



History
Lives Here

PAJARO VALLEY Historical Association

Spring 2024

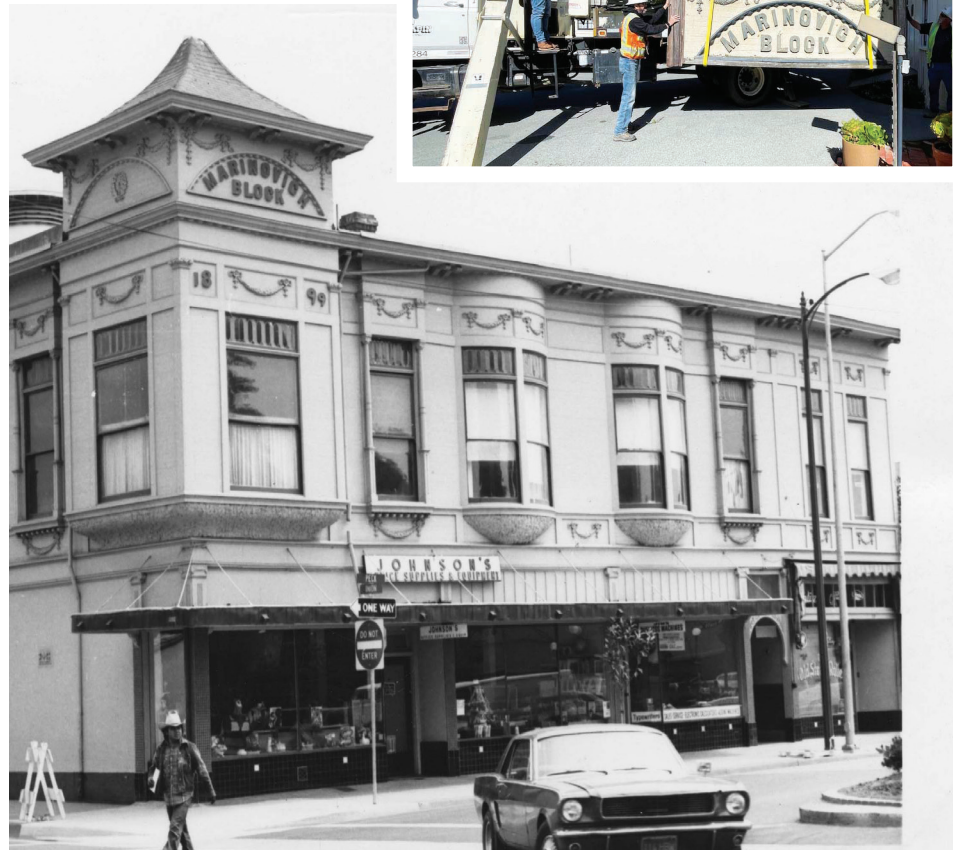
Spring at the Bockius-Orr House

The garden is blooming and the spring colors are out. Dresses from the 1930s–1960s are on display. Come check it out! 🌸



Marinovich Building Sign

The Marinovich Building, constructed in 1899, graced the Peck Street/ Union Street corner of the downtown square for many years, providing a human-scale presence that charmed with its bowed bay windows and architectural scroll work. Sadly, the building was demolished in 1981, in spite of a lengthy legal battle fought by numerous organizations including the PVHA. The large sign that graced the top of the building was acquired by Bill Marinovich, who had it installed at his property on Calabasas Road. The building's story has another happy ending note, however, as that sign was recently donated to PVHA by Annie Allen (nee Marinovich), and delivered by workers from the Don Chapin Company. At least we are now able to provide the building's sign with a continued existence! 🌸



The First Schools in Aromas

By Claudia Mize

In the 1870s with the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad, pioneer farmers began settling in Aromas. With more families moving to Aromas, the Aromas School District was formed in 1889. The first classes were held on the Weeks' family property. The first teacher, Miss Emma Kerr taught all grades and had 75 students. After a few years, a new school was needed. In 1895, two wooden framed buildings were designed by the young architect, William Weeks. One of the buildings still stands today. It was a gas station but is not in use today.

