Pinole Historical Society Newsbriefs



P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564

www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org

FEBRUARY 12 PROGRAM

TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALLGAME

he Pinole Historical Society will kick off its 2016 series of programs with a sports focus.

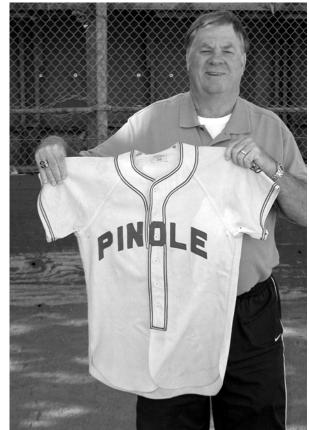
Mike LeFebvre, longtime high school and college coach and current Guest Services representative for the San Francisco Giants, will chronicle the history of baseball in Pinole in "Take Me Out to the Ballgame," on Friday, February 12, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in Conference Rooms 2A and 2B of the Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Building, 1301 Pinole Valley Road. Refreshments will be served.

With Major League Spring Training camps opening in Arizona and Florida the following week, this is a great time to feature our city's participation in our National Pastime.

Four players who attended Pinole Valley High School have played Major League baseball. They are:

- Dale Sveum, a coach for the World Champion Kansas City Royals, who enjoyed a 12-year playing career as an infielder with the Milwaukee Brewers, Philadelphia Phillies, Chicago White Sox, Oakland A's, Seattle Mariners, Pittsburgh Pirates, and New York Yankees
- **Chris Singleton**, who played six seasons as a centerfielder for the Chicago White Sox, Baltimore Orioles, Oakland A's, and Tampa Bay Devil Rays
- **Jeff Harris**, a right-handed pitcher for the Seattle Mariners for two seasons
- **Nathan Haynes**, an outfielder for two seasons with the Anaheim Angels and Tampa Bay Devil Rays.

Major League teams have drafted 16 players from Pinole Valley High School and one Pinole resident, Kenny Burrow, a catcher who played for De Anza High School before PVHS was built. Burrow didn't play Major League baseball, but he



Mike LeFebvre is Pinole's dean of local baseball history.

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

PHS CALENDAR

PROGRAMS AND BOARD MEETINGS

February 12 program: "Take Me Out to the Ballgame." (Full story on front page). Join longtime coach and current San Francisco Giants Guest Services representative Mike LeFebvre for a program on the history of baseball in Pinole. Lots of fun stories and great photos. The public is invited to this FREE event in conference rooms 2A and 2B of the Kaiser Permanante Medical Office Building, 1301 Pinole Valley Road. Refreshments will be served.

February 10, March 9, April 13: 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.

Pinole **Historical** Society

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

TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALLGAME

Continued from page 1

played five seasons as a wide receiver for the Atlanta Falcons of the National Football League.

In addition to these baseball players, Pinole has produced several allstar softball players, including Anne Walsh and Stephanie Tamayo, who will also be profiled during this program.

Many PVHS athletes were coached by Mike LeFebvre, who taught math and physical education at PVHS, where he coached softball (15 years), football (10 years), and basketball (10 years).

He later coached softball at Contra Costa College for 10 years and baseball for three years at Will C. Wood High School in Vacaville.

Mike's father, Lawrence "Big Red" LeFebvre, founded and managed the Pinole Merchants, one of the Bay Area's best semi-pro teams, in the late 1930s. He returned to Pinole after serving in World War II and resumed managing the Merchants.

Mike works part-time

for the Giants, where "I mostly talk about baseball with the fans," he says.

"But I also show you where to get garlic fries, where the bathroom is, and if somebody is in your seat, I'll throw them out for you."

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.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9

PHS TO PRESENT PROGRAM AT PINOLE SENIOR CENTER

he Pinole Historical Society will take its "museum on wheels" to the Pinole Senior Center on Wednesday, March 9, for a 1 p.m. program during the center's monthly membership meeting.

PHS co-founder George Vincent, the society's historian, current vice president, and co-author of the recently published book "Pinole Through Time," will regale the audience with stories based on photos from the book, which features old photos — some dating back to the 19th century – and current photos showing the same locations.

The program is open to all Pinole Senior Center members.





