

History Lives Here

News and Activities of the Pajaro Valley Historical Association

September 2016



The Young Historian winners receive their award.



More than 120 people attended the lunch.

Old-Time Fun at Vintage Picnic

By Claudia Mize

This year's Vintage Picnic was a big success thanks, in part, to Sharon Bystran, who organized the affair, and George Ow, our guest speaker, who had the audience captivated when he shared how his family came to Watsonville from China.

More than 120 people enjoyed George Ow's presentation, and the delicious buffet lunch served by Monterey Bay Caterers. The warm, sunny day had visitors strolling through the well-manicured grounds. Oohs and awes were heard from visitors checking out the wedding dresses on display in the house.

Many people commented on the quality and extent of the Pajaro Valley Chinese immigrant history that was on display and on the video at the archive. Thanks to Lou Arbanas, Susan Jacobs and Jolene Vukasovich who made this display possible.

The day ended with a fun raffle. Thanks to all who attended and to the many volunteers who helped to make it a great day!



Judy Nielsen and George Ow.



Watsonville Chinese School Band items from the 1930s.

Dan Rodgers: He Paid for His Freedom — Twice

By Gayle Ivanovich

We had the pleasure of a visit on July 12 from more than 12 descendants of a black pioneer who came to live in Watsonville in the 1850s.

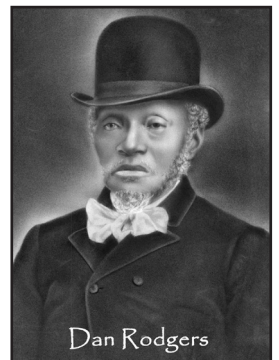
His story is a fascinating one which is documented in books and

articles about our early days.

The family brought photos and documents that enriched our archive, and we were able to provide them with some insight into local history and a tour of our facilities. Most of the family members

hailed from the Sacramento area. Rodgers came to the gold fields in 1849 from Little Rock, Ark. with his owner to work for him during the day, and in his "spare time"

Continued on Page 2



Pioneer Volunteer Jane Borg Visits New Archive Building

We were excited to have a visit from Jane Borg on May 13.

She walked over from Watsonville High where her son Eric Borg, who graduated in 1975, received Watsonville High School's Hall of Fame honor. He was the third member of her family to make the WHS Hall of Fame.

This was Jane's first visit to the "new" Borina Archive and Alzora Synder and Jane Borg Research Center building bearing her name. She was very pleased to see the fruiting of everyone's dream. Jane had volunteered at PVHA for about 40 years and had worked to having an adequate building to house all our historical information. Jane moved to Oregon about three years ago but she still keeps in touch.

Her knowledge of the materials and their locations in our collection is invaluable to today's volunteers.



Rodgers: Continued from Front Page

to earn the \$1,000 for a document that would make him a free man. He earned the money, paid his owner and returned with him to Arkansas, only to find that his owner had duped him and he had no receipt or proof of freedom. He was sold to another unscrupulous man who mistreated him.

A group of white neighbors admired Daniel's upright character and were appalled at his treatment. They raised the money for his freedom, and obtained for him a legal document (unique at the time) attesting that he was a "temperate and peaceful man, and one worthy of trust and confidence of all philanthropic and good men wherever he may go." The signatures of the 14 white men may be seen today (see bibliography).

His wife won her freedom from her mistress, and in 1859, he and his family returned to California by wagon train to settle in Watsonville, which at the time, had only one other black family. Soon, a third black family, the Derricks, would come to the Pajaro Valley and in time, the Derrick and Rodgers families would be connected by marriage. Daniel Rodgers lived in Watsonville until his death in 1903 at more than 100 years of age. Until the day he died, he neither wore glasses nor used a cane. He was a productive citizen, and we learned that his descendants were highly accomplished and had the same independent spirit as their patriarch.



The descendants of Daniel Rodgers visit the PVHA.

Our guests promised to visit with us again soon!

