

Celebrating 50 years: 1974-2024



Pinole **Historical Society**

Newsbriefs

Winter 2024

P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564

www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org

50th anniversary in 2024

PHS RECEIVES CONGRESSIONAL COMMENDATION

Congressman John Garamendi's (CA-8) representative, Harpreet Sandhu, presented the Pinole Historical Society with a congressional commendation at the November 11, 2023, Veterans Day Memorial and Flag Retirement Ceremony.

Rep. Garamendi congratulated the society on its upcoming 50th anniversary in 2024 and recognized its commitment to preserving the city's history.

The Pinole Historical Society was founded in 1974 by George Vincent and the late Dr. Joseph Mariotti.

The congressman's choice of words are of particular significance. He wrote:

"The Pinole Historical Society has not wavered from its commitment to promoting appreciation of history and chronicling the city of Pinole's heritage for current and future generations. ... Organizations such as the Pinole Historical Society connect us through our shared heritage and legacy."

We appreciate the congressman's recognition of the importance of local history, and are sure many Pinole residents share his sentiments.



Congressional Commendation

PRESENTED IN HONOR OF THE

Pinole Historical Society

IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR

50th Anniversary

~ November 10, 2023 ~

It is my pleasure to recognize the Pinole Historical today as they celebrate their 50th anniversary. Since 1974, the Pinole Historical Society has not wavered from its commitment to promoting appreciation of history and chronicling the city of Pinole's heritage for current and future generations. The Pinole Historical Society volunteers over the years have dedicated their time to presenting at many libraries, schools and community centers to teach residents about Pinole's fascinating history. Organizations such as the Pinole Historical Society connect us through our shared heritage and legacy. On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, please accept my sincere congratulations on this milestone and my best wishes for your continued success.

JOHN GARAMENDI

Member of Congress
8th District, California

Published quarterly by the Pinole Historical Society

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Newsbriefs is also posted on the PHS website (click on NEWSLETTER in the menu bar).

FOR ADVERTISERS: 1,500 printed copies of *PHS Newsbriefs* are distributed every quarter, generating readership among thousands of Pinole and West County residents. Hundreds more receive the newsletter directly from the PHS via its database and website.

If you're interested in advertising, contact Jeff Rubin at info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org or (510) 724-9507.

Pinole**Historical**Society

Board of Directors: Jeff Rubin, President; Mary McMains, Treasurer; Jo Ann Gannotti, Secretary; Norma Martinez-Rubin, Peter Murray, Carol White.
Directors Emeritus: 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 taking its annual winter break from the Pinole Farmers' Market. We'll be back April through December.

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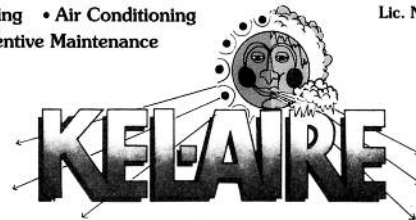
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President's Message

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

PHS ESSAY CONTEST EDUCATES AND STIMULATES THINKING



Jeff Rubin

Why is it important for communities to preserve their history?

This seems an appropriate question to ask since 2024 marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Pinole Historical Society by George Vincent and the late Dr. Joseph Mariotti.

(Read George's first of a two-part series of articles on growing up in Pinole in this newsletter.)

Rather than list a litany of reasons why a community's history is important and deserves to be remembered and preserved, we thought we'd ask the people who will one day be the caretakers of today's history — the school children of Pinole.

In the 50th year of the society's existence and the 16th year of the society's Pinole History Essay Contest, we're asking students to answer this question:

Why is it important for communities to preserve their history?

Participating schools include Ellerhorst, Collins, Shannon, and Stewart elementary schools, West County Mandarin School, and St. Joseph School. The contest will run through Friday, March 29. Teachers will submit their students' essays to the Pinole Historical Society, whose board members will select the winners.

Certificates and grand prize awards will be presented to students at each school in person in June or will be sent to teachers for distribution to their students.

Why does the PHS sponsor a history essay contest?