FARIA HOUSE/KAISER PERMANENTE MEDICAL OFFICE BUILDING: The Faria House (left) is one of Pinole's iconic buildings, built in the late 1880s by James Tennent as a gift for his bride, Louise. Joseph Dutra and Maria Nunes Faria, immigrants from the Azores, bought the home in 1912, and generations of Farias were reared here. They had eighteen children, eleven of whom survived to adulthood. The house was moved to Heritage Park in downtown Pinole in 2005 to make way for the Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Building (right), which opened January 12, 2009.



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In memoríam

IDA ANN (GRABER) CASTRO

March 7, 1924 — October 30, 2015. Age 76

Ida was a long-time resident of Pinole and a member of St. Joseph's Church of Pinole. Ida met the love of her life, Don Castro, while working at the Shell Development Company in Albany. Ida and Don owned and worked at the C&C Deli on San Pablo Avenue for 35 years. Ida is remembered by faithful customers for making a terrific meatball sandwich.

Ida is most remembered for her smile, kindness, and generosity to all she met. She lovingly cared for Don during his illness until his passing. Don and Ida especially enjoyed being together on their trips to their Tahoe retreat, where they cooked for and entertained friends and family.

Her funeral testimonials were evidence of the love and gentleness she shared with so many. One story told of a homeless vagrant she welcomed and fed at the deli while saying, "God is also on San Pablo Avenue." Another tearful speaker remarked, "I knew a saint — Ida Castro."

Ida is survived by her daughter, Jeanne Castro-Ricketts, of Arkansas, and son, Tony Castro, of El Sobrante, and five grandchildren.

George Vincent



Ida Castro

<u>In memoríam</u>



Joseph Variz

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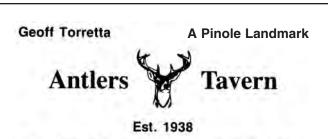
Joseph Variz

August 21, 1926 — January 7, 2016. Age: 89

Joe was the oldest son of six children of Frank and Lena Variz. The Variz family were early Portuguese residents of Pinole. Joe attended Pinole-Hercules School #1 and graduated from Richmond High School. He worked for 22 years for the Hercules Powder Company. Joe loved the Oakland A's and playing softball. He was also the groundskeeper and board member of the Pinole-Hercules Little League and member of the Pinole Historical Society.

Joe married his lifetime sweetheart, Joan, in 1950. The couple had seven children and enjoyed camping trips together. Joe's wife and son, Joey, preceded him in death. He is survived by his brother, Albert Variz and sister, Laura Murray. He is also survived by sons, Frank, Allen, Edward and David and daughters Delores Keoskes and Donna Simmons, and 12 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

- George Vincent



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Back in the day

THE HOUSE THAT ??? BUILT

By George R. Vincent

inole has had three imposing historic homes constructed on hills — the Fernandez Mansion (1894), the Downer Mansion (1900), and the Faria farmhouse, built sometime in the late 19th century.

Recently, a resident took the Pinole Historical Society's self-guided downtown walking tour. Stop #5b was the transplanted Faria House at 2100 San Pablo Avenue.

The tour brochure states the house was built by William Allen in 1891 for his daughter as a wedding gift when she married James H.

Tennent. However, upon researching the home's past on the Internet, the inquirer found it was built in 1880 by Dr. Samuel J. Tennent for his newly wedded son, James.

A romantic pair of tales to be sure, but which version is correct, if either?

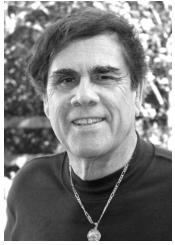
The Faria House, known in earlier days as the home of James Hugh Tennent, has always had question marks as to its builder, date of construction, and its chain of occupants.

Much of the landmark's history has been based upon local legends of memory, historical speculation, or Tennent family folklore. Since this home may someday be a

candidate to house Pinole's museum, it is important to set the historical record straight.

After researching this at the Oakland History Center at the Mormon Temple, Contra Costa County Historical Society, newspaper, census and county vital statistics records, family genealogy records, and local folklore, I have solved the mystery of the Faria House construction and occupancy.

We must start with Pinole's pioneer resident and founder, Dr. Samuel J. Tennent. In 1849, he married Rafaela Martinez, who had inherited 1/11 of El Rancho Pinole. This included all land north of present I-80 freeway to



George Vincent

downtown Pinole, as well as the entire bay waterfront.