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For more information, see the following:

PIONEERS OF NEGRO ORIGIN IN CALIFORNIA by Sue Bailey Thurman. Acme Publishing Co., 1952, San Francisco, CA.

MINING FOR FREEDOM (BLACK HISTORY MEETS THE GOLD RUSH) by Sylvia Alden Roberts.

THE NEGRO TRAIL BLAZERS OF CALIFORNIA by Delilah L. Beasley. Kessinger Legacy Reprints.

CALIFORNIA PIONEERS OF AFRICAN DESCENT. Developed by Guy Washington, National Park Service, 111 Jackson Street, Suite 700, Oakland CA 94607. December 2010.

PVHA Archive, Watsonville CA: www.pajarovalleyhistory.org



Chloe Deleissegues



Alina Aguilar

Stephanie Chavez

Marlene Gonzales



Pat Edwards

Summer Volunteers Were A Huge Help, Thanks Everyone!

Opportunities abound for you to help, learn new things, meet new people

This Summer we have had five wonderful new volunteers helping in the archive: Chloe Deleissegues and Pat Edwards helped with

digitizing, while Alina Aguilar, Marlene Gonzales and Stephanie Chavez assisted with objects curation. Thank you so much for all of your help!

Volunteers to help with the clothing, archive and garden are also welcome.

The Oral History Committee, made up of Ann Jenkins, Nancy Roark DePuy and Gerry Martin, is actively looking for history

lovers to help with recording and transcribing interviews. Brush up on your typing and learn some new skills.

If you would like to help with the Oral History Project, or submit names of local people to interview, or join us as a volunteer for any committee please call the office at 831-722-0305 and leave a message and contact number.

Second Annual No Attendance Raffle Fundraiser



High Tea or Lunch or Dinner for 8. (Donated by P.V.H.A.)



Two night stay at the Monterey Portola Hotel & Spa + \$100 Jacks Restaurant gift certificate. (Donated by Monterey Portola Hotel & Spa; Dominic & Martha Muzzi; Stan & Judy Nielson)



Two night stay at Yosemite View Lodge. (Donated by the Fischer Family)



Three night stay at Lake Tahoe Cabin - west side near North Shore. (Donated by Gino Stefanini & Kathleen Moore)

Four Fabulous Prizes!!

The winners get to pick their own prize. First drawn gets first choice, etc. If you have not received a letter and full description of the prizes, along with raffle ticket forms, or if you would like to get tickets for a friend, call 831.722.0305 or write PVHA at P.O. Box 623, Watsonville, CA 95077

Items of Note

Newsletter as of Sept. 1, 2016

Memorials

Lucille Fransich

Carl and Fran Dobler

Dorothy Skillicorn

Sharon Gray
John and Beth Boles

George Frank Hurley

William and Cloy Codiga

James Rea Marston

William and Cloy Codiga

Lillie E. Heebner

William and Cloy Codiga

Jim Dutra

Edward and Jean Kelly III

Dan Chauvet

Stan and Judy Nielsen

Bill Murphy

John and Beth Boles

Bob Tindall

John and Beth Boles

Beverly Bontadelli

Charles and Marybeth Bontadelli
Jane Borg

Kathryn Coproviza

Joseph Parker

Ted Maddock

Jane Borg

Arnold Brunetti

Ralph and Susan Jacobs
Ken and Anne Dobler
Harvey and Candi Thorpe
John and Antoinette Lukrich
Hank and Cathy Schimpeler
Stan and Judy Nielsen
Ron and Gingi Kinninger
Lou Arbanas
Hugh and Pat Hudson
Phil and Linda Segal
Walter and Noreen Erwin
John and Timberly King
Dominic and Martha Muzzi
Tony and Julie Scurich
Gayle Ivanovich
Richard and Annie Staniford
Sandra Goldstein
Rita Pope
The Price Company(Phillip Price)

