

Pinole Historical Society Newsbriefs



P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564

www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org

SEPTEMBER 9 PROGRAM

HISTORY OF THE SAN RAMON VALLEY

Pinole and its Contra Costa County neighbors to the southeast share much history and heritage. At the September 9 Pinole Historical Society program, historian Beverly Lane, a founder of the Museum of San Ramon Valley, will present a program about the history of San Ramon, excerpted from her recently published book, *San Ramon Chronicles: Stories of Bygone Days*.

The program, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in conference rooms 2A and 2B of the Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Building, 1301 Pinole Valley Road, is FREE to PHS members and the public. Refreshments will be served.

Located at the southern edge of Contra Costa County, San Ramon's Native American, rancho and American past reflects that of the

county and the state. Beverly will recount stories about the city which,

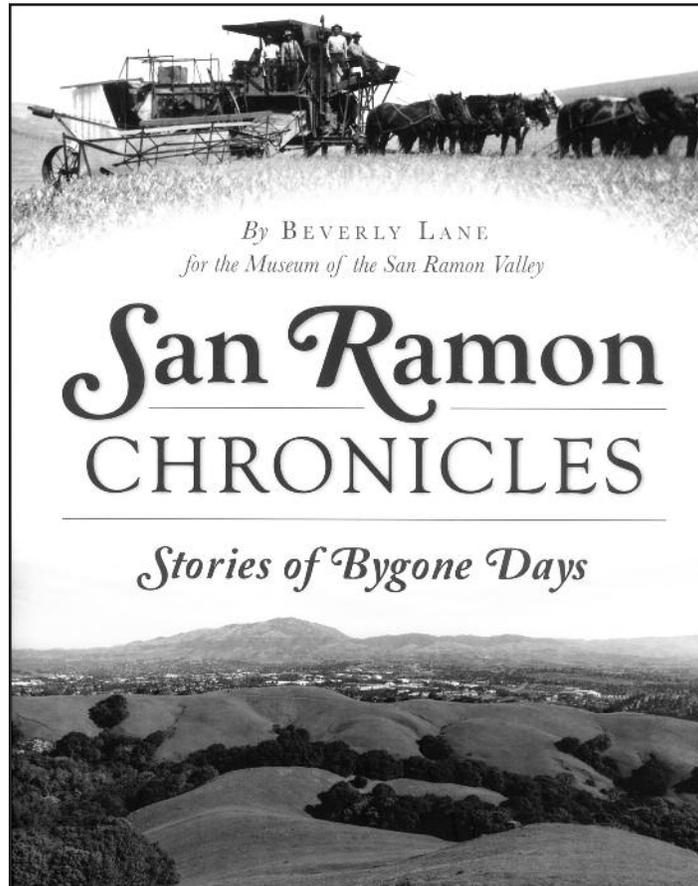
for many years, featured a street sign that read "Population 100."

The Norris family was the first to purchase land from Californio ranchero Jose Maria Amador and settle in the San Ramon Valley.

Memorable dates include 1867 when the school was built, 1891 when the Southern Pacific's San Ramon Branch Line opened, 1911 when a community hall was constructed, 1966 when the I-680 freeway was completed, and 1983 when the city incorporated.

The program will follow the development of the town from pre-historic times, with now-extinct mammal life, touch on the Ohlone and Miwok peoples, and continue through the agricultural period of the 19th and 20th centuries and on to the development of a modern town of 78,000 people.

Continued on page 2



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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 (510) 724-9507.**

PHS CALENDAR

PROGRAMS AND BOARD MEETINGS

September 9 program: "SAN RAMON CHRONICLES: STORIES OF BYGONE DAYS," presented by author and Museum of the San Ramon Valley co-founder and curator Beverly Lane.

Pinole and its Contra Costa County neighbors to the southeast share much history and heritage. This program will chronicle San Ramon's development from its settlement in the 19th century to the present.

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 10, September 14, October 12: 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. Upcoming dates are August 6 and 20, September 3 and 17, October 1 and 15.