In 1850, Dr. Tennent built Pinole's first wooden home on their ranch site as a present to his new bride. The large ranch stretched west and east of Pinole Valley Road from today's Pinole Valley Lanes to Collins School. Here, the couple had ten children.

Rafaela died in 1868 at the age of 44. James Hugh Tennent was their

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Continued from page 5

oldest son, delivered by midwife in 1856. James Tennent would become the caretaker of his father's stories of life on Rancho El Pinole in the 1850s and 1860s.

Research from archives gives clues to the home's background:

➤ Kathyrn Burns Plummer, granddaughter of

Samuel J. Tennent, remembered: "James H. Tennent and his family lived in the Tennent ranch house until they built a new and larger house on a hill across the road." Local history has always dated this event in 1880.

➤ Tennent family genealogy states: "The eldest son, James, built the large house across the Valley Road after his marriage and lived there many years."

➤ James Tennent died at age 91 in 1948. His long obituary read in part: "Jim married Louise Allen of Pinole and built for his bride the home which is now owned and occupied by the William Faria Family."

Answers may also be inferred from a timeline of sources:

1. August 16, 1886: Samuel Tennent died.

2. July 4, 1887: James H. Tennent married Louise Delcina Allen,

a school teacher.

3. James Tennent was 32 and Louise was 29. They married in Alameda, her hometown.

4. September 1888: Tennent heirs (James, John, and Kate Tennent Cousins) partitioned the Tennent Ranch into divisions.

5. 1888: first child, Samuel Edward Tennent, died at birth.

6. The couple's six children were born between 1888 and 1895. All three sons died early.

7. 1890: The couple's next son, James Allen Tennent, died.

8. From 1892-1897: Voting registers placed James Tennent as a Pinole resident and butcher.

9. 1897: Louise Tennent and children are living in the Tennent home.

10. 1898: James Tennent left Pinole for the Klondike Gold Rush in Alaska.

Continued on page 7



Dr. Samuel Johnson Tennent

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PHS MEETING DATES/PROGRAMS

e have several interesting programs lined up this year. Our focus will be not only on Pinole history, but the history of the region. We have scheduled programs for our May 13 and September 9 meetings. We'll announce our November 4 program as we move closer

ot that date.

Here are our scheduled programs all from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in conference rooms 2A and 2B of the Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Building, 1301 Pinole Valley Road:

May 13: The Contra Costa County Historical Society (CCCHS) operates a major archival collection documenting the history of the county at its Contra Costa History Center at 724 Escobar Street, in Martinez. CCCHS representatives will describe the collection, consisting of letters, diaries, manuscripts of writings, legal records, photographs, maps, newspapers, periodicals, and books.

September 9: Beverly Lane, former mayor of Danville and curator of the Museum of the San Ramon Valley, will speak about the history of the San Ramon Valley, which has many parallels to the history of West Contra Costa County. Beverly is the author of the recently published book, "San Ramon Chrinocles: Stories of Bygone Days."

Continued from page 6

11. 1900: James and Louise Tennent's home was now in Claremont, Alameda County. His occupation was listed as a miner by a censustaker.

12. 1905-1926: Tennent returned from Alaska and settled with his wife on a cotton ranch in San Joaquin Valley.

13. 1912: The James Tennent home in Pinole was purchased by Joseph and Maria Faria from Kate Tennent Cousins.

14. 1926: The Tennent family resided in Berkeley.

15. 1927: Louisa Tennent died in San Francisco at age 68.

16. 1928-1936: James was a retired cotton grower living in Kensington. An 80th birthday party was given by his two daughters.

17. July 1948: James Tennent died at age 91.

WHAT IS KNOWN OF WILLIAM ALLEN?

Allen was an Irish immigrant born in 1819 and resided in Alameda. His wife was Margaret Allen. They had six children; a daughter, Louise, was the second oldest.

Allen made his living as a carpenter. In 1887, he was 68 years old when his daughter married James Tennent.

The evidence shows that James Tennent indeed built his elegant two-story home on a knoll across from the family ranch after his father's death. There is also truth in the charming, prevailing story that he built it as a wedding gift for his new bride — and quite possibly for his new family as well.

However, this was done closer to 1888 or 1889, not in 1880, as James Tennent was not yet married then.

