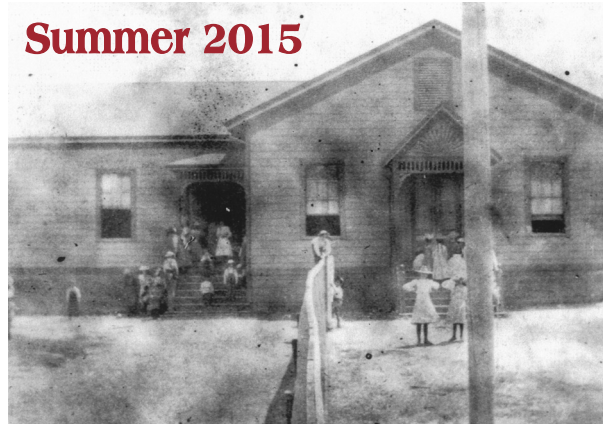


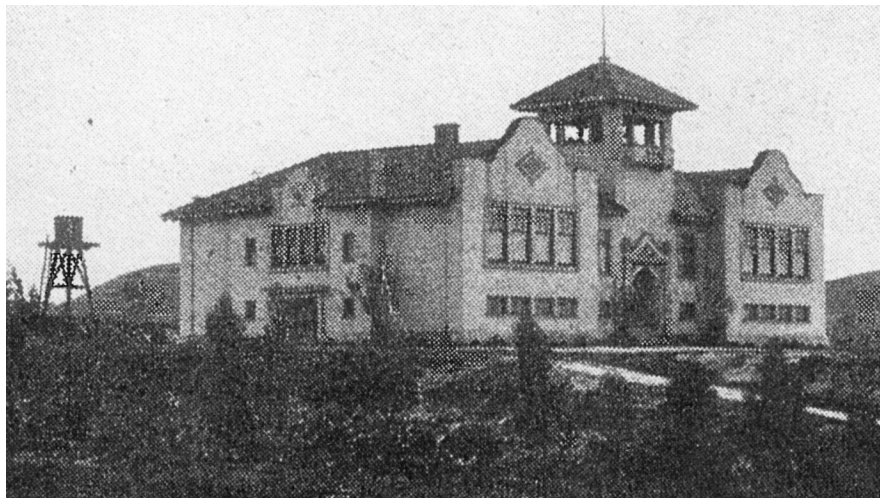
Pinole Historical Society Newsbriefs

Summer 2015



P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564

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Side view of Pinole-Hercules School #1 (looking west) with water tower and new tree growth, around 1910.

SEPTEMBER 11 PHS PROGRAM

SCHOOL DAYS IN VERY OLD PINOLE

The alumni of Pinole-Hercules Old School on the Hill will gather at the Elks Lodge in El Sobrante on September 12 for their ninth reunion. To Pinole newcomers, it may seem odd that folks would want to come together to celebrate a grammar school. After all, reunions are supposed to be reserved only for nostalgic graduates of high schools and colleges.

Don't tell that to Pinoleans who graduated from Pinole-Hercules School #1 (1906-1968), as did many of their parents and grandparents before them.

Hill School alumni are fiercely loyal to their "green school" that stood atop Samuel Street in Pinole until 1968. There is a shared pride of camaraderie understood only by those who bore the trials of the daily uphill climb to the creaking stairs and dark halls haunted by the strict stares of lurking teachers.

Continued on page 2

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It's also posted on the PHS website.

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, please contact Jeff Rubin at info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org or call him at (510) 724-9507.**

SCHOOL DAYS

Continued from front page

On Friday, September 11, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in rooms 2A and 2B of the Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Building, the Pinole Historical Society will honor past students and teachers and living grads of Pinole-Hercules School #1.

Our quarterly program will trace the history of Pinole's three oldest schools from 1865-1968.

Our presenter, Pinole Historical

Society co-founder and Old School alumnus George Vincent, has spent a decade researching Pinole's early schools — Fitzgerald Ranch School, Pinole Plaza School, and Pinole-Hercules School #1.