PinoleHistoricalSociety

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

HISTORY OF THE SAN RAMON VALLEY

Continued from front page

Today San Ramon is a dynamic suburban city with the Bishop Ranch Business Park in the center and a new city hall. It's no longer a rural outskirts of the Bay Area.

For more information on Pinole Historical Soci-

ety activities and the history of Pinole, please visit the PHS website at www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org.

☆ ☆ ☆

Beverly Lane is an elected director of the East Bay Regional Park District. She served on the first Danville Town

Council as a member and mayor. She was the founding president of the Museum of the San Ramon Valley.

She is a local historian, author, and curator of the Museum of the San Ramon Valley. Her books include *San Ramon Valley: Alamo, Danville, San*

Ramon, "Vintage Danville: 150 Years of Memories, and San Ramon Chronicles: Stories of Bygone Days.

President's Message

Jeff Rubin, President, Pinole Historical Society

STEP 2 ON ROAD TO A MUSEUM

The second step on achieving the society's goal of establishing a museum for the city of Pinole was accomplished July 19 when the Pinole City Council voted 4-0 (one council member was absent) to purchase the Faria House.

The city had previously asked for an appraisal of the Faria House and other properties the city must sell to comply with the state's dissolution of Redevelopment.

The next step will be a discussion at a future council meeting on how the Faria House should be used. At a March 1 council meeting, all five

council members indicated their desire to use the Faria House as a site for a museum.

★ ★ ★

Pinole Historical Society members and their guests are invited to the the society's Member Appreciation Party on Friday, August 12, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at the East Bluff cabana. (See the invitation at the top of page 11 in this newsletter).

Food and beverages will be provided.

There will be several raffle prizes. And, a videographer will record interviews with members and guests so we can get their thoughts about

Pinole on record for our archives.

Members are invited at no cost and may bring a guest at \$10 per guest.

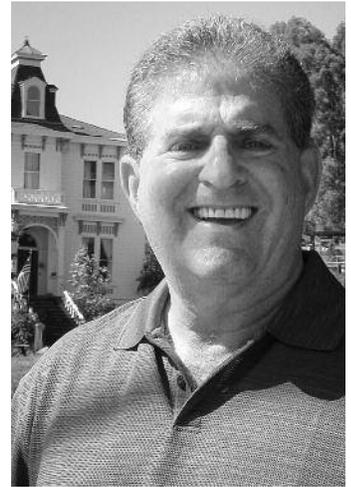
Parking is available on Marionola Way, Ridgecrest Road, and Tesoro Court, which are adjacent to the cabana and pool.

Please RSVP by Wednesday, August 10, to (510) 724-9507 or by e-mail to info@pinolehistoricalsociety.org. Let us know if you are coming and how many guests you are bringing.

Thanks. We look forward to spending some time with you.

★ ★ ★

The PHS is fortunate to



Jeff Rubin

have many people who donate artifacts — photos, maps, books, paintings, and other memorabilia — so that we may archive our city's history.

One of the more talented and generous members we have is Earl Combs, a photographer whose talent has been recognized by the Hilltop YMCA and Pinole Library, which hosted shows of his photos.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 3

Earl contributed to our archives by chronicling the demolition of the old Pinole Valley High School, and continues with photos of the construction of the new PVHS and Gateway East and West projects.

Earl also contributed several photos to our recently published book, "Pinole Through Time."

In addition to being a marvelous photographer

when he's standing on the ground, Earl has become adept at shooting photos from his recently purchased drone, which may be seen hovering above the high school and Gateway construction sites when it's not too windy.

Earl's contributions to the society, which help us chronicle the city's history, will be treasured for years to come.



Earl Combs

In memoriam

MICHAEL MOHRING

September 21, 1955 – June 30, 2016

Age 60

Michael "Mike" Mohring was the third son of the late Leonard and Vivian Mohring of Pinole.

A lifetime resident of Pinole, Mike passed away unexpectedly after having surgery.

The Mohring family ranch in Pinole Valley was one of the oldest and last working ranches in the area. Mike was the caretaker of the ranch, its buildings, animals, and grounds.

