

Pinole Historical Society Newsbriefs



P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564

www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org

info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org

PVHS STUDENT COMPLETES PHS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

In January 2022, Pinole Valley High School senior Olivia Lubinger participated in the Pinole Historical Society's Oral History Project, designed to give students an opportunity to learn more about their family history and contribute to the society's historical archives.

The society is compiling oral histories of families that have more recently moved to Pinole, as opposed to the histories of Pinole's pioneer families from the 19th and 20th centuries.

Olivia interviewed her mother, Christina Chavez, whose oral history has been archived on the Pinole Historical Society's YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/0mOUvgFlrp4>.

In addition to her video interview, Olivia was required to write

an essay to explain what she learned about her family and about Pinole's history, and why it's important to her.

OLIVIA'S ESSAY

"I have lived on the same street, in the same house, in the same small city of Pinole my whole life. Pinole is where I took my first steps and made my best friends. I will graduate and leave Pinole in a matter of a few short months, but, more importantly, I will always come back to Pinole.

"I have known that Pinole played an important role in my mother's life, too; however, through interviewing her I was able to see just what the city of Pinole was like and how it shaped her into the woman I know.

"My mother moved to Pinole in 1978 when she was eight years old. She recalls looking through the backseat window of



Olivia and her mother, Christina.

the Realtor®'s car with her older sister as he showed them around the city.

GREAT CHILDHOOD

"Her mother and stepfather settled the family into a house on Savage Avenue and began operating a carpet cleaning business from within its walls. For my mom, this was the beginning of a childhood she describes as 'just fun.'

"Hot summers and cold hose water, roller

skating and knee scraping, a childhood set to the funky upbeat music of the Bee Gees. She reminisces on the old plaza off of Pinole Valley Road which used to hold a small beat-down Lucky's standing where Trader Joe's is today, the family-owned dance studio where she took baton classes, and Fiat Music, which is right where it's always been.

Continued on page 10

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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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Directors Emeritus: Marcia Kalapus, Jack Meehan, George Vincent. **Newsletter Editor:** Jeff Rubin.

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

PHS at Pinole Farmers' Market

The Pinole Historical Society is back at the Pinole Farmers Market. We'll be there twice every month through December.

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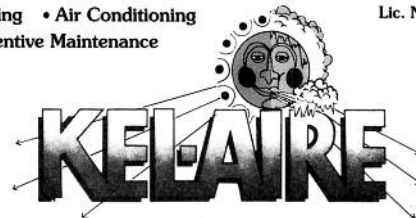
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President's Message

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

LATEST APPEAL LEAVES NO DOUBT ABOUT PUBLIC'S THIRST FOR A MUSEUM

There is good news to report about the zeal with which the public responded to the Pinole History Museum's winter 2022 fundraising appeal, it's first since the pre-COVID days of late 2019.

As of April 10, the museum's generous donors gifted the museum with \$15,500. This was the highest total raised of the museum's four mail appeals. Add in \$1,700 end-of-year gifts received in December 2021, and the museum received \$17,200 in fewer than four months from December 2021 to March 2022.

In four appeals — one in 2018, two in 2019, and one in 2022 — the museum board has raised \$53,180. Including money raised from donations excluding the appeals, the museum board has raised \$85,593.

This clearly establishes:

- The museum board's ability to raise money, which addresses City Council members' and opponents' specious concerns about sustainability, and
- The public's thirst for a museum in Pinole.

EXTRAORDINARY TOTAL

This fundraising total is extraordinary, because the museum still does not have a home. This money was donated on a hope and a dream — and a belief that this Pinole City Council will honor the intentions and commitments of previous city councils dating back several decades to renovate the historic Faria House for use as a community history museum.

It's also extraordinary because the museum board did no fundraising at all

in 2020 and 2021 — no appeals and no private requests — because, as we told our supporters in April 2020:

"The Pinole History Museum board of directors wants to thank you for your financial support, and for encouraging us to proceed with our goal of establishing a world-class, small-city museum in the historic

Continued on page 4



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.

LATEST APPEAL LEAVES NO DOUBT ABOUT PUBLIC'S THIRST FOR A MUSEUM

Continued from page 3

Faria House. We will get there.

"These are wild, crazy, unpredictable times. And scary, too. We are fortunate to live in a community that is strong and supportive. We shall get through this.

"We understand the financial and emotional strain the coronavirus pandemic has placed on everyone. This is affecting many people we know. We feel it, too.

"For the last two years the Pinole History Museum has mailed two appeal letters per year, once in late April, and another in early November. The response from our donors has been generous and enthusiastic. For this we thank you.