While California history is taught in the public schools, usually in fourth grade, local history is not part of the curriculum. It's the society's goal not only to expose our city's young people to Pinole's history, but also to get them thinking about how the city has progressed from its earliest times to the present.

Since the contest started in 2008, we've asked students to opine on such questions as:

- What makes a community like Pinole so special?
- What would you like Pinole to be like 25 years from now?
- How would you describe an American?
- If you could meet with an historic person, who would it be and what would you talk about?
- Every 10 years the U.S. government counts the number of people living in the United States. This is called a "census." Why is a census important, and what can we learn about Pinole by counting the number of people who live here?

We've received some brilliant essays on all of these topics, but none as thoughtful as those received from our 2021 essay question: **What is the most important lesson you've learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, and why?**

Here are some of those responses:

"I learned many things about myself that I didn't know how to do during the pandemic. I learned how to do a front flip on a trampoline and ride a big bike. I learned how to do all of this because of covid and quarantine. We should be happy around this time because we could learn many things about ourselves like many skills that you didn't know you had, now probably working out a little more for some exercise because there's no recess. You're probably spending a lot of time with your family because of quarantine and there's no school so you should be happy about that."

— Mason Soriano, Shannon Elementary, Grade 4

Continued on page 4

Find out more about Pinole's history by using your smartphone to scan this QR code. It will take you to the Pinole Historical Society website:
www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org



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Your donation is tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 3

"The Covid 19 pandemic has taught me to appreciate what I had before the Covid pandemic."

— Jordynn Dasilva
Ellerhorst Elementary
School, Grade 3

"During this tough time I learned not to take anything for granted. We should treasure every day because we

never know what is gonna get thrown at us the next day."

— Juliana Campos,
Stewart Elementary
School, Grade 5

"I have learned to be thankful for my family, my friends, my health, and my teachers. But the most important lesson I have learned was to never give up."

— Maya Firas
Ellerhorst Elementary
School, Grade 3

"I thought that perhaps this disease that was wiping out our loved ones would unite the United States. Instead the distance between us grew much greater than the mandatory six feet."

— Olivia Lubinger,
Pinole Valley High
School, Grade 11

"I would not know what I know now if it weren't for the pandemic. I learned that life is

meant to be happy and that living with less improves your life, and apart from this beautiful and wretched world, every individual has a choice on how to live their life. It matters how I view the world and how I want to live my life. I have to have faith in myself, do what I love, and I will always be good enough ... I also learned that patience is vital to have. The pandemic allowed more time for my family and me. I am changing the way I live and using what I have."

— Maricela Martinez,
Pinole Valley High
School, Grade 9

"The COVID-19 pandemic has taught me to never take things for granted."

— Acomeveer S.
Kingera,
Pinole Valley High
School, Grade 11

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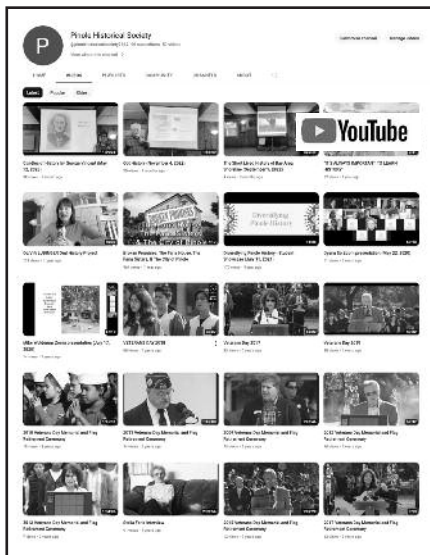


The Pinole Mural video is on the Pinole Historical Society YouTube channel. Visit it in person at Wells Fargo Bank on Fitzgerald Drive.

PINOLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY YOUTUBE CHANNEL FEATURES MORE THAN 40 PROGRAMS

All of the programs the PHS recorded since 2008, are on the Pinole Historical Society YouTube channel.

Type PINOLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY in the search bar. When you get to the channel, click on the "P" in the brown circle, then click on VIDEOS to see all of the programs.