Mike was remembered at his memorial by many friends and relatives. His kindness and unselfish service to others characterized his life — always going out of his way to help anyone in need.

Although his favorite song was "Sitting By the Dock of the Bay, Wastin' Time," Mike certainly did not. He was a hard-working rancher and friend to so many. His quiet manner and spirit for living will be missed. Mike is survived by brothers Danny, Jimmy, and Glen Mohring, sister Janine Burgess, as well as many nieces and nephews.

BRUNO ANGELO FILICE

September 28, 1924 – July 11, 2016

Age 91

Former city councilman and mayor of Pinole Bruno Filice died July 11 in Danville.

Born to Ciccillo and Clementina Filice, his family was part of the mass immigration of Italians who came to the United States in the first 15 years of the 20th century. Bruno's family settled in Gilroy, where he remained after serving in the U.S. Army Signal Corps. He and his wife, Pearl, moved to Richmond in 1951, where Bruno went to work for the family owned Filice and Pirelli Canning Company as a food technologist. In 1964, the company merged with four other canners to create California Canners and Growers, the nation's largest fruit and vegetable canning cooperative.

The family moved to Pinole and in 1962, Bruno was elected to the Pinole City Council. He served as mayor in 1963-64.

Geoff Torretta

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The Pinole Historical Society promotes awareness and appreciation of history through preservation and education, and chronicles the city's heritage for current and future generations.

In memoriam

DONALD LEE BARTELS

October 17, 1929 – March 16, 2016

Age 87

Don was born in Nebraska the year of the great stock market crash.

He had an early love of horses and was no stranger to hard work. As a young man, he worked with his father in the ash and trash business, and later in the oil fields of many states.

He came to California in 1954 and entered real estate. He and a partner founded Locators Real Estate, which was sold in 1969. He opened his own office and was a successful realtor for 62 years. It was in his office that he met a co-worker, Lynda, who was to become his wife and the love of his life.

Lynda purchased the Downer Mansion from Buddhist monks in 1997, and she and Don began a labor of love restoring the home built in 1900.

In 2003, when Pinole celebrated its 100th anniversary,

they held the home open for public tours. In that year, Don and his pony, Peanut, led the parade to the Faria House pulling a 100-year old pony cart to call attention to bringing a museum to Pinole.

Don always had a welcoming smile and outgoing manner of sincerity, showing his deep love for people.

Don served as school board president for the Richmond Unified School district. He was also a supporter of the Bay Area Rescue Mission, the Salvation Army, and the Salesian Boys' and Girls' Club. He was also president of the Board of Realtors and won many awards for public service.

Don is survived by his wife, Lynda, two brothers, two daughters, and two step-daughters, as well as 10 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.



Don Bartels



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Fond Memories

Stella (Freitas) Faria

A COBBLER COMES TO TOWN

If you grew up during the Great Depression, you are familiar with the saying, "You kids are so lucky that you never had to wear cardboard in your shoes."

It is joked about by many, but unfortunately it was true. My mother blamed the asphalt paved playground at Pinole-Hercules Elementary School for the rough wear and tear on our shoes, and it seemed often that one of us four sisters had to wait for the next new pair of shoes.

We were fortunate to have a stepdad who had been given a metal shoe form and some leather scraps by a shoemaker friend. He became quite good at improvising until we could afford the next pair of shoes.

It was really exciting when we drove down to Albert's in Richmond or other times to the Buster Brown shoe store in Oakland when our turn came up.

The shoe department upstairs in Albert's was run by two brothers who were very patient with children who had to have their feet checked for size. That metal gadget, which they laid on the floor, had sliding parts that measured both the length and width of your feet. That was a fascinating new experience for little kids.

A quaint new little

shoe-repair shop coming to Pinole in the mid 1930s was more than welcome.

Mr. and Mrs. de Silva and their three sons and one daughter moved into a building bordering Pinole Creek in the 2400 block of San Pablo Avenue.

They were Portuguese immigrants, who had previously lived in Crockett. The shop area was at the street side of the building, probably no more than 12 feet x 15 feet in size.