"This letter is different. We haven't attached a donor card and we're not asking for money.

We are just hoping you, your families, and the people you care about, are well. And stay well

"We'll be in touch again in late fall. We are hopeful that this challenging time will be just a footnote in our history by then.

"As always, thanks for supporting the Pinole History Museum. And, keep your spirits up."

The museum board is grateful for the public's continued support of the museum project. They are keeping our spirits up.

★ ★ ★

Asking people for money is difficult. Talk to any non-profit board member and they will tell you that fundraising is their least favorite activity.

So, you can imagine my surprise — and elation — when, in mere conversation about my

efforts to establish a museum in Pinole, Collins Management Company CEO Paul Collins VOLUNTEERED to donate \$2,000 to the Pinole History Museum.

Collins manages the East Bluff Homeowners Association, a planned unit development, where I live.

COLLINS FOUNDATION

It was during that conversation that I learned that Paul's family, through their business, had established a foundation that supports the people working within managed communities.

I also learned the Collins Management Foundation has made it its mission to allocate more than \$25,000 to assist charitable organizations who have suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Talk about giving back to their community!

The Pinole History

Museum, which suspended fundraising activities for two years during the pandemic, is very grateful for the Collins Management Foundation's gift.

Read about the Collins Management Foundation's philanthropic philosophy on page 8.

★ ★ ★

PHM board member Alexander Jason discusses why he joined the movement to create the Pinole History Museum on page 9.

★ ★ ★

And, Linda Jane Kole, a retired teacher, long-time Pinole Historical Society member, and Pinole History Museum donor, talks about her reasons for supporting the museum, and how living history has a dramatic effect on children. Her story is on page 5.



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My donation will help the museum enhance the preservation and collections of artifacts that represent Pinole's history and culture.

Enclosed is my gift of:

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*With a gift of \$1,000 or more your name will be placed on the museum's Wall of Honor.

Please make checks payable to **PINOLE HISTORY MUSEUM** or provide credit card information below. To donate online, please visit www.PinoleHistoryMuseum.org.

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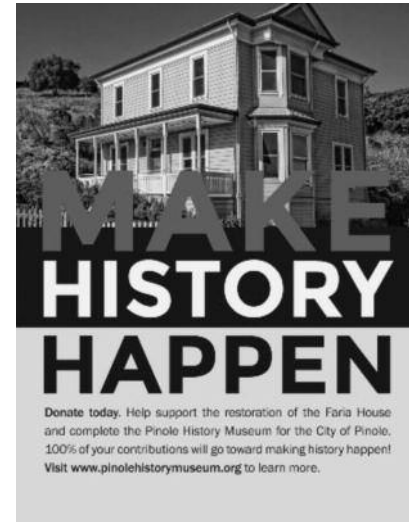
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Mail your donation to Pinole History Museum, P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564

The Pinole History Museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Your donation is tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.



MUSEUM WOULD BE A HOME TO CELEBRATE OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY

Supporters have made the Pinole History Museum's first request for donations since 2019 an overwhelming success, providing \$15,500, with more gifts arriving in our winter 2022 appeal.

The museum also received \$1,700 in gifts in December.

Supporters demonstrated in three previous appeals in 2018 and 2019 that they're eager to see the renovation of the Faria House and the establishment of the Pinole History Museum in that historic structure.

One donor, Linda Jane Kole, spoke during the February 1 Pinole City Council meeting and told the council members:

"I've been a Pinolean for 58 years, and I'm now a retired teacher after 40 years of working with children. I've seen the impact of living history, seeing real items, holding them in your hands.



Linda Jane Kole

"I envision our building, the Faria sisters' home, as they did, which was a place for children and adults to experience and see our city's history unfold before them.

"Pinole has long had a problem of being a kind of bedroom place for working families. You want to change your citizens from just people who commute, sleep, eat, and go back to work.

"You want Pinole to be a place where they feel connected, a center

for events and activities, like I envision this museum to become a way for people to become connected, a center for events and activities ... a way where people change a bedroom community for themselves.

"We have a very diverse, rich, amazing community of people here, and this museum will be a place for everyone to be able to follow the roots of who came before them and grow (their own)

branches and leaves.

"I really think we should put our money into getting that building renovated and then move forward into a future that is not just about monetary gain for the city, but about what we build as a community together."

You can help create the Pinole History Museum. Please use the donor form above and send your gift to Pinole History Museum, PO Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564, or donate online at: www.pinolehistorymuseum.org.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

Send an email to city council members and/or publicly state that you support the Pinole History Museum at a council meeting (1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month).