His soon-to-be-published book, "School Bells and Ink Wells," brings to light the workings and people that made the Pinole-Hercules Union School District the envy of surrounding townships.

PHS CALENDAR

MEETINGS

September 11: Program: "School Days in Very Old Pinole." (Story on front page). The public is invited to this FREE event in conference rooms 2A and 2B of the Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Building, 1301 Pinole Valley Road. Refreshments will be served.

August 12, September 9, October 14: 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.

ONGOING

Pinole Library history exhibits. Two exhibits are at the library, 2935 Pinole Valley Road. Library hours are: Monday (10 a.m. to 6 p.m.), Wednesday (2 to 8 p.m.), Friday and Saturday (12 to 5 p.m.).

PHS booth at Pinole Farmers' Market. We are at the farmers' market every other Saturday from April through December.

2015 PHS MEETING DATES

- Friday, September 11
- Friday, November 6.

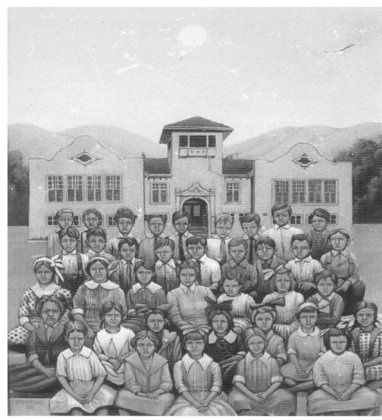
Pinole Historical Society

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

School Bells and Ink Wells

A History of the Early Schools of Pinole, California, 1865 - 1968

By George R. Vincent



President's Message

Marcia Kalapus, President, Pinole Historical Society

IT'S TIME TO SAY GOODBYE

This is my last article as president of the Pinole Historical Society.

As some of you know, I have been battling health problems for many years, more serious the last three years from autoimmune lupus and pulmonary lung disease that requires me to temper my activities almost to a snail's pace.

I have voluntarily resigned as president, but I will continue to serve as a board member for the time being, as I have some unfinished projects I want to complete.

The PHS board elected Jeff Rubin as president and George Vincent as vice president.

In November 2007, when I was elected president of the PHS, the society needed new direction, financial stability, a complete overhaul of systems, a budget, and goals to promote future growth.

It became immediately apparent that the propos-

al for the Faria House to be refurbished using Redevelopment funds was not in the best interests of the society, as it placed an impossible financial burden of repayment of a loan that the society could not meet.

The society met with a museum consultant, paid for by the City of Pinole, to assist us in evaluating whether or not the society could indeed financially sustain a museum in the future. It can be done only if there is abundant money available to annually subsidize it.

We are working on plans for a museum.

As new president, my first order of business was to interview the board members as to how they wanted to improve.

We needed to do a complete audit of the society's finances and paperwork to meet all the state requirements for a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

We revised the bylaws, new officers were

elected, and liability insurance was purchased for the directors and for when we had off-site programs.

We began immediately with new plans: establish a website, e-mail address, new business cards, newsletter with advertising spaces for local businesses, add to our photograph collections, write and publish two books about Pinole's history, do educational programs for the community groups and school children, and place two exhibits and numerous photos in the Pinole Library. We did all of this.

We also put a booth at the farmers' market to advertise the society and sell books and mementos. George Vincent and Jeff Rubin have done many PowerPoint presentations for various groups and all the elementary schools in the city, and George has also conducted walking tours for the public.

We secured the safety and preservation of the



Marcia Kalapus

Old School bell; it was refurbished and sits at Margaret Collins School. We do four programs a year, all open and free to the public, at our membership meetings.

And, we have increased our finances from a balance of \$465 in 2007 to \$38,000 today.

There is much more to be said of all the things that we have done and accomplished.

Our annual Veterans Day celebration in Fernandez Park was a first such event for the community and the response has been overwhelming; the Pinole Valley High School band, the Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, and the entire St. Joseph School student body help make this a great event.