At the back of the shop there was a door that led to the family living quarters. There was a driveway between the shop and the next building, which at that time was the Smith and Hemleb butcher shop and later a meat market owned by the de Silva's youngest son, Augie.

The pungent smell of leather and very strong glues was overpowering as you entered the shop. Mr. de Silva was particularly neat in practicing his craft, and tried hard to



Stella Faria

accommodate his customers with what they felt was an affordable price. He carried a small supply of boots and work shoes in the limited space he had. If you needed shoe polish, that was the place to buy it, because he carried an assortment of colors other than the usual black or brown.

I remember he would tack little metal tabs on heels to prevent them from running down on the outer edge. I'm sure those cost less than twenty-five cents for the pair. In his work area, he also had a heavy-duty sewing machine, which was used to repair leather belts, purses, vests or jackets. Mr. de Silva was really appreciated for prolonging the life of a pair of shoes, providing the uppers were still in good shape.

The attention-getter inside the shop was a shiny brass cash register, which today would be a valuable collectible piece. Attached to the outside of the shop was a simple little, probably metal, boot-shaped sign that fit the quaintness of his shop.

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A COBBLER COMES TO TOWN

Continued from page 8
Shoemakers and cobblers are more of a rarity

in the United States than in foreign countries. My son, Allen, goes to one

of two cobblers in this area, one in El Sobrante, and the other in Kensing-

ton, to have his boots repaired.

He told me that he recently paid forty-five dollars to have half soles and heels put on a pair of cowboy boots. I'm sure that job, if done by Mr. de Silva, would probably have cost even less than two dollars, and he always included a shoeshine that made your shoes look and feel like brand new.

The little shop closed after Mr. de Silva retired, and was later operated by a young cobbler, as "The Old Soft Shoe."



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Back in the day

George R. Vincent

WHEN PINOLE WAS A LODGE TOWN

Today, if one wishes to meet that special someone, he or she takes to the many internet match sites.

However, in early 20th century Pinole, the local lodges were the social clubs that brought couples together.

Lodge membership flourished especially during the first three decades of the new century. Most of the organizations were male fraternal orders with national affiliations. The orders had ladies' auxiliaries as well.

Many Pinoleans boasted of membership in more than one lodge. Townsfolk then were

eager joiners. There was status and recognition in being a lodge member. It also helped one to advance in business, religious, and social circles.

Each lodge had its own unique look of dress, symbolism, rules of conduct and secrecy, and special activities.

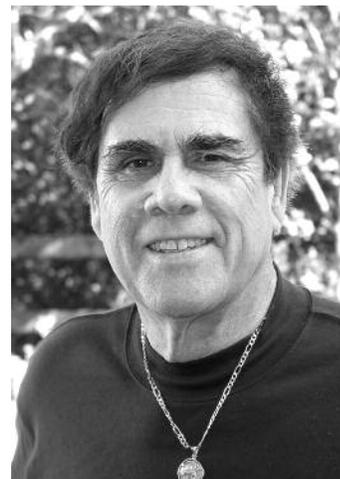
Pinole had chapters of the Odd Fellows, Foresters, Masons, Knights of Pythias, Redmen and Pocahontas, Woodsmen of the World and Women of Woodcraft, Moose, Eagles, Elks, Lions, Young Ladies' and Young Men's institutes, Eastern Star, and Portuguese I.D.E.S., among others.

The lodges served

more than a social function for the small town, which was somewhat isolated from the outside. The lodges were also charitable organizations whose members went into the homes to care for the sick and organized holiday parades and raised money for community improvements and events.

Lodges held meetings, dinners, parties, and entertainment at the large Pinole Foresters Hall, which burned down in the great Pinole fire of 1908.

In 1909, the Pinole Opera house was built on the same site on north Tennent Avenue. From 1909 to 1931,



George Vincent

lodges held meetings, dances, concerts, plays, graduations, and boxing matches there. It also burned down in 1931, taking with it lodge belongings and melting four lodge pianos.

Many a romance began in the Pinole Opera House, with a lady's dance card signed by her suitor-to-be.

