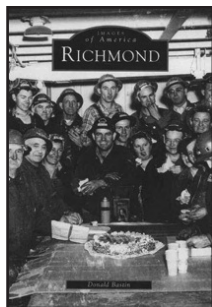
Registered Representative, Farmers Financial Solutions, LLC
30801 Agoura Road, Bldg. 1, Agoura Hills, CA 91301-2054
Tel 818.584.0200 Member FINRA & SIPC



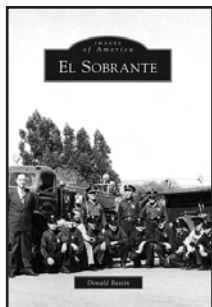
Pinole



Hercules



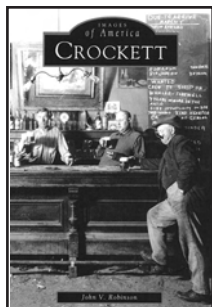
Richmond



El Sobrante



El Cerrito



Crockett

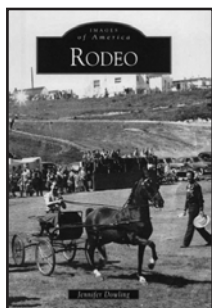
LOCAL HISTORY BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM THE PINOLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

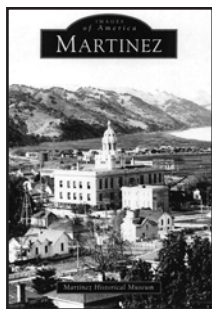
The Pinole, Pinole Through Time, Hercules, Richmond, El Sobrante, El Cerrito, Maritime

Contra Costa County, and East Bay Hills books are \$25, including sales tax. The Crockett, Rodeo, Martinez, and Port Costa books are \$23, including sales tax.

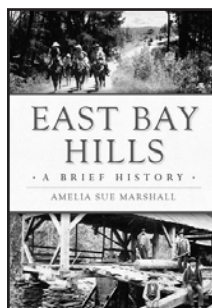
Mail order prices (below) include shipping. We accept Visa, MasterCard, Amex, and Discover credit cards.



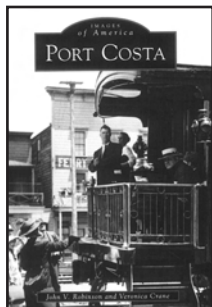
Rodeo



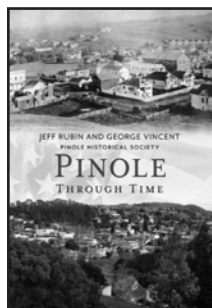
Martinez



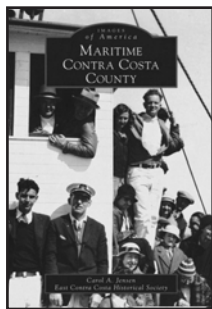
East Bay Hills



Port Costa



Pinole Through Time



Maritime

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Phone () _____

E-mail _____

METHOD OF PAYMENT

- Check: Payable to Pinole Historical Society
- Credit card (Visa MasterCard Amex Discover)

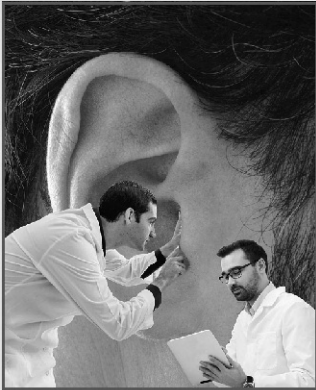
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- # of Pinole books @ \$30 _____
- # of Pinole Through Time books @ \$30 _____
- # of Hercules books @ \$30 _____
- # of Richmond books @ \$30 _____
- # of El Sobrante books @ \$30 _____
- # of El Cerrito books @ \$30 _____
- # of Maritime Contra Costa County books @ \$30 _____
- # of East Bay Hills books @ \$30 _____
- # of Crockett books @ \$28 _____
- # of Rodeo books @ \$28 _____
- # of Martinez books @ \$28 _____
- # of Port Costa books @ \$28 _____

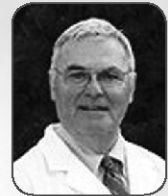
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Pinole **Historical** Society 2018 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(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 2018 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: _____

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