Continued on page 4

Geoff Torretta

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 3

I would like to thank all of the board members who have served at various times in the last eight years. Your input and contributions are invaluable. I would also like to thank all of the members who renewed their dues every year, as it has helped us to continue our programs. I also would like to thank all of our ongoing newsletter advertisers.

There have been so many people who have helped us; I know who

you are and I would like to extend my personal thanks to everyone who has been a part of my life during this time.

And lastly, my personal thanks to the present board members for all the selfless hours they have volunteered in making it all happen, and to Jeff Rubin for making my goals for the website and newsletters a reality, as well as the books and everything else he does.

This has been one of the greatest journeys of my life, and I won't ever forget any of it.



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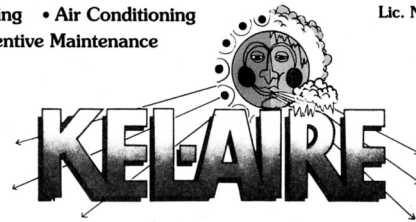
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Guest columnist

Stella Faria

MY FAVORITE LITTLE GROCERY STORE

My hometown of Pinole was famous for having a motorcycle cop named Officer Buck, who parked daily in the shade of a tree on Tennent Avenue about 100 feet from San Pablo Avenue, which at the

time was old Highway 40.

Officer Buck was ruthless when it came to writing tickets for speeding, and his reputation traveled far.

Another popular description of Pinole was that there was a bar or saloon on every corner.

That was the case in the late 1890s and early 1900s, but as the city's population grew, grocery stores took over some of the corner locations.

At the east end of town, Bill Lewis had a grocery store on the southeast corner of San Pablo Avenue and Pinole Valley Road. In the next block, next to Pinole Creek, was the T.W. Woy grocery and bakery. In midtown, on the corner of San Pablo and Fernandez avenues, was the store owned by Louis Ruff.

On the northeast corner of San Pablo and Tennent, in a brick building (now occupied by Tina's Place), sat the



Stella Faria

grocery store that played a big part in my family's life.

When my parents came to Pinole in 1925, they were immediately introduced to the Barroca and Pontes grocery store.

The proprietors were Antonio Pontes, the original owner, and his partner, Antonio Barroca, both natives of Portugal.

That made it very convenient for my mother, who did not speak any English at the time.

Continued on page 6



Tony Barroca in Central Grocery, around 1950.



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MY FAVORITE LITTLE GROCERY STORE



Antonio Barroca Sr., and John Bispo boarding up the front windows of the store, broken during the 1944 Hercules Powder Company explosion.

Continued from page 5

Mr. Pontes had started the business when he arrived in Pinole in 1910, and he may have at first worked on a small scale in the basement of the John Bispo home on Quinan Street, where he was a boarder.

Mr. Barroca joined him as a partner a few years later. He was from Ilhavo, Portugal, and had been a fisherman as a young man.

It was just a coincidence that Mr. Pontes came from the same village as my mother, Ligares, in northern Portugal close to the Spanish border. Mr.

Pontes had a brother, Carlos, who lived with his family in Newcastle, and farmed fruit orchards. He was to become an interesting link in this story.

The store owned a little pickup truck, and Mr. Barroca made the rounds in Pinole and Hercules in the morning, taking grocery orders from the stay-at-home mothers of that era.

He would return in the afternoon with filled orders, along with a tag indicating the amount charged to that family's account.

The tags were placed in a storage locker and added up when the patron came to pay the bill, usually when cashing their paychecks. The owners were very generous and understanding and were known to extend credit if needed.

Barroca and Pontes was a typical small-town grocery store with a little

bit of everything, but very little space for overstock.

There was a storeroom at the back of the store for bulk items such as sacks of potatoes, onions, beans and rice, plus large cases of beverages.

The checkout counter was in the right center of the store. On it was a very large roll of wrapping paper that was ripped off as needed, and a small padding machine with a crank handle on the right side.