In 1917, the Aromas School District absorbed the Vega School District. By 1925, a second school was built for the growing number of

students. This school was most likely designed by William Weeks noting the symmetrical wings, mission-style lines, and tile roof. The early records were lost but residents were sure that Mr. Weeks designed the building and donated all the tile for the roof. Weeks wrote in an article titled Some Notes on School Planning the following: "Good architecture is one of the greatest assets in the building up of a community, adding to one's civic pride, and making a favorable impression on the home seeker."

A new principal was hired for the new five room school. Principal Walter Reed also taught seventh and eighth grades. Helen Webb transferred to the new school when she was 14, and was a member of the first graduating class. She said the school was "lovely" and everyone thought it was "grand."

Principal Reed hired Leola, a young woman for a teaching position. However, after a few years, she quit teaching to marry the principal. At

continued on page 2

PVHA

**Preserving the History
of the Greater Pajaro Valley
Established 1940
Incorporated 1956**

Board of Directors

Chuck Allen, President
Luann M. Lauesen, Secretary
Ralph Jacobs, Treasurer
Virginia Banuelos-Avila
Ken Dobler
Cathy Mello
Grayson Moore
Peter Navarro
Tony Scurich
Phil Ybarra
Sharron Bystran, Emeritas

Office Administrator

Jodi Frensley

P.O. Box 623 Watsonville, CA 95077
831-722-0305
info@pajarovalleyhistory.org



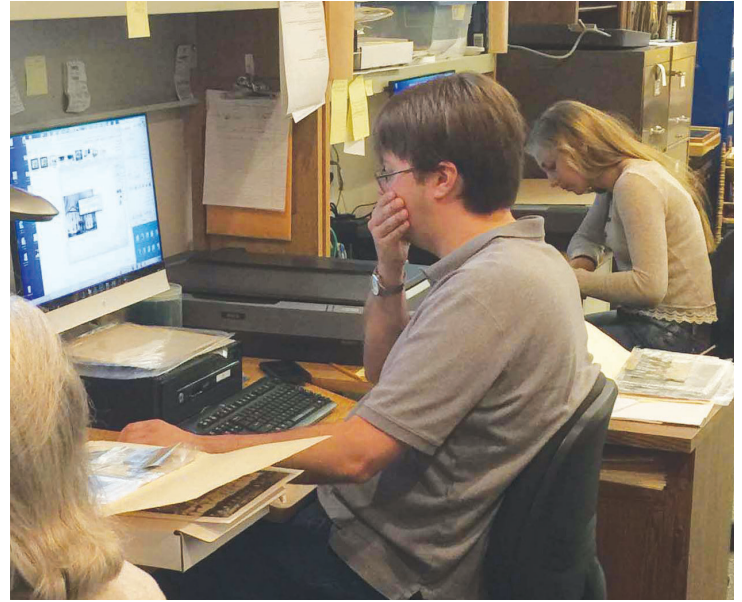
Top: One of two of the wooden framed school houses.

Below: Schoolhouse thought to have been designed by William Weeks, later becoming a firehouse and currently a grocery store and library.

Volunteers Needed at PVHA

PVHA is looking for new volunteers, to help with processing new materials and organizing collections in both the House collections of clothes and objects, and the Borina Archives collections of photographs and documents. If you have good organization or research skills, and can devote a few hours most weeks any time during our current open hours (Tues–Thurs, 11am–3pm),

please contact either Georg Romero or Bill Beecher, at info@pajarovalleyhistory.org.



First Schools in Aromas continued from page 2

that time, female teachers were not allowed to be married. Leola was able to return to teaching later when that ruling was revoked. Walter Reed retired in 1947 after serving 22 years as the Aromas School principal.

Around 1947, the school building was condemned by the state because its tile roof was not earthquake proof. This building still stands on the corner of Blohm Avenue and Carpentaria Avenue. For many years it served as the Aromas Fire Department. Records show title was transferred by the school to the Aromas volunteer firemen for \$1, and they later transferred the title to the Aromas Fire Department for \$1. It is now is a grocery store and library.

In 1950 the main building of the current school was built. In 1965, Aromas School was absorbed into the Pajaro Valley Unified School District.



