

**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.**

# Pinole Historical Society Newsbriefs



Summer 2009

P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564

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

## PINOLE BOOK-SIGNING PARTY AUGUST 5

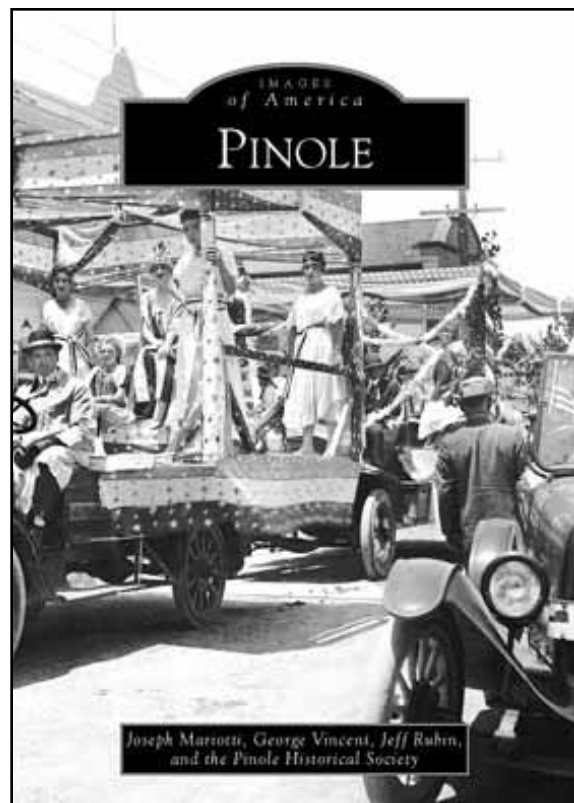
**T**he books are on their way! *Images of America: Pinole*, the first book about the city by a major U.S. publisher, has been shipped from Arcadia Publishing's South Carolina headquarters and will arrive in Pinole toward the end of the week of July 27.

Those who ordered the book in advance may pick up their copies at the Pinole Historical Society booth at the Pinole Farmers' Market on Saturdays, or at the PHS booth at the Summer Sounds concert series in Fernandez Park on Thursday nights.

And, of course, the books will be available at our book launching/signing party Wednesday, August 5, from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Alex Clark Room, Pinole Public Safety Facility, 880 Tennent Avenue (behind the fire station).

Please join us for this joyous event in the city's history. There will be music (by PHS member Althea Hathaway of Cherry Bomb Productions) and food (catered by PHS member Antlers Tavern and Sharon), and the authors—Dr. Joe Mariotti, George Vincent, and Jeff Rubin—will be there to autograph your books. Plus—there will be a surprise, one-of-a-kind dessert honoring the book and the city's history, courtesy of the Red Onion restaurant.

*NOTE TO PHS MEMBERS: We've cancelled our August 20th membership meeting in lieu of the book event. Our next meeting will be Thursday, September 17.*



**Published quarterly by the Pinole Historical Society**

## WHERE TO FIND NEWSBRIEFS

**Y**ou can find the Pinole Historical Society *Newsbriefs* at these locations:

AccuTech Auto Care, The Alley Cafe, Antlers Tavern, Bank of the West, The Bear Claw, Big O Tires, Bliss Esthetics, Blue Sky Sports, Bronze Buns, Cafe Soleil, China House, Collins Elementary School, Crocketts Premier Auto Body, Embers, Farmers Insurance (Madeline Crandall), Farmers Insurance (Carol White), Douglas Gordon, D.D.S., Hairitage Bead and Boutique, Happy Sashimi, Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Building,

Kendall Financial Services, Ladies Workout Express, Lakeridge Athletic Club, Mechanics Bank (Pinole Valley and Pinole Vista), Old Time Realtors, Park Pharmacy, Attorney Donald E. Patterson, Peet's Coffee, Pinole City Hall, Pinole Creek Cafe, Pinole Library, Pinole Paws, Pinole Police Department, Pinole Senior Center, Pinole Valley Community Church, Realty World, the Red Onion, Ristorante Due Rose, Sashays Salon, Tenax Law Group, and Top Floor Salon.

It's also posted on the PHS website.