For instance, in December 1910, a masquerade ball was given by the drill team of the

Continued on page 9

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WHEN PINOLE WAS A LODGE TOWN

Continued from page 8
Shenandoah Tribe of the Improved Order of Redmen. Admission was \$1, with all-night dancing and food. Festivities went on until Edgar Plantz sang "Good Night Ladies."

The spacious Eagles Hall on Tennent Avenue (the site of today's community playhouse) hosted rock & roll teen dances into the 1950s, while a stuffed bald eagle in a glass case looked on.

Across the street, the I.D.E.S. Portuguese Hall was a lodge meeting place and home of the annual Holy Ghost festa celebration of community dancing, feasting, and fireworks.

Some lodges had their own baseball teams or sponsored one. The Portuguese Hall was also used by lodges to hold community "whist" card parties to raise money.

Pinole lodges were

Members of the Shenandoah Tribe of the Improved Order of Redmen.



known for their patriotic fervor and for "putting on the dog" for the town's celebration parades for the Fourth of July, Holy Ghost, and Fiesta del Pinole.

These events were also a recruitment opportunity. Lodges had elaborate floats, costumes, and

musical accompaniment.

The Redmen float, for example, was an Indian encampment of teepees and Indian maidens who waved and threw flowers.

However, fearsome painted braves with tomahawks roamed around the outside, scaring young and old alike.

Continued on page 10

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WHEN PINOLE WAS A LODGE TOWN

Continued from page 9

People would see chief Vince Scanlan and braves Louis Francis and George Dutra doing war whoops.

My father was an Eagle, Elk, Y.M.I. (Young Men's Institute), Portuguese I.D.E.S., and Redman. He was always away at lodge meetings. My mother belonged to the Y.L.I. (Young Ladies' institute) and to the Pocahontas.

Lodge popularity and membership began to decline after World War II. A new generation found other outlets of interest and lodges became an "old folks bag" and not "hip" for the time.

Lodges were also a casualty of Pinole's rapid



Knights of Pythias members, ca. 1900.

growth as a suburban community. They served a small town of 500 very well, where everyone knew their neighbors. But the I-80 freeway brought change, and many commuting newcomers whose style of living did not fit the vintage appeal of lodge culture.

Today, the tall Pythian Castle building still stands on San Pablo Avenue as a reminder of the heyday of lodge attendance in Pinole. The Knights of Pythias once met there in 1907 in their symbolic garments.

The Pocahontas

Opequon #45 ladies' auxiliary of the Redmen Lodge still meet at the Sportsman's Club on Pinion Street. Its small membership of 22 is highlighted by Pinole's oldest citizen and long-time member, Sybil Bareres, who is 99. She and fellow member Lorraine Pereira have been in the Pocahontas for over 60 years.

The 100-member Y.L.I. is still active and associated with charity works for St. Joseph's Church.

These surviving lodge groups also bring back memories of a time when speed dating was doing the Charleston at a lodge dance at the Pinole Opera House.

Pinole **Historical** Society 2016 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(PINOLE RESIDENCY NOT REQUIRED FOR MEMBERSHIP)

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METHOD OF PAYMENT: Cash Check (Payable to Pinole Historical Society)

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TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

Member Appreciation Party

When: Friday, August 12, 2016

Time: 6:30 to 9:00 pm

Where: East Bluff Cabana

1251 Marionola Way, Pinole

RSVP: by August 10, 2016 to (510) 724-9507

or info@pinolehistoricalsociety.org



pinole historical society get-together

All PHS members are invited to our **Member Appreciation Party** at no cost. Members may bring a guest at \$10 per guest.

Come, sit, relax, share your stories, and have a fun evening with the Pinole Historical Society. Members and guests may use the cabana facilities (but may not swim in the pool).

Food and beverages will be provided.

We will be video-recording short interviews with members and guests for our archives, so if you have a story you'd like to share about growing up in Pinole, we'll be listening!

You can help us preserve the history of Pinole

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.