Grade school class at Aromas, Sept. 1921; Pearl Totten, teacher

However, in 1991, the parents voted to leave the Pajaro School District, and formed the current Aromas-San Juan School District.

If you would like to know more

about Watsonville or Aromas history, check into these two books:

- *Watsonville: Memories that Linger* by Betty Lewis
- *Aromastory* by Tina Baine

Message from Our Board President

Our Pajaro Valley Historical Association's museum, archives and grounds continue to be a very important and active part of our Pajaro Valley community.

It is hard to believe that the first quarter of 2024 has already slipped into history. Our annual "stay at home" raffle raised approximately \$15,000 for the 2023 PVHA budget. One of the raffle prizes was a dinner for eight guests at the Bockius-Orr house. This special pre-Christmas dinner, won by Trina Coffman-Gomez, included her family and friends. Thanks to Dominic and Martha Muzzi, Ken Schwan, and my wife Ramona, who hosted the dinner. The house ambience of the mid-1800's added to the special event.

As we move into the second quarter of 2024, we are making plans

for our PVHA Vintage Picnic, under the historic oak trees. We are pleased to announce that Mr. P. J. Mecozzi, CEO and owner of Del Mar Foods, will be our featured speaker. Mr. Mecozzi will share the history of Del Mar Foods, one of the oldest frozen fruit and vegetable processing companies in Watsonville. Mark your calendar for this special event: Saturday, June 29, 2024. More information will be coming.

Thanks to volunteer Bill Beecher and his team, who have created a very special graphic presentation of the ethnic history of Pajaro Valley. The presentation depicts the significant ethnic changes within Pajaro Valley from the early 1800s to now starting with the Spanish Land Grants.

It is my pleasure to welcome Mr. Grayson Moore to our PVHA Board. Mr. Moore's family has been and

continues to be a strong part of Pajaro Valley's agricultural industry.

I would like to thank our volunteers and approximately 275 members for being an active part of PVHA. 🌻

Sincerely, Chuck Allen

Email Your Newsletter?

PVHA would like to know if you would prefer your newsletter emailed? If so, please send your email address to info@pajarovalleyhistory.org and ask to be put on our newsletter email list.

What's New in the PVHA Archive?

We have been busy at the Archive and have added and improved several areas.

Over the years we have accumulated many **maps**. Over the last year we have completed digitizing all of the collection, now consisting of over 850 maps, the earliest from 1857. Watsonville Blueprint did a great job scanning the larger ones. In order to preserve these fragile maps, we have made 12 X 18 copies and arranged them by: county, city, rancho and bolsa [the old land grants], and Watsonville.

Over the last eight years we have

been expanding our **oral and video history** collection. We recently added one for Harry Wiggins, as well as several Filipino and farming histories from UC Santa Cruz. We now have about 340 histories, and we do make copies for those interested.

Our collections of photograph **negatives** continue to grow considerably. In addition to the many glass and film negatives from notable area photographers like Edgar L. Clark and Alex Stepick, and numerous old unidentified area negatives, our collection of negatives from the Watsonville Register Pajaronian has expanded to include thousands of

images, primarily covering the years 1950–1998.

We have been researching what can be done about flood control and will issue a pamphlet on what the local farmers can do to remove debris from the rivers and tributaries. The California Department of Fish & Game has stymied them in the past and we found that they have procedures that allow the removal of debris. There are some issues with how to dispose of the debris. As pointed out in this month's Board meeting, there are other items that are being dumped in the streams, such as mattresses and appliances. 🌻

Watsonville on the Move—Literally

By Georg Romero

When Watsonville was growing beyond its early existence as a small town, downtown space was at a premium, for building the new commercial and industrial edifices that reflected the town's growth. To make room for that growth, there were many houses, built on those central streets, that ended up being either demolished or relocated.

Luckily, moving entire houses was much more common—and often much more cost-effective—in the past. The quality of materials, design details, and family history in older houses meant that they were worth wrestling to another location. Additionally, planning the move route was easier when city environments were less developed, with fewer wires and less traffic to contend with.

Some of the notable relocations: The Mansion House on Main Street, formerly on the corner of Watsonville Square, was moved a few hundred feet in 1914, to make room for the new, and much larger, Lettunich Building.