I remember those things so well, as I made many trips to that store as a child and later as an adult.

My very favorite thing in that store was a cabinet with a sliding glass door to the right of the front entrance that contained boxes of cookies in bulk form. The cookies were either counted or weighed and put in a little brown paper bag.

There was also a cabinet that held some large cheeses that were cut to order, plus just a few cold cuts such as bologna and boiled ham, which I loved to have in a school lunch.

A big surprise happened in January 1932, when Mr. Barroca's son, Antonio Jr., arrived from Portugal. It was a fairly common practice for men to leave their families behind when they came to America for a better life.

The local store patrons were happy to meet this handsome nineteen-year-old young man, who

Continued on page 7



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MY FAVORITE LITTLE GROCERY STORE

Continued from page 6

soon became known to everyone as Tony. His father was grooming him to eventually take over for him in the business, so he started driving the delivery truck, and quickly became part of the Barroca and Pontes daily routine.

Mr. Pontes's brother from Newcastle had a beautiful daughter, Julia, who caught Tony's eye. He courted her, and they were married on February 4, 1940, and had three children.

As his father had planned for him to take over, Tony spent five years working for Lucky Stores to improve his knowledge of the grocery business.

Tony and Julia became owners of the store in 1950, and it was now known as Central Grocery.



Julia Barroca packing the delivery truck, 1955.

They operated it for ten years and were a very active part of the community.

It was very sad news in town when Tony died from a sudden heart attack the night before his and Julia's 50th wedding anniversary. Julia spent her remaining days with their youngest daughter, Elizabeth Miller in Tracy.

I can still almost taste those little cookies that came from the cookie cabinet at the front of the store.

AUTHORS NOTE: I am grateful to Elizabeth (Barroca) Miller for providing me with the pictures and important details for my story. She and her husband, Mike, are retired school teachers living in Tracy.



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Back in the day

DISCOVERING A GEM OF PINOLE'S HISTORY

Part two: The Silvas family's transition from rural to urban life in 19th century Pinole

By **George R. Vincent**

The old Tessie Curran Baldwin dwelling in downtown Pinole today houses a popular business called the Garden of Gems. This quaint residence along San Pablo Avenue is a landmark tracing its origins from slaughterhouse to butcher shop to remodeled home in the 1870s.

It was at that time that new occupants Cipriano and Maria Silvas and their 11 children moved from their ranch in Pinole Valley to the town's fast-growing business corridor

called Main Street.

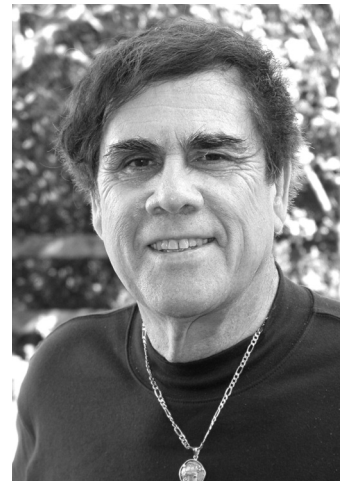
At that time, the intersection of Tennent Avenue and San Pablo Avenue was the coveted business location known as the Four Corners. Having an eye for a profitable business opportunity, Cipriano and Maria in the early 1900s purchased the southwest corner building called Maguire's Saloon, which sat adjacent to their San Pablo Avenue home. Here they built the imposing Golden West Hotel.

The hotel had a popular saloon on the first floor run by Cipriano's

brother, Jimmy. A men's haberdashery shop was also here. Pinole's menfolk could now drink and dress in style at the same time.

The large wooden building was to survive many downtown fires, changing hands in later years to become the Trovatore Café and the Town Tavern. In 1958, the Golden West Hotel was razed to become a Standard Oil gas station; today the site is occupied by the Pump House gas station and convenience store.