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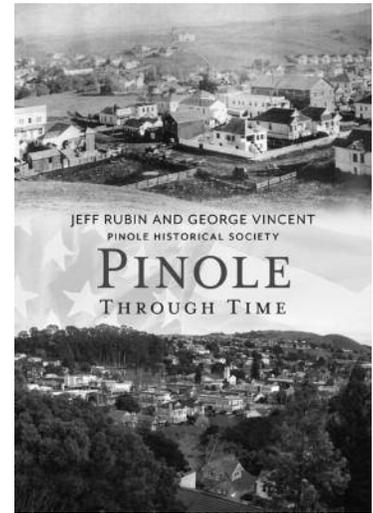
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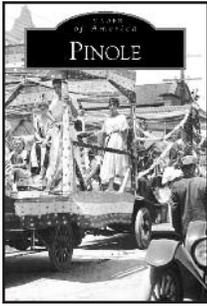


Gary Lalley

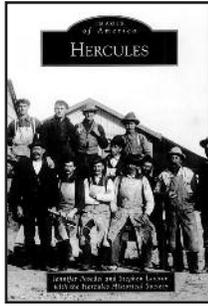
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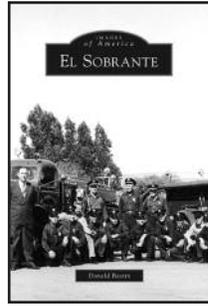
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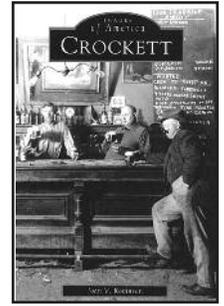
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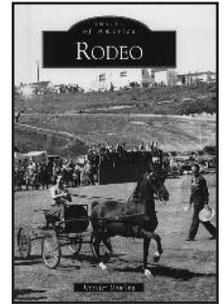
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The Pinole Historical Society sells Arcadia books about Pinole, Hercules, Richmond, El Sobrante, El Cerrito, Crockett, Rodeo, Martinez, Port Costa, and Maritime Contra Costa County at the Pinole Farmers' Market every other Saturday through December.

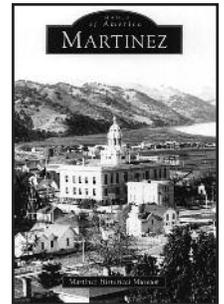
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books are \$24, including sales tax. The Crockett, Rodeo, Martinez, and Port Costa books are \$22, including sales tax.

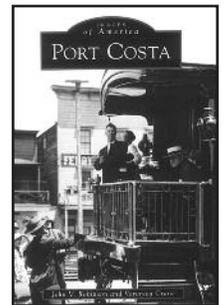
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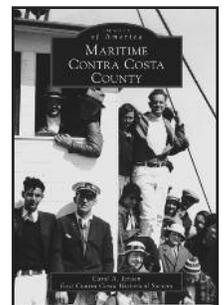
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50 years ago — 1966

- August 5:** The Beatles release "Revolver," often cited as one of the greatest albums in rock music history.
- August 5:** Ground is broken in New York City for the World Trade Center.
- August 5:** Martin Luther King Jr. is hit by a stone during a march in Cicero, IL.
- August 10:** In daylight, a meteor flashes across the sky from Utah to Canada; it is the only known case of a meteor skipping through the Earth's atmosphere and leaving it again.
- August 22:** The United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC), later renamed the United Farm Workers of America (UFW), is formed.
- August 29:** The Beatles play their last public concert in Candlestick Park, San Francisco.
- September 5:** Jerry Lewis's first Muscular Dystrophy Labor Day telethon raises \$1 million.
- September 8:** The first Star Trek episode, "The Man Trap," airs on NBC-TV. Created by Gene Roddenberry, Star Trek airs until September 2, 1969.
- September 12:** The Monkees premieres on NBC-TV.
- October 9:** The Baltimore Orioles complete a four-game World Series sweep of the Los Angeles Dodgers to win the franchise's first championship.
- October 15:** President Lyndon Johnson signs a bill creating the U.S. Department of Transportation.
- October 29:** National Organization of Women (NOW) is founded.



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