The most recent program added was the May 12, 2023, presentation by PHS co-founder George Vincent, *Candles of History: Celebrating 200 Years of the Heydays and Remnants of the Rancho El Pinole.*

Put My Experience and Knowledge to Work For You

Having the right connections in the community makes all the difference. I grew up in the Pinole-Hercules area, where my ancestors settled more than 150 years ago, some farming the fertile soils from Pinole to Rodeo, while others helped build the communities we now call home. The benefits of my longstanding connection to and detailed knowledge of the community are the foundation for the outstanding service I deliver to my clients.



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Visit the Pinole Historical Society website for information on the society's activities and events – and, of course, the history of the sweetest city in the East Bay.



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Back in the day

By **George R. Vincent**
Co-founder, **Pinole Historical Society**

REVISITING PINOLE'S POST-WAR PAST

A few years back, I led a walking history tour of Old Town Pinole and its surrounding streets. In case you weren't there, it's on the Pinole Historical Society YouTube Channel.

This sit-down tour will be a less-strenuous workout. It will give a glimpse through a youngster's eyes of what it was like to grow up in post-World War II in Pinole, as well as the 1950s.

Back then there was still an atmosphere of small-town culture imbedded in Pinole. Things and people welcomed the roots of change very slowly after the war.

If there was a suitable song title for the time period I was raised in, it might have been "Somewhere Over the Rainbow – But Not Here."

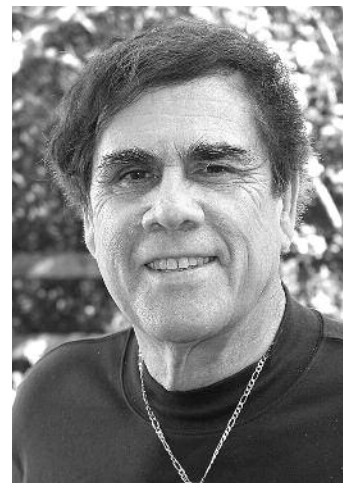
Kids shaking with fear were still warned to never set foot beyond the city limits signs. Pinole Creek flooded regularly each winter and still served as the local sewer system and dump site, while here and there an out-house remained standing until Halloween.

Visitors rightly feared the town's long-standing reputation as a one-cop citation speed trap. Our saloon-culture pride which had once lured even Jack London was still thriving with exotic husband-traps like Club Alibi and Antlers Tavern.

The famous landmark of the "old timers' bench" sat next to Antlers Tavern. It welcomed new members who lied to one another about past deeds. A main interest was watching passing ladies. If one was

expecting, the guys carefully watched to see which foot she put up on the curb first. This was the old Pinole way to determine the baby's gender – left foot first (boy), right foot first (girl).

Horse apples still had to be danced around on city streets. One could



George Vincent

hear and smell the livestock serenade from backyard farms.

Students feared unspeakable tortures if missing the last ring of the 1906 tardy bell of the old schoolhouse on the hill.

Continued on page 9



Pinole's first policeman and traffic officer, Hugh Young, on his Harley in 1948. Young served as police chief from 1950 to 1967.

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PINOLE'S POST-WAR PAST

Continued from page 8

Jessie Clark's Pinole-Hercules News still made sure your birthday party made the front page. And, Henry "Hank" Almond's silver WWII airplane gave noisy airshows over the town with stunts for kids'

enjoyment and parents' worries.

When the old palm tree was cut down on Willow Avenue, it drew a large crowd of curious townfolk. However, this was to be outdone by a stampede of onlookers when the first TV aerial

Continued on page 10



Jessie Howe Clark arrived in Pinole on the train in 1913 and immediately began chronicling the city's history, first for the Pinole Weekly Times, and then for the Pinole-Hercules News, which she founded in 1946. Her newspaper clippings are on microfilm at the Pinole Library.



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PINOLE'S POST-WAR PAST

Continued from page 9
went up on a home on Prune Street.

I proudly stood among the clapping masses when the first traffic light was dedicated in 1948. Paper boy Ronnie Silva pressed the start button, and Mayor Allan Doidge gave a great speech about how this event would put Pinole on the map.