Samuel J. Tennent died the year before his son's marriage. Therefore, he could not have given the home as a wedding gift to his son.

The couple named their first-born son in the grandfather's honor, but sadly, the infant died shortly after birth.

There is always the possibility that during his son's engagement in 1886 that the father made the promise to give the land and build the house as part of James's inheritance.

Hence, the origin of the story of the father's



Kate Tennent Cousins in 1870. As the oldest heir of Dr. Samuel J. Tennent, she sold the James Tennent house to Joseph and Maria Nunes Faria in 1912.

wedding gift to James.

It is interesting that James did not marry until after his father's death.

It seems James
Tennent followed his
father's footsteps in
life. Both were Gold Rush
seekers, and James's
father had also built a
new home for his bride,
Rafaela, in 1850.

It would have taken a year or more to build the

James Tennent home. Even the 1891 date seems plausible, as one reliable source stated: Tennent's "family" lived in the father's ranch house after his marriage to Louise.

There, they would have had access to servants to help with their new offspring while the house was being built. Also, Louise was pregnant with

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their fourth child in 1891.

James Tennent married at age 32, which was rather late for the time period. Louise, who was living in Pinole, was 29 and possibly teaching school in the area.

It seems the couple spent the first two years of their marriage living at Samuel Tennent's family ranch home until it became crowded with arrivals of children back-to-back-to-back in 1888, 1889, and 1890.

James Tennent undoubtedly wanted to strike out on his own with the building of a larger house than his father's on the 4.5-acre parcel.

From 1888 to 1898, James and Louise Tennent raised their young family in the new home. When James left



James Tennent (seated) and his brother Samuel. They were two of the 10 children of Dr. Samuel and Rafaela Tennent. James and his wife, Louise, lived in the farm house later purchased by the Farias.

for Alaska in 1898, Louise must have had her own family's support if she stayed in the big house.

In 1900, she was living in the Claremont district of Oakland. So, she may have moved the family out to be nearer to the Allen family for help, as her youngest child was only three.

The house probably saw a succession of renters or new owners after the Tennents moved out around 1900 and before Kate Tennent Cousins, the oldest family heir, sold it to the Farias in 1912.

The story of William Allen building the home in 1891 for his daughter's marriage does not seem likely. She married in 1887, not in 1891.

The Tennent family estate owned the land on

Continued on page 9

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which the home was built, not Allen.

Then, too, as a carpenter he probably was not a wealthy man, as carpenters made about \$4 a day at the time. With five other children to support, he could not afford to be so generous in home giving to one daughter.

However, it seems William Allen had some connection to Pinole, since his daughter lived there before her marriage.

Since Allen was a carpenter, perhaps he or his sons did play a part in the actual hammer and nail physical construction or furnishing of the home, despite Allen's advanced age.

Hence, the comingling of the two stories as to who built the home for the daughter or new bride as a wedding pre-



The Faria family in front of their first Pinole home in 1907, five years before they bought the farm house from Kate Tennent Cousins.

sent — Samuel Tennent, James Tennent, or William Allen.

The James and Louise Tennent home was built for a large family unit. Its large staircase, banisters and drawing room never lacked for playful children's footsteps and laughter.

Margaret, Mary, and John Tennent lived there with their parents. Their sibling, May, died as an infant in 1891. The Continued on page 10

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In 2005, the Faria house was moved to its present location downtown Pinole at 2100 San Pablo Avenue, in Heritage Park. Could it be the future home of a Pinole museum? We'll see.

Continued from page 9

youngest son, John, died at age 15.

When the Farias moved in with their brood of some 14 offspring in 1912, it became the "Faria House," as it is known today. Eventually, three generations of Farias grew up there.

In 2005, the house was moved to Heritage Park in downtown Pinole — #5b on the PHS Walking Tour.

The local mythology that once surrounded the home has also now been moved away to reveal much about the home's occupants and its true early history.

NEXT ISSUE: Maria Nunes Faria owned the land surrounding the Tennent home before the Faria family bought the home. How was this possible? Read about Manuel Costa Moitoza Garcia's gift to Maria Nunes Faria in the next issue of *Newsbriefs*.