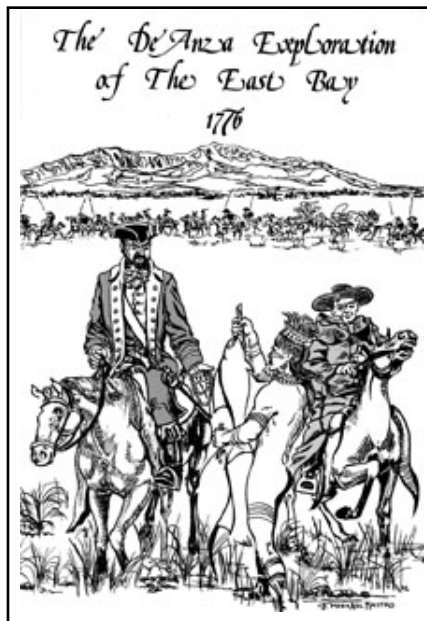
## PHS APPRECIATES DONATIONS

**T**he Pinole Historical Society thanks these people, organizations, and businesses for their donations of historical information and artifacts:

- **Kathy Bradshaw**, for three books, a photograph, and a hard hat from the Pinole Senior Center groundbreaking

- **Valerie Sewell**, for commemorative buttons from the Fiesta del Pinole

- **Lakeridge Athletic Club, Accutech Auto Care**, and **Marilyn McPherson**, of **SM Technical**



**Consultants Inc.**, Point Richmond, for file cabinets and office equipment

- Our friends at the **Friends of the Pinole Library**, for 11 books on California/Bay Area history, including the one pictured here, which mentions the DeAnza landing in Pinole.

## PHS MEETINGS FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2009

**August 5:** Book launching/signing party  
**September 17:** Board of Directors (all welcome)  
**October 15:** Board of Directors (all welcome)  
**November 19:** General Membership (presentation)  
**December 17:** Board of Directors (all welcome)

All Pinole Historical Society meetings are open to members and guests. Meetings are held the third Thursday of each month in the Alex Clark Room, Pinole Public Safety Facility, 880 Tennent Avenue; doors open at 6 p.m., meetings begin at 6:30 p.m.



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# President's Message

Marcia Kalapus, President, Pinole Historical Society

## THE BOOK IS HERE—FINALLY!

**B**y the time you have read this newsletter our book, *Images of America: Pinole*, will have arrived from Arcadia Publishing.

What a process it's been. From the initial excitement of being approached by Arcadia, through the eight months spent putting the book together, to waiting from February (when it was submitted to Arcadia), to July for the books to arrive—the anticipation has been incredible.

And now our first nationally published book is here.

Having a book published about history of Pinole is very important to the city, and its citizens. Knowing how the city started, who made it grow and gave it its personality, how it has evolved over the last nearly 200 years, gives us insight into who we are, where we've been, and who we want to be.

The content of the book is a reflection of

the true spirit of Pinole.

From the early Martinez family who settled this land, to the pioneers who came here in the mid and late 19th century and early 20th century, to the people and events that gave our city an identity, Pinole has always had an admirable and undeniable strength of spirit.

That spirit of cooperation was evidenced in the development of our book. Take a look at the Acknowledgments section; it's probably one of the longest in Arcadia's history—and they've published more than 5,000 titles! People gave us photos and artifacts, helped us track down the hidden or not-so-well-known history of our city. What a collaboration!

My thanks to Joe Mariotti, George Vincent, and Jeff Rubin for all of the hours they devoted to collecting the material, writing the text, and scanning the more than 200 photos in the book.

Please join us Wednesday, August 5, from 6 to 8 p.m., for our book-launching/signing event in the Alex Clark Room. The authors will be there to sign your books, and it will give all of us an opportunity to celebrate the history of the city.

We thank the city of Pinole for a grant so we could have this party.

### MUSEUM UPDATE:

On Wednesday, July 29, the PHS board will meet with the city's museum consultant, Kathleen Brown, to discuss the budget process for our proposed historical museum.

This is the next step in a six-month-long feasibility study that Brown conducted. The initial results showed that the city could support a museum; this meeting will detail exactly how we should go about doing it.

We look forward to seeing you at our September 17th membership meeting. Our August meeting will be the book signing on the 5th.