It was during the demolition of an old



George Vincent

Pinole building belonging to Cipriano Silvas that a gem of Pinole's past came to light. An intact business ledger was found, written by Cipriano in 1874-75. The ledger is a day-by-day record of the Silvas' family's living expenses, written by the father in Spanish in a fine hand of pen and ink. William McMaster, a descendant of Cipriano Silvas and Tessie Curran Baldwin, owns the ledger.

Continued on page 9

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DISCOVERING A GEM OF PINOLE'S HISTORY

Continued from page 8
The ledger chronicles more than just tallies of purchases. The book reveals how a large family of 13 carried on their daily needs in 19th century Pinole.

In 1874-75, Silvas sold 333 bales of hay for \$495.34 and 420 sacks of beans for \$1,505.73. Freight costs to deliver goods to market were

\$79. His income from October 1874 to October 1875 was \$1,922.07. His expenses totaled \$1,683.95, for a profit of only \$238 for the family to live on.

Nevertheless, the ledger shows the family was self-sufficient through hard work, making most of their own clothing and raising and cooking their own food-

stuffs. Yards and yards of materials were bought for sewing. In 1875, the family bought a ready-made suit for one of the little boys for \$8. Sombreros were bought for \$1 each and suspenders for \$.50 each. The family made only one trip away that year to San Francisco that cost them \$2.

The ledger shows whiskey purchased for \$2.50 a gallon. The family grew almost all its own food and raised animals for meat. Each month they bought a 50-pound sack of flour, a sack of sugar, and a 25-pound sack of rice. Flour cost \$.04 a pound, sugar \$.12 a pound, and rice was \$.08 a pound.

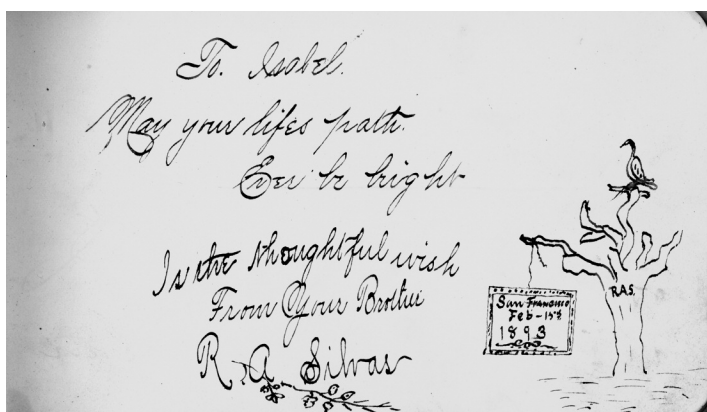
Since all vegetables and meats were raised by



Cipriano Silvas

the family, there must have been an endless kitchen parade of cooking, baking, and preserving chores.

During harvest time, "trabajadores" (workers) were hired to help in the
Continued on page 10



A page from Isabel Acosta's memory book, dated February 1893, one of many items left to Tessie Curran Baldwin, granddaughter of Cipriano and Maria Silvas.

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Always 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 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 and scroll down to PINOLE HISTORY. Several recent programs have been added.

DISCOVERING A GEM OF PINOLE'S HISTORY

Continued from page 9

fields and one household servant was employed. However, no cooks were hired. Entries also show purchases needed to run the ranch: human and livestock medicines, tools, ropes, lamp oil, gun powder, soap, writing paper, knives, forks, and spoons.

Tessie Curran Baldwin was a granddaughter of Cipriano and Maria Silvas. Tessie inherited the ledger, as well as photos, documents, and a memory book from her family's stay in early Pinole.

The Silvas family made the change from the hard life of ranching to become Main Street business folks in 1870s Pinole. Although it seems that they combined ranching with the saloon and hotel business, the



Golden West Hotel and Silvas Saloon (center left), early 1920s.

family enterprise gives us a rare glimpse of the

pioneer spirit and family closeness needed to sur-

vive in 19th century Pinole.