The Neighborhood Watch Program was the telephone central operator in Louis Ruff's grocery store on Main Street. She electronically traced your every movement, so your parents knew where you had been before you got home.

Our hand-crank phone was #133, and the opera-



Club Alibi, San Pablo and Fernandez avenues.

tor knew everyone's online business. The telephone poles sang with songs of rumor and gossip.

When the big tomato trucks from Pinole Valley farms overturned with their red loads on High-

way 40, housewives got their telephone cues faster than a smartphone text. They grabbed their kids and baskets and rushed to the messy scene to scoop up the spoils.

Another valued tradi-

tion was the community rush to their Tennent Avenue front porch or curb when the fire siren rang. Everyone dropped what they were doing and hurried outside to see which way the fire truck went and to wave and cheer on the firemen.

Like Rip Van Winkle, I awakened one day in the late 1950s to witness the start of the loss of the vintage Pinole I knew.

The coming of I-80 cut Pinole in half from the valley. The springing up of homes in Pinole Valley ended our family mushroom hunts and the rural paradise of tomato fields, green pastures, and meadowlarks' songs.

NEXT ISSUE: GROWING UP IN '40S AND '50S PINOLE.

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Remembering the 1927 Carquinez Bridge

FEB. 2 PHS PROGRAM AT PINOLE LIBRARY

John Robinson, author and Cal State East Bay professor who has presented four times to Pinole Historical Society audiences, will present the society's first 2024 program — *Remembering the 1927 Carquinez Bridge* — Friday, February 2, at the Pinole Library, from 6:30-8 PM

John's previous PHS programs include:

- The Lift Bridges of the Bay Area
- Lost Cities of the East Bay
- The Short-Lived History of Bay Area Shoreline Art.



John Robinson

• The Bay Bridge Troll
 Several of John's programs, along with all of the programs the PHS recorded since 2008, are on the Pinole Historical Society YouTube channel.

When the Carquinez Bridge opened on May 21, 1927, it was the

longest bridge west of the Mississippi River and the world's longest highway bridge. (It predated the San Francisco Bay Bridge and Golden Gate Bridge by 11 years.) It was also the first bridge to be designed to resist seismic forces.

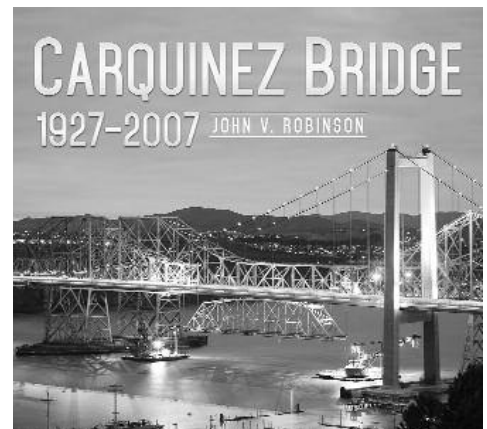
The two main spans were 1,100 feet in length; at the time, it was the

fourth longest cantilever bridge in the world.

Construction began in 1923 and when the bridge opened it replaced ferry service across the Carquinez Strait.

When I-80 was built, the second cantilever bridge was built with four lanes for the eastbound traffic. The westbound

Continued on page 13



"The challenge of history is to recognize its time flow so we can better understand it. To understand history, we have to somehow bridge then and now and connect the dots of past events with the present. One way to do this is by learning to view the past not in terms of timelines or yesterdays, but rather as an ongoing present."

— George R. Vincent —



CARQUINEZ BRIDGE

Continued from page 12
bridge was expanded from two to three narrow lanes by eliminating the pedestrian crossing.

By the 21st Century, the traffic count was up to 105,000 vehicles per day. Because the original bridge didn't meet modern seismic standards, rebuilding it was impractical, so a new one was built.

The 1927 bridge was dismantled in 2006 after the new Al Zampa Bridge for westbound traffic opened in 2003.