Marcia Kalapus

## PINOLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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# PINOLE'S BIG HOLE ON THE HILL

By George Vincent

**T**he entrance to Pinole Valley is flanked by two imposingly large hills. The one south of Interstate 80 is called Faria's Hill. North of the freeway, atop the other hill, is a landmark called the Pinole Reservoir.

The need for fresh water has always been crucial to Pinole's development. The first Native American inhabitants settled their villages near Pinole Creek's waters.

Generally following the route of 1772 explorer Don Pedro Fages and diarist Padre Juan Crespi, on April 1, 1776, a Spanish expedition led by Juan Bautista de Anza camped at the base of

Faria's Hill next to Pinole Creek. Pinole's first settlers, the Martinez family, also built their adobe homes in the 1830s adjacent to Pinole Creek's life-giving waters.

Nineteenth-century Pinoleans depended primarily on wells, cisterns, and wooden water tanks. But water was always in short supply as the town grew. In the late 1800s, the California Powder Works needed water for its expanding plant. From the Tennent family it purchased a high hill west of Pinole Creek.

In 1898, construction

began on the cement-lined reservoir that was finished in the fall of 1902. Water was pumped up from a dam in Pinole Creek, and then piped to the powder company, as well as the growing towns of Pinole and Hercules.

The Hercules Water Company owned the reservoir, which was very large for its time. It sat on a hilltop covering 4.3 acres. Its depth was 37 feet and covered an area of 32,400 square feet. Its volume had a capacity of 8,728,621 gallons of water. The entire reservoir was covered by a wooden roof.

Early residents used the utility boat inside the reservoir for recreational rowing with their sweethearts.

The reservoir was abandoned in 1934 due to seepage and leakage, which caused landslides, especially on the eastern slopes. By 1936, it had been purchased by EBMUD, but wasn't used.

Fearsome goats, cattle, and a caretaker's shack guarded the hillsides



**George Vincent**

around the reservoir. Locals climbed its poppy-covered slopes and braved the climb down the rusty metal ladder to the dry reservoir bottom.

By 1966, the reservoir had been purchased by a Pinole service organization that envisioned turning it into a community center. The plan did not materialize, and in 1978, the reservoir parcel was purchased by Joseph and Gretchen Mariotti to save as open space.

Today, the reservoir sits as an empty monument to the past and the graffiti of the present. But it once stimulated the growth of the cities of Pinole and Hercules as it supplied their thirsty needs.



**Inside the reservoir, around 1900.**

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# VISIT PHS BOOTH AT FARMERS' MARKET AND SUMMER SOUNDS CONCERTS IN FERNANDEZ PARK

**P**lease visit the Pinole Historical Society booth and swap stories with our members about the city's past—and present.

Look for us at the **Pinole Farmers' Market** on Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., and at the city's **Summer Sounds in the Park** concert series through August 27, from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

We'll have copies of our new book, **Images of America: Pinole**, for sale at both locations.

**Pinole Historical Society board member Jo Ann Gannotti and Consultant to the Board Jack Meehan at the PHS booth at the Pinole Farmers' Market.**





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# It happened back then . . .

**1894:** Manuel Fernandez, a medical student, and Edward M. Downer, Southern Pacific Depot agent, start Pinole's first newspaper, *The Pinole Weekly Times*, in a small building at the Fernandez Mansion.

**June 25, 1903:** New Town of Pinole's first council meeting in Old Plaza Schoolhouse on School Street. Members elected to Board of Trustees, City Clerk, Marshall, and Treasurer.

**November 1903:** Miss Kate M. Bouquet of Pinole gives piano lessons at reasonable rates.

**Sept. 23, 1905:** Half-holiday honor roll list for Plaza School's second grade includes Vincent Scanlan, Louis Ferreira, Myrtle Sweet, Mamie Costa, Lucy Azevedo, Corrine Walton, Hazel Downer, Beatrice McKenzie, and Annie Lewis.

**May 6, 1906:** Pinole prepares to celebrate a glorious Fourth of July, one of the liveliest celebrations in the county. Committee meetings will be held in Green-

**On January 3, 1966, Frances Ellerhorst (second from left) cut the ribbon to open the downtown Pinole office of Mechanics Bank. Also in the photo are (L-R): Edward M. Downer III, Edward M. Downer Jr., and Hazel Downer Thornton.**



field's store: finance, arrangements, sports, baseball, printing, dance.