Dana and Theresa Davis
Gregg and Lori Simpkins
Brad and Catalina Simpkins
John and Alicia Pippus Brunetti
Janis Brautovic
Fred and Gail Haas
Jim and Connie Barsotti
Sharon Gray
Mark and Carol Pista
Bob and Suzanne Stanfield
John and Tammie Barsocchini
Chuck and Ramona Allen
Nancy Buoy

Marion Newland

Hank and Cathy Schimpeler

Mark Ruso

William and Cloy Codiga

Norman Dana Carter

William and Cloy Codiga

Fred Willoughby

Janet Meidl
Greg and Suke Pavlovich

Allan Molho

Jane Borg
William and Cloy Codiga

In Memory of Alzora Snyder

Jane Borg

In Memory of Frank and Zoe Orr

Warren and Ann Nelson

In Honor of Judy Campbell

Longtime friends and class mates:
Eugene and Suzanne Valla

In Honor of our Grandchildren Hannah and Reece Hamalanen

Marvin and Eileen Byers

Donation for Oral History Project

Chuck Allen
Jane Borg

Donations for General Use

Lucile Colendich
Steve and Mimi Gregg
Watsonville Woman's Club Foundation

Donations for House and Costume Fund

Anne Dobler
Jane Borg
Diane Porter Cooley

Donations for Archive/ Research Center

Alvin and Ruby Beilby

New Members

Dan Carrillo
David Kikuchi / Priscilla Partridge
David and Maryann Schmitter

Memberships renewed in April

Jane Parks McKay
Tamia Marg

Membership renewed in May

Agriculture History Project
Mary Okamoto
Lou Arbanas
Edward and Jean Kelly III
Betsy Ehm Lobay
Robert and Julie Olsen Edwards
Allen and Betty Bjur
Jere Ann Hall
Jeanette Crosetti
Lorraine Beall
E. Leon and JoAnn Mattingley
Patty Haden Dion
Jody Haden Barker
Alvin and Ruby Beilby
Mabel Cole
Dr. David South
John and Carol Tietz
Joann Year
Dan and Ann McGrath
Jim and Shirley Spain
Nancy Buoy
Steve and Kerry Stringari
Don and Dolores French
Dr. Seymour and Frances Birnbaum
Laura Hofmeister
Dan Carrillo

Memberships Renewed in June

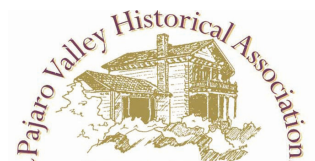
Gayle Ivanovich
Thoma Mitchell
Mc Sherry and Hudson
John and Maria Goretta Carvalho
Nancy Bilicich
Lee and Mary Vaage
Richard and Nancy Codiga
Lorraine Jurach

Memberships Renewed in July

Ken and Anne Dobler
Paul and Karen Bachan
Stan and Judy Nielsen
Joseph Parker
Stephen and Alice Bankhead
Janet Meidl
David and Frances Delfino
Diane Robey
Barbara Corrigan

Memberships Renewed in August

Warren and Ann Nelson
James and Nancy Carroll
Dominic and Martha Muzzi
Bob Dickie
John and Megan Martinelli
Robert and Janey Leonardich
Joe and Natalie Costa
John and Frances Kovarik
John and Judy Eiskamp
Vic and Nancy Lewis
Rita Pope
Les and Joyce Roth
Patricia Lester
Dennis and Laurie Osmer
Thomas and Virginia Rosewall
Anton and Charlotte Car
Peter Navarro
Eric and Teresa Del Piero
Donaldine Ann and Dana McRae
Greg and Suke Pavlovich



DOCENTS NEEDED

We are looking for a few volunteers who would be willing to learn about the History of the Bockius-Orr House and Volk Museum and lead tours when needed. Training would involve a commitment of a few hours at your convenience.

If interested please call Jodi at the PVHA office at (831) 722-0305 on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.