Pinole **Historical** Society 2016 Membership Application

(PINOLE RESIDENCY NOT REQUIRED FOR MEMBERSHIP)

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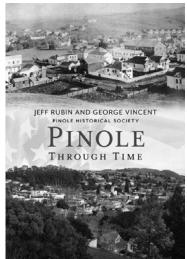
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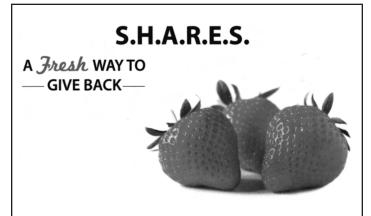
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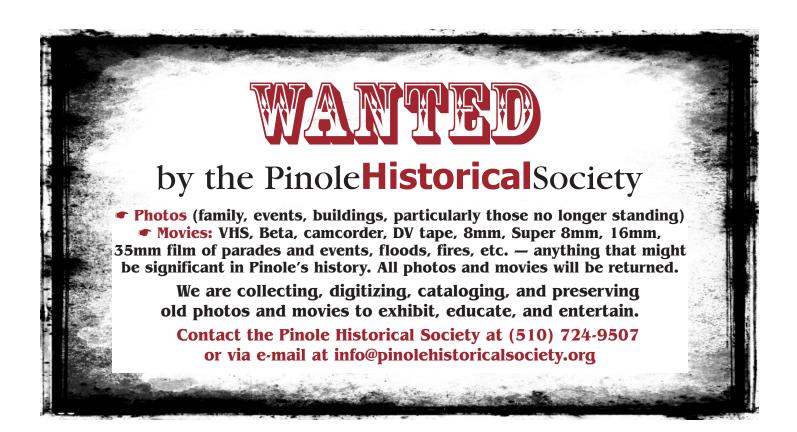
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The original Pinole Valley Shopping Center, photographed (above, left) in 1968 by Earl Combs from Faria Hill, was built in stages, from the supermarket in 1959 to the in-line stores in the 1960s. It was Pinole's first shopping destination away from the downtown area. Much of Pinole Valley Road was still undeveloped then; that would soon

change, as the valley's ranches disappeared and were replaced by private homes.

In 2016, a completely remodeled and expanded Pinole Valley Shopping Center is a major destination, with restaurants, Walgreens, Mechanics Bank, Trader Joe's, and specialty stores.

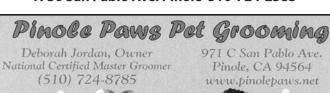


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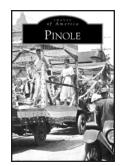
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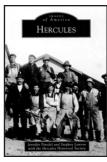
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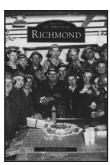
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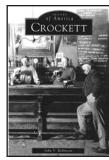












Pinole

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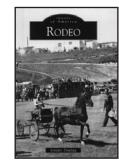
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The Pinole, Hercules, Richmond, El Sobrante, El Cerrito, and Maritime Contra Costa County

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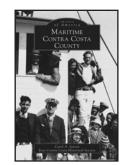
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50 years ago — 1966

January 1: Simon & Garfunkel's "The Sounds of Silence" reaches #1 on the charts.

January 12: "Batman," starring Adam West as Batman, Burt Ward as Robin, and Cesar Romero as The Joker, debuts on ABC-TV.

January 13: The first African-American to become a Cabinet member is Robert C. Weaver, named by President Lyndon B. Johnson as the United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

March 19: Texas Western University (now the University of Texas at El Paso), starting five black players, defeats the all-white University of Kentucky, 72-65, to win the NCAA basketball championship. Until that game, at the height of the civil-rights era, no major-college team had ever started five black players in an NCAA championship game. In fact, until coach Don Haskins did it earlier that season, no major-college team had ever started five black players in ANY game. Within a decade, major college teams in most sports throughout the south were integrated.

February 3: The Soviet spacship Luna 9 makes the first soft landing on the Moon.

March 25: U.S. Supreme Court rules "poll tax" unconstitutional.

April 11: Frank
Sinatra records
"Strangers in the
Night" single for
his album of the
same name.



It reaches #1 on the Billboard charts.

April 28: "The Sound of Music" is named Best Picture at the 38th Academy Awards. Julie Christie ("Darling") and Lee Marvin ("Cat Ballou") were named Best Actress and Best Actor, respectively.

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