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vsalimi@ci.pinole.ca.us

Mayor Pro Tem Devin Murphy:
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Councilmember Norma Martínez-Rubin:
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Councilmember Anthony Tave:
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Councilmember Maureen Toms:
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PINOLE HISTORY MUSEUM

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COLLINS MANAGEMENT FOUNDATION DONATES \$2,000 TO MUSEUM

When Paul Collins, a local who grew up in Viewpointe in Rodeo, graduated from San Diego State University and returned home to take over Collins Management Company, the family business, he knew "we want to do more than make money. We want to make a difference. We want to do what we can."



Paul Collins

Formed as a 501c3 non-profit in 2017, the Collins Management Foundation donates \$50,000 to \$70,000 a year.

"A management company is a gatekeeper for vendors who want to work in our area," Paul says. These vendors aggressively market to

managers. Vendors contribute to the foundation instead of providing perks for Collins Management; the foundation, in turn, funds activities and needs for vendors' employees.

Why the Pinole History Museum?

"It's a secondary mission to support organizations that support the communities where we manage property.

PHILANTHROPIC SPIRIT

"I love museums. They are generally underfunded. And there are not many opportunities to support organizations in Pinole."

The foundation supports the Alameda County Community Food Bank, Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, 10,000 Lunches, Meals on Wheels, Options Health, All Souls Parish, and the City of Alameda Food Bank.

The foundation has

also distributed more than 2,300 face masks to organizations and individuals throughout the community.

"We're all looking for meaning," Paul says. "Why are we here? Our business success doesn't result in life satisfaction. You just kind of seek more, give some meaning to what we do while we're here in this brief moment in time, and help people when they need help.

"There has to be more in our lives than just the daily routine. I like the concept that we have a duty to each other, to the community, to the country, to the world. This is my effort to align that desire with action."



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Guest column

Alexander Jason, Pinole History Museum board member

AN OPPORTUNITY TO LINK PRESENT WITH PAST

When I first learned that there were citizens of Pinole hoping to create a Pinole History Museum, I was interested in the idea.

I have lived in Pinole for almost 45 years. I have seen our little city change from a semi-rural to a suburban city but, through the years, it seemed to me that the character of Pinole didn't really change. It seems to be a town of mostly working people who want primarily to live in a safe, clean, well-functioning place where families grow and succeed.

I have always been someone interested in museums. Wherever I travel in this country and the world I seek out museums for the opportunity to learn about where things came from, and particularly about the people who contributed to the construction and establishment of the cities, culture, and society that exist today, to understand how and

why things turned out as they are.

I believe that with a Pinole History Museum, we have an opportunity to link our present to the past in very meaningful ways through the collection and presentation of the important details of our history. This is what the Pinole History Museum will create.

When I first became involved in the PHM project, I was a bit concerned that there might be a plan to establish a museum with dusty exhibits of relics and old photos showing "how people lived in the past."

I was greatly encouraged to discover that Jeff Rubin and the others involved in this project wanted more — they also wanted to make history come alive, to present our past in ways that shows how it has brought us to where we are.

Pinole has, I believe, a great history. The more I learned about our history, the more I was intrigued. It is something

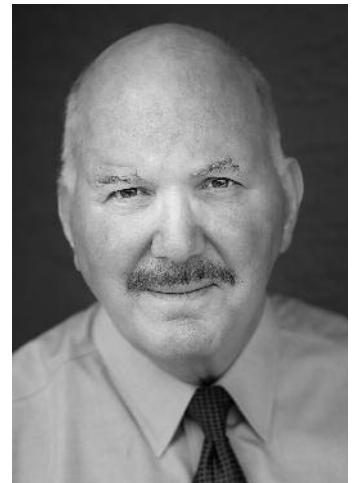
we are a part of, and that history has interesting stories and elements.

We shouldn't forget about the pioneers and founders and about such things as the bay ferry and cargo port that existed near the current location of the water treatment plant, and which became an important element in the commerce of Pinole and West Contra Costa.

The stories of those who first built businesses and homes can help us all to appreciate what we have and how we got here. The PHM will make this happen.

Another concept that I found attractive is that the PHM will also become more than just a historical preservation facility, but as a center for community activity where the historical elements become a backdrop for modern civic and community events.

This became clear when I spent time with the Faria sisters — Dolores, Deanna, and



Alexander Jason

Margaret — who told me many wonderful stories about how they grew up in Pinole and worked on their family farm (now the location of the Kaiser Medical Office Building) — and particularly how their farmhouse served as an informal community center with a never-ending series of community breakfasts, tomato-picking, horse-riding, and other events.