Asa Story (center) with others during a costumed historical celebration sometime around 1937. Photo courtesy of Gayle Ivanovich

Asa A. 'Dad' Story: Watsonville's Last Civil War Veteran

By Gayle Ivanovich

On January 27, 1847, the birth of Asa A. Story was recorded in St. Lawrence County, New York. Almost 91 years later, in October 1937, he died in Watsonville, California, with family at his bedside and an entire community to mourn him. He was the last of three remaining local members of the Robert McCook Post of the Grand Army of the Republic (Union Army) who had participated in the Civil War.

Living in upstate New York, Asa enlisted in October, 1863 and joined Company F, 5th New York Heavy Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade, Second Division, VIII Corps United States Army. (VIII Corps was also known as the Army of West Virginia).

He was 16 years old. By October of 1864, Asa had fought in Virginia, and was captured at the Battle of Cedar Creek and was sent to a Confederate prison in Salisbury, North Carolina.

When he was released with other sick and dying prisoners he weighed only 71 pounds.

He later credited his youth and robust family health with his recovery and survival. He received an honorable discharge from service in June, 1865.

In December of that year he married his childhood sweetheart Eliza, who remained his wife until her death in 1917. Story organized a company of volunteers to fight in the Spanish American War in 1898, but the war ended before they saw action. He was reported to say, "There wasn't enough war to go around!"

Upon his move to Watsonville, he lived on Van Ness Avenue (now Rodriguez Street). The records of the local G. A. R. post before 1903 are lost, but in that year they show many familiar Pajaro Valley names: Capt. A.N. Judd, A. Bardmess, J.W. Sanborn, W.M. Gordon, Asa Bateman, Robert W. Eaton, H.C. White, S.E. Chapman, H.E. Trueworthy, E.W. Hall, W.M. DeHart, J.M. Ike, S.A. Shields and A. Dickerman. Asa Story's name was later included in this group.

In Watsonville, he took a "lively interest" in public functions, often photographed in his Spanish American War hat with several honors pinned to his civilian suit.

Upon his death, the Watsonville Pajaronian reported, "hundreds who knew and loved "Dad" Story gathered at White's Funeral Home." There were "many floral tributes." Pallbearers were Charles Williams, S.G. Dahl, Les Jefsen, Art Babcock, William Dye and Dr. Henry Watters, all past commanders of the American Legion. Honorary pallbearers were A.W. Wheelock, A.J. Meidl, John Wilson of the Spanish American War veterans and Frank Monterio, C.R. Bridges and C.F. Fields of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

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Sources: "Old Soldiers: Santa Cruz County Civil War Veterans" by Robert L. Nelson

Watsonville Pajaronian, 1937 PVHA Archive

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Preserving the History
of the Greater Pajaro Valley

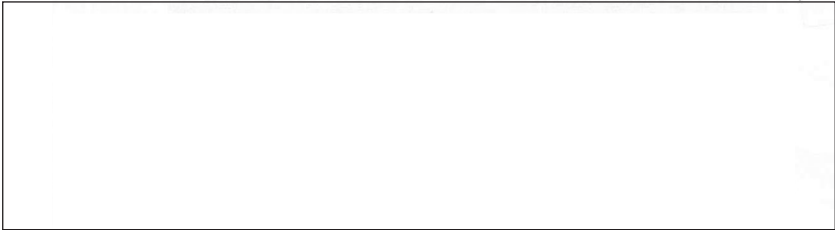
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**Not a member yet? Want to join now or need to renew?
We'd love to have you become a member of PVHA**

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please Make Checks Payable to “PVHA”

P.O. Box 623, Watsonville, CA 95077

or join via our website at www.pajarovalleyhistory.org

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(We are updating our database and would like to include your email address please)

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THANK YOU!

**Ways to
Donate**

- Become a Member
- Upgrade your Membership Level
- Make a general donation to the PVHA
- Make a donation to our endowment funds: Historic Preservation (endowment fund in formation) or Archive (endowment fund established at The Community Foundation)

Checks should be made payable to PVHA with a designation notation