**July 24, 1909:** A hungry scoundrel enters the residence of E.M. Downer and helps himself to some good things to eat and departs with a large platter of potato salad as a souvenir.

**October 16, 1909:** Wedding

of Miss Ida Fraser, daughter of John Fraser of Pinole, to Howard Pointsett, son of Mrs. E.M. Downer. Wedding at the Fraser house on San Pablo Avenue and reception at the E.M. Downer house.

**Aug. 27, 1916:** Pinole's worst thunderstorm in memory. For four hours, wind, rain and

*Continued on page 9*



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# PHS FLAG DAY ESSAY CONTEST A HIT IN SCHOOLS

**T**he first Pinole Historical Society Flag Day Essay Contest received high marks from principals and teachers, who were grateful for the recognition of their students.

Students in Pinole schools were given the opportunity to answer the question, "What does the American flag mean to you?"

Essays were received from St. Joseph School, Shannon Elementary School, Stewart Elementary School, and Pinole Middle School.

Seven students, whose essays were judged to be the most outstanding (three from St. Joseph, two each from Shannon and Stewart), received certificates, U.S. Savings Bonds from Mechanics Bank; Fernanda Rodrigues, Community Affairs Officer of Mechanics Bank; and Marcia Kalapus, President of the Pinole Historical Society, presented certificates to all of the grade winners, and savings bonds and U.S. flags to the grand-prize winners at St. Joseph School, Stewart Elementary School, and Shannon Elementary School.

Terrific photos, a complete list of all the grade winners at each school, and all of the winning essays are on the PHS website. Look under the "Events" column at: [www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org).

Judges were Pinole Councilwoman Debbie Long (St. Joseph School), who had the idea for the contest; retired Pinole Valley High School music teacher Nancy Gill (Shannon Elementary School); and Veronica Ahuruonye, Director of Las Deltas Early Intervention Center, a Richmond pre-school



**Pinole Historical Society President Marcia Kalapus and Mechanics Bank Chairman of the Board Ed Downer make presentations to St. Joseph School students.**

for children from low-income, high-risk families. All are Pinole Historical Society members.

On Monday, June 8, Ed Downer, Chairman of the Board of Mechanics Bank; Fernanda Rodrigues, Community Affairs Officer of Mechanics Bank; and Marcia Kalapus, President of the Pinole Historical Society, presented certificates to all of the grade winners, and savings bonds and U.S. flags to the grand-prize winners at St. Joseph School, Stewart Elementary School, and Shannon Elementary School.

Stewart Elementary School.



**Shannon Elementary School.**



**Stewart Elementary School.**

# PHS TO BE PART OF WEST COUNTY BUSINESS EXPO

The Pinole Historical Society has accepted an invitation from the City of Pinole to share the city's booth at the West County Business Expo '09, on Thursday, August 20, from 4 to 8 p.m. at Pinole Shores

Business Park. The event is being sponsored by the Pinole Chamber of Commerce. It's a collaborative effort among the West County chambers of commerce to showcase the products, services, and people of West County.

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# It happened back then . . .

Continued from page 6

lightning knock down power poles and plunge Pinole and Hercules into darkness. Lightning blows up the Corning house at the Hercules Black Powder Plant.

**Oct. 27, 1917:** Pinole's first library building built on corner of San Pablo and School Street on a lot owned by R. & Mrs. L.P. Brandt. The building is of corrugated, fireproof sheet metal. Mrs. Annette Brandt is the new librarian. The building replaces the cloakroom book handouts at the opera house.

**June 19, 1925:** City plans four-day carnival for Pinole, August 27-30. The town trustees reserve the entire block on Tennent Avenue from Main Street to Third Street for the carnival; participants to celebrate the state of California Diamond Jubilee.

**September 1949:** Mayor Allan Doidge presses the electric button to activate Pinole's first traffic light at the corner of Tennent Avenue and Highway 40.

**Jan. 3, 1966:** E.M. Downer Jr. opens first Mechanics Bank office in Pinole on Fernandez Avenue.

**February 1968:** Pinole Historical and Museum Commission founded and given official status by Pinole City Council. Members are: George R. Vincent, Mrs. M.L. Fernandez, Mrs. Florence Bifford, Mrs. Jessie Clark, Edgar Vovsi, W. "Bud" Wakeland, and George Dutra.