The Faria sisters sold their home to the city more than 25 years ago with the promise that it would become a Pinole History Museum, and they still strongly hope it will become true — as do I. We need a Pinole History Museum.

ALEXANDER JASON JOINED THE PINOLE HISTORY MUSEUM BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN 2019.

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PVHS STUDENT COMPLETES PHS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT



**Olivia
Lubinger**

Continued from front

"Things like the West-CAT bus system were just being introduced; she describes it as more like a "taxi" than a bus because it dropped its passengers at destinations rather than bus stops.

"However, there were also things my mom would describe as not so fun, things like financial issues and bitter arguments between her parents. Over all though, her childhood was lively, and she wouldn't have traded the safe setting of Pinole for any place else.

"In 1988, my mother entered her senior year at Pinole Valley High School. She remembers this year vividly. It began with donkey basketball in the gym and watching the car club drive by in their low riders.

HIGH SCHOOL JOB

"In her junior year my mom started working at a store called Best Products, which ironically was where Best Buy is today; this is where she met the

man that would become my father.

"In June of the next year the little girl she babysat, Amber Swartz, would be abducted from her front yard and never seen again. When my mom thinks back to this time it is with teary eyes. Suddenly a safe and secluded Pinole did not feel that safe anymore.

"This wasn't the first time that tragedy

breached Pinole's suburban borders; years prior Amber's father, Bernie, was killed in a shooting as an on-duty police officer.

"The Swartz family's devastation left a mark on Pinole's history, but it also brought the community together to look for Amber and support her mother. My mom told me this story when I was very little because we passed by her memorial park on our walks around the neighborhood.

I know Amber's story will always be dear to my mom's heart.

NEW INFORMATION

"My mom would graduate from Pinole Valley High and end up leaving Pinole for a while when she moved into a condo with my dad in 1990, but she would come back. My parents bought our house in 1995, right off Pinole Valley Road and

started their family.

"The interviewing process allowed me to capture the stories from my mother I grew up with, as well as extrapolate more I had never heard before. Her stories help me understand both her and Pinole better, and subsequently myself, because I am a product of both.

NOT JUST A TOWN

"Seeing the joy light up in her eyes when I asked her about her childhood, or the tears when I asked about Amber, remind me my mom was once a kid, too.

"I hope the stories I have shared help paint a picture of Pinole not only as a town, but as a home. I also hope this encourages others to ask questions and capture the history of their loved ones before it is lost to time."



St. Joseph School

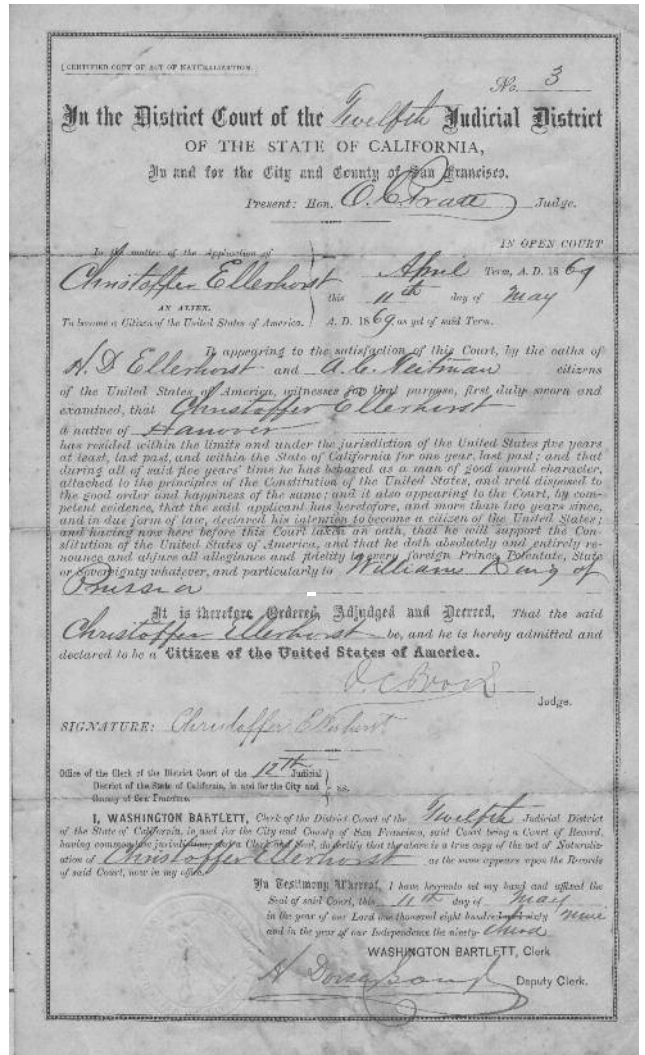
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TWO MUSEUM POP-UP EXHIBITS TO BE INSTALLED SOON

Pinole History Museum board members are preparing two pop-up exhibits that will be installed at Mechanics Bank and Bank of the West, respectively.