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WANTED

by the Pinole **Historical** Society

- **Photos** (family, events, buildings, particularly those no longer standing)
- **Movies:** VHS, Beta, camcorder, DV tape, 8mm, Super 8mm, 16mm, 35mm film of parades and events, floods, fires, etc. — anything that might be significant in Pinole's history. All photos and movies will be returned.

We are collecting, digitizing, cataloging, and preserving old photos and movies to exhibit, educate, and entertain.

Contact the Pinole Historical Society at (510) 724-9507 or via e-mail at info@pinolehistoricalsociety.org



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THEN AND NOW

A Pinole landmark closed its doors — albeit briefly — on Sunday, June 14, when Cori Clark cooked her last batch of hash-browns at The Alley Cafe. The restaurant reopened on June 25 under new management.

This cafe has been a fixture in Pinole since 1962, when former Fire Chief Alex Clark and his friend, Bob Dutra, bought the former Greenfield's Department Store building. They sold the café, reacquired it, and then sold it again.

Cori Clark's father, Dave Brandt, bought it in 1978. Cori Brandt worked for her father in the restaurant as a waitress; Dave was the cook. When Dave died in 1992, Cori (Brandt) Clark, by this time

Cori Clark in the 1990s.



married to Alex Clark's son, Chano, took over, and had been there since.

Not much changed through the years at The Alley Café, including the food and the cook. Cori fed generations of area residents, many of them who remember her fondly on Facebook.

One Facebook writer commented about the enormous portions of hashbrown potatoes Cori served: "She throws them down, oils them up, and fries the dickens out of them before they hit your plate piping hot!" Another wrote: "Where else is there only one cook for over 40 people? Cori is the bomb!" Still another: "This place is my morning go-to. Such a wonderful place."

Cori Clark 2015.



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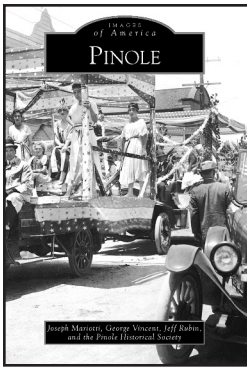
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LOCAL HISTORY BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM PHS

The Pinole Historical Society stocks Arcadia Publishing books about Hercules, Richmond, El Sobrante, El Cerrito, Crockett, Rodeo, Martinez, Port Costa, and Maritime Contra Costa County. And, of course, we have plenty of Pinole books.