On May 21, 1927, President Calvin Coolidge pressed a button in Washington, D.C., and opened the Carquinez Bridge to the 50,000 cars that crossed that day. (Photo by the Sacramento Union.)



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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
2024 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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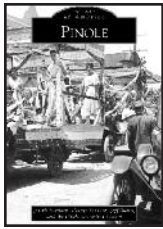
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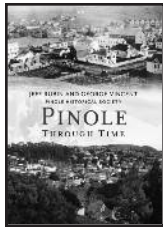
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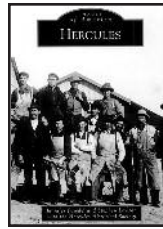
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Pinole



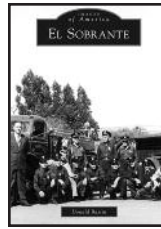
Pinole Through Time



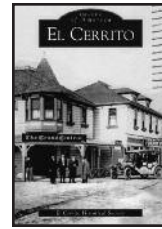
Hercules



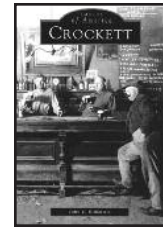
Richmond



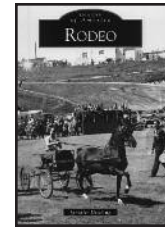
El Sobrante



El Cerrito



Crockett



Rodeo

LOCAL HISTORY BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM THE PINOLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Pinole Historical Society sells these Arcadia books at the Pinole Farmers' Market two Saturdays per month, April through December.

Most are \$25, including sales tax. A few of the older books are \$23, including sales tax.

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

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E-mail _____

METHOD OF PAYMENT

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

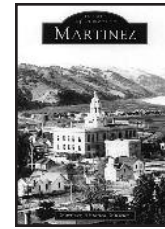
Card # _____ CVV _____ Exp. date _____

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| # of Pinole @\$30 _____ | # of Pinole Through Time @\$30 _____ |
| # of Hercules @\$30 _____ | # of Richmond @\$30 _____ |
| # of El Sobrante @\$30 _____ | # of El Cerrito @\$30 _____ |
| # of Maritime CCC @\$30 _____ | # of East Bay Hills @\$30 _____ |
| # of Crockett @\$28 _____ | # of Rodeo @\$28 _____ |
| # of Martinez @\$28 _____ | # of Port Costa @\$28 _____ |
| # of Tilden Park @\$30 _____ | # of Napa Valley @\$30 _____ |
| # of Bay Area Cocktails @\$30 _____ | # of Hidden SF @\$30 _____ |
| # of Bay Area Ferries @\$30 _____ | # of Left Behind @\$30 _____ |
| # of Lighthouses @\$30 _____ | # of SF Beer @\$30 _____ |

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

Please mail to PINOLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

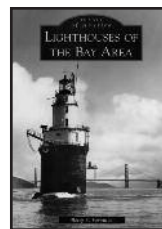
P.O. Box 285, PINOLE, CA 94564



Martinez



Maritime



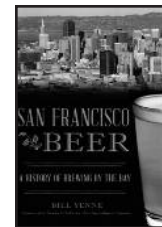
Lighthouses of the Bay Area



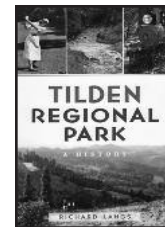
Bay Area Cocktails



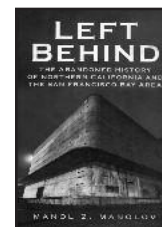
Ferries of the Bay Area



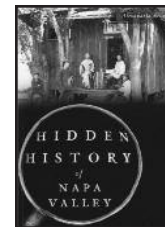
San Francisco Beer



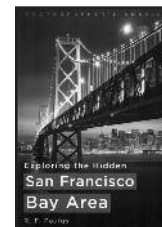
Tilden Park



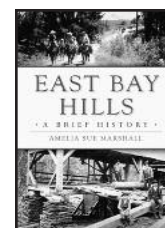
Left Behind



Napa Valley



Hidden San Francisco



East Bay Hills



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