One exhibit, chronicling one of Pinole's most historic families, the Ellerhorsts, will be installed at Mechanic Bank this spring. The other, documenting the people behind many of the street names in Pinole, will be installed at Bank of the West this summer.

When people think of the name Ellerhorst, the most familiar member of that family was Frances Ellerhorst, a career educator who began her teaching career at Sheldon School in 1895, taught at the Plaza School, site of today's post office, and was principal of the Pinole-Hercules School #1 for 40 years.

However, there were six siblings, and each played a part in the city's history.

The exhibit will include their parents' marriage certificate and their father's naturalization papers.

Many Pinole street names were named for politicians and prominent business people and citizens.

Among those names are Ruff, LeFebvre, Brandt, Shea, Savage, Greenfield, Lopes, Rafaela, Tennent, Faria, Jovita, Fitzgerald, Fernandez, Downer, and, of course, Ellerhorst.

Christ and Christina Ellerhorst's marriage certificate (left) and Christ's naturalization certificate will be on display.



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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

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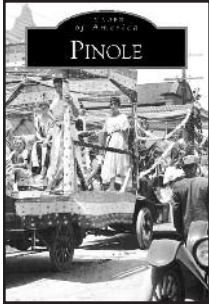
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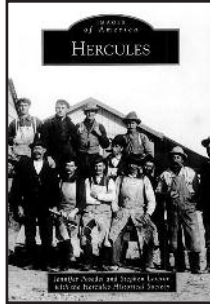
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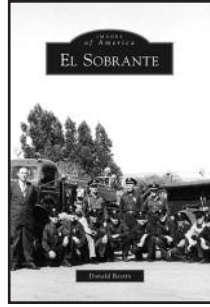
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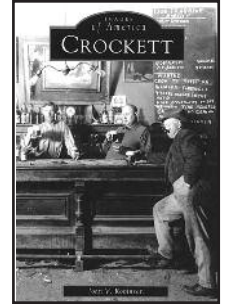
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El Sobrante



El Cerrito



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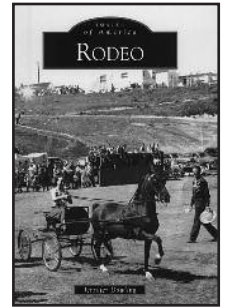
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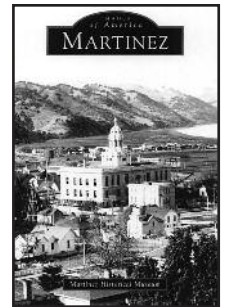
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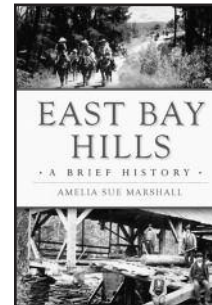
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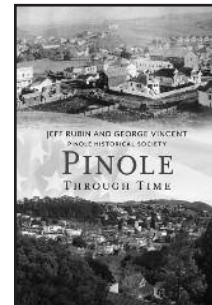
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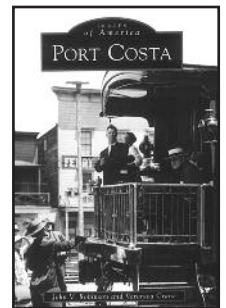
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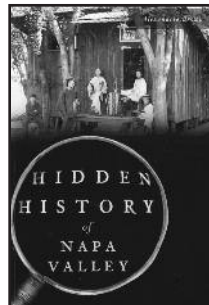
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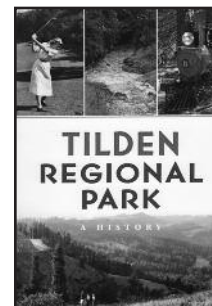
Pinole Through Time



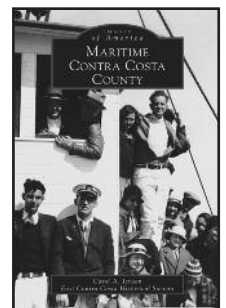
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