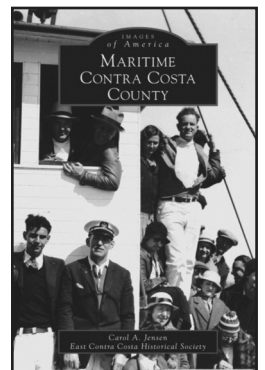
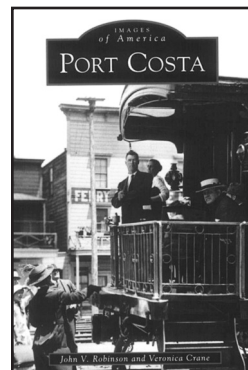
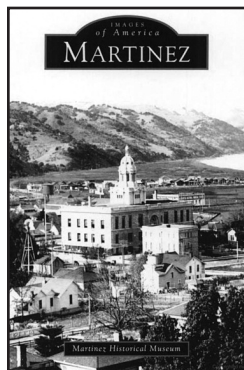
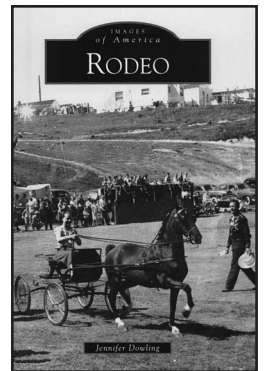
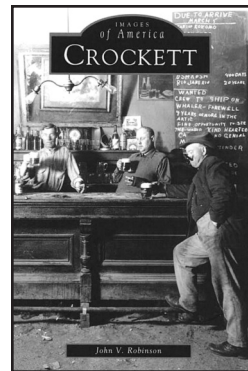
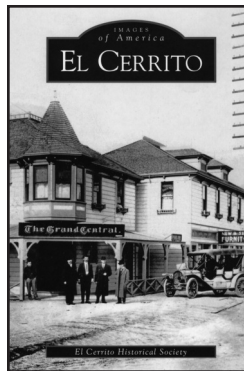
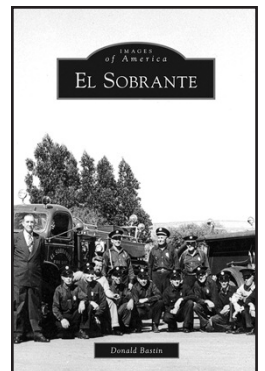
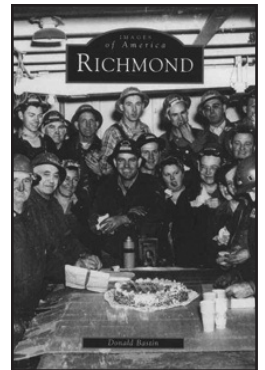
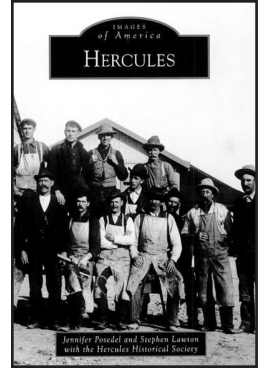
You may purchase one or more of these books from us at the Pinole Farmers' Market—we're there every other Saturday from April through December.

Pinole, Hercules, Richmond, El Sobrante, El Cerrito, and Maritime Contra Costa County books are **\$24**, including sales tax.

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

You may order one or more by mail (prices listed include sales tax and postage) and we'll ship them to you immediately.

Mail your check and order form to **Pinole Historical Society, P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564.**



50 years ago — 1965

August 6: President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Voting Rights Act prohibiting voting discrimination against minorities.

August 6: Indian troops invade Pakistan.

August 9: Singapore separates from the Federation of Malaysia and gains its independence.

August 11: Watts riots begin in Southeast Los Angeles, lasts 6 days.

August 13: Jefferson Airplane debuts at the Matrix in San Francisco and begins to appear there regularly.

August 14: Sonny & Cher's "I Got You Babe" hits #1.

August 15: The Beatles perform the first stadium concert in the history of rock, playing before 55,600 persons at Shea Stadium in New York City.

August 18: 5,500 United States Marines destroy a Viet Cong stronghold on the Van Tuong peninsula in Quảng Ngãi Province, in the first major American ground battle of the Vietnam War.

August 22: San Francisco Giants pitcher Juan Marichal hits Los Angeles Dodgers catcher John Roseboro on the head with his bat, causing a 14-minute brawl.

August 30: Casey Stengel announces his retirement after 55 years in baseball.

September 13: Willie Mays's 500th HR (off Don Nottbart) keys Giants' 11th straight win.

September 18: "I Dream of Jeannie," starring Barbara Eden as a 2,000-year-old genie, and Larry Hagman as an astronaut who becomes her master, premieres on NBC.



The Gateway Arch

September 28: Fidel Castro announces that anyone who wants to can emigrate to the United States. The first group of Cuban refugees travels to the U.S. on October 10.

October 4: Pope Paul VI becomes first Pope to visit the Western Hemisphere. He appears for a Mass in Yankee Stadium and makes a speech at the United Nations.

October 9: Beatles' "Yesterday" single goes #1 and stays #1 for 4 weeks.

October 15: In Berkeley, an anti-war march to the Oakland Army Base is stopped at the Oakland border by a line of Oakland police.

October 28: In St. Louis, the 630-foot tall inverted catenary steel Gateway Arch, part of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, is completed. There is a unique tram system to carry passengers to the observation room at the top of the arch.

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