**April 25, 1971:** First Pinole Historical Appreciation Day held at Margaret Collins School. There is a very large attendance of families of early settlers. First public viewing of the 10 historical scrapbooks cataloging Pinole's history.

## FLAGS AVAILABLE FROM HISTORICAL SOCIETY



**D**o you have a made-in-America United States flag?

The Pinole Historical Society has a limited stock of American flags to fly on important occasions—such as the upcoming Labor Day and Veterans' Day holidays

The PHS has 3x5 nylon American flags—50 stars, all-weather, embroidered—available for a donation of \$25 to the society.

And, we have a limited supply of basic flagpole kits (pole, bracket, etc.) at our quantity cost of just \$6. So, a flag and flagpole can be yours for a donation of only \$31 (plus postage if we mail them)!

Pick up your flag/pole at our Pinole Farmers' Market booth, or e-mail us at [info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.com](mailto:info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.com) and we'll make arrangements to get these items to you via U.S. mail. We accept checks and cash.



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# El Cerrito Historical Society hosting July 26 discussion

**T**he El Cerrito Historical Society will present a program chronicling the history of that city's Italian community Sunday, July 26, at the El Cerrito Senior Center, 6510 Stockton Street, behind the library. A short meeting of the society starts at 1:30, followed by the discussion at 2 p.m. This is a FREE event.

This will be a lively, informative panel discussion featuring several longtime members of El Cerrito's Italian community, including Gino Martinucci and Theresa Parella, both born and reared in town—and perhaps others.

The illustrated talk will range from the origins of the city's large Italian community and the many businesses they owned (ceramics factories, dairies, shops, and such entertainment venues as the Six Bells) to winemaking, education, life during the Depression and World War II, and more.



**Check the Pinole Historical Society website for information on PHS activities and events – and, of course, the history of the sweetest city in the East Bay.**

[www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org)

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# CONTRA COSTA COUNTY HISTORIC LANDMARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE NOW ON COUNTY'S WEBSITE!

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The Contra Costa County Historic Landmarks Advisory Committee, now on the county's website, offers much useful information.

The page includes links to information about:

- Committee meeting agendas
- Historic preservation incentives
- Information for property owners
- Mills Act Property Tax Abatement program.

The purpose of the Contra Costa County Historical Landmarks Advisory Committee (HLAC) is to advise the Board of Supervisors on matters relating to the identification and preservation of historical resources within the county, including identifying eligible sites and places to be listed in the county's Historic Resources Inventory (HRI).

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### Historical Landmarks Advisory Committee (HLAC)

**Overview**  
The purpose of the Contra Costa County Historical Landmarks Advisory Committee (HLAC) is to advise the Board of Supervisors on matters relating to the identification and preservation of historical resources within the County, including identifying eligible sites and places to be listed in the County's Historic Resources Inventory (HRI).

**Agendas**  
Agendas are available prior to the scheduled meetings.  
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**Additional Resources**

- [Application For Nomination](#)
- [Guidelines](#)
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- [Historic Resources Inventory \(HRI\)](#)
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- [Meeting Dates 2009](#)
- [Mills Act Information Brochure](#)
- [Mills Act Agreement Application](#)

**Contact**  
Christine Louise  
Flanner  
E-Mail  
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4th Floor, North Wing  
Martinez, CA 94553  
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Ph: (925) 335-1237  
Fk: (925) 335-1250  
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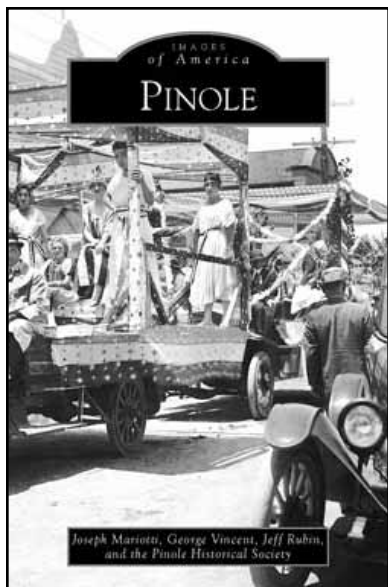
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