

The major activities of the PVHA are the management of the Bockius-Orr House and the operation of the Snyder Archive and the Volck Museum.

The association's office is on the first floor of the historic Bockius-Orr House that is open to visitors at no charge, on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, or by appointment. Special group tours of the house and gardens may be arranged, and the facilities are rented out for receptions, weddings, and small dinner parties.

There is an extensive collection of textiles and men's and women's clothing, spanning decades of fashions from the 1860s to the present and can be seen in rotating exhibits in the House, Museum, and Archives. The PVHA conducts several fundraising activities each year. Other association traditions are the 4th of July Barbecue and the Holiday Tea.

SNYDER ARCHIVE

The Association maintains the Snyder Archive, a rich resource for writers, teachers, students, genealogists, and others interested in local history. The archive includes the following items, all dealing with the Pajaro Valley:

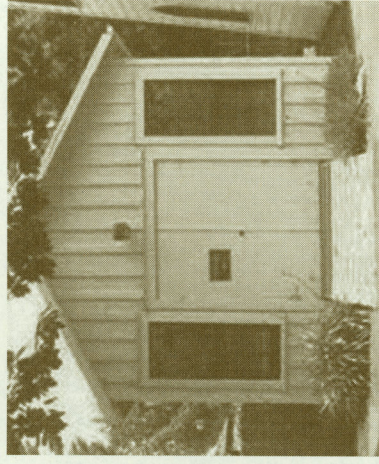
- Books, manuscripts, newspapers and other printed materials
- Historic posters and photographs
- Maps
- Oral histories
- Historic materials related to agriculture, business, local schools, organizations, and families

All of the Pajaro Valley archive holdings are accessible onsite and available on a limited basis for use by the public for

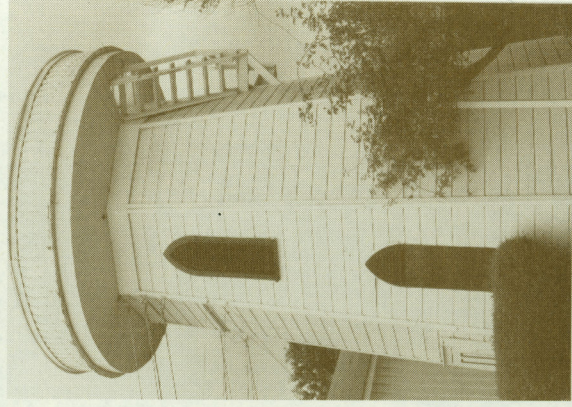
history programs, public lectures, and offsite exhibits. There are nominal fees for photo duplication and research assistance in excess of half an hour (except for students and PVHA members).

THE VOLCK MUSEUM

Found in the original building that was used as a carriage house are displays of historical artifacts relating to the early days of the Pajaro Valley. This building in addition to the adjacent Tank House offers a glimpse into a time gone by.



Carriage House/Volck Museum



Tank house

THE BOCKIUS-ORR HOUSE - YESTERDAY

Godfrey M. Bockius (1818-1906), a farmer, moved from Pennsylvania to settle in the Pajaro Valley in 1852 purchasing a 70 acre plot of land bounded by Third (now East Beach), Marchant, and Blackburn Streets and extending on the south side to the Pajaro River. He played an active role in organizing the town of Watsonville and became one of its first trustees. Bockius was elected a county judge and served one term as a state assemblyman. He was also one of the founders of the Bank of Watsonville.

In 1870 he commissioned the building of a large Victorian-style house by Alex Chalmers to be added to an original existing structure. Bockius continued to live there with his mother, his wife and their four children. The family cultivated fruit and vegetable crops, including asparagus, blackberries, and rhubarb. The two-story addition to the original single story house was constructed on concrete posts with heavy timber of virgin redwood supporting the frame and sub-flooring. This allowed water to flow freely beneath the house, protecting it from periodic flooding of the Pajaro River. There were four bedrooms and no indoor plumbing, but running water and a downstairs bathroom were added at a later date. The rooms on the ground floor have 12-foot ceilings, while those upstairs have 11-foot ceilings. A carriage house and (water) tank house were built adjacent to the house, and barns housed the farm animals beyond the backyard and gardens. After Bockius's death, various relatives and descendants occupied the house. Frank Fletcher Orr, a great-grandson of Godfrey Bockius, purchased the old homestead from an aunt in 1948.

Orr, schooled in journalism at Stanford University, led a five-decade career marked with distinction. During World War II he was commissioned in the U.S. Army Signal Corps and was in charge of still-picture photography operations in Europe. He joined the staff of the Watsonville Register-Pajaronian in 1939 and ten years later became managing editor, serving in that post until his death in 1985. Due largely to his skill, in 1956 the paper won the Pulitzer and Sigma Delta Chi prizes for public service by a newspaper--the first time any publication had captured both awards in the same year.

Soon after they purchased the Bockius House, Orr and his wife, Zoe Ann Hill, initiated a major remodeling project. Downstairs the renovation crew combined a sitting room, small dining room, and one of the three exterior porches into the present 20-by-30-foot living and dining room. Workers installed a large picture window to provide a generous view of the 200-foot deep front yard, with its long walkway, majestic century-old oaks, crepe myrtle, and boxwood hedges. Also, the kitchen was modernized. Upstairs a bedroom was converted into a bathroom, another bedroom was taken for a library, and a third bedroom eventually became a wardrobe. The fourth room remained as a bedroom.

THE BOCKIUS-ORR HOUSE - TODAY

Fortunately, the damage sustained by the homestead buildings in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake did not permanently mar their character. The house, which Zoe Ann Orr Marcus (she remarried in 1989) donated to the PVHA in 1993, has retained the features and some of the furnishings that she and Frank Orr, and other former residents, cherished. The rare square grand piano, shipped from the East