The Rodgers house was moved from East Lake Avenue to the Santa Cruz County fairgrounds in 1998, where it is now a museum. Interesting factoid: John Steinbeck's sister Esther married into the Rodgers family, and lived in the house for many years, where her brother John was a frequent visitor.

A house formerly on East Lake Avenue was moved to Pajaro in 1955, to serve as a parish house for the Church of the Assumption (below).

The old Thurwatcher house was

moved from central Watsonville to Manresa where it was refurbished and turned into a boutique hotel, first the Inn at Manresa Beach, and most recently the Flora Vista Inn.

The James Ingham house, designed by William Weeks, was moved from Main Street in 1925 to 22 High Street.

The Martinelli house on East Beach was moved to Beck Street.

Local historian Betty Lewis frequently wrote articles for the Register Pajaronian about this topic, as it was as interesting to past citizens as it is to us today. As Ms. Lewis mentions in one of those articles, when you see an older house in a neighborhood of newer houses, that is usually a sure sign that the older house was moved there from somewhere else! 🏠



A house formerly on East Lake Avenue was moved to Pajaro in 1955, to serve as a parish house for the Church of the Assumption.

Redwood Roots in the Pajaro Valley

By Milliani Rodriguez

As a group of Spanish men from the Portola Expedition traveled through the Pajaro Valley in 1769, a member of the expedition, Padre Crespi, acknowledged a new tree species in his diary. The color of the tree's bark was similar to cedar in color but brittle in texture, the leaves were also completely different from a cedar tree's leaves. The expedition decides to call the tree, "Palo Colorado," literally translated as "Redwood." An abundance of redwood trees were found near a "lagoon," which was later confirmed to be Pinto Lake. In 1941, Dr. W.G. Paden, California historian and educator, along with members of the Pajaro Valley Historical Association, retraced the Portola expedition route and confirmed that the discovery site was very likely the shore of Pinto Lake. Once the Portola route was completed by the group, a temporary marker was placed on site, along with



A group in 1943 planting a redwood tree alongside a commemorative sign at Pinto Lake County Park, the location of the document encounter. The group includes members of the Pajaro Valley Historical Association who, in 1941, retraced the Portola expedition route to confirm the location.

a redwood sapling. Unfortunately, the redwood tree later died, and another was planted. Plans for establishing a permanent monument were delayed due to World War II. As of now, it is unknown if the redwood tree planted

in 1943 survived. Another thing to note is that most of the redwoods that grew in the Pajaro Valley were cut down for lumber, over the years. It is said that there are still some leftover redwood trees in the vicinity. 🌲

House Volunteer off to Germany

By Jodi Frensley

Angelina Dememtry, a house volunteer for the past 1½ years, is heading to Berlin, Germany, for her Master's Degree from Humboldt University. She is in the Global Studies Program that enables her to travel the world to places like Argentina, South Africa, Thailand, and India. When her classes are finished, she will return to Berlin to begin work on her thesis.

Angelina moved to Watsonville

in 2022 to attend classes at UCSC. Her second day in town, she stopped by PVHA for a tour. She was interested in our historical clothing and enjoyed decorating. Lucky for us, Angelina became a volunteer. She helped put together the 100-year wedding dress display. And for the past two winters, she helped decorate the Bockius-Orr house and yard for Christmas. We miss her and wish Angelina all the best in her new adventure! 🌸





Memorials

Anka J. Bulaich

- Lorraine Washington

Diane Severin

- Carl and Fran Dobler
- Ken and Anne Dobler
- Marilyn Hyde

Barbara Corrigan

- Steven and Kristin Smith

Barbara Murphy Corrigan

- Bestsy Ehm Lobay

Catherine Moresco

- Kristy Bobeda

Norman Johnson

- Jim and Shirley Spain

Marilyn Jeanne Johnson

- Jim and Shirley Spain

Grace Dickson Smith & Clara Dickson

- Anonymous
- Anonymous

Betty Lewis

- Kelly Anderson

Jennifer Lynn Ring (Pirtle)

- Mark and Cathy Lauesen

Maryann Bulich Schnitter

- Jim and Shirley Spain

Judy Doering Nielsen

- Colleen Brunetti

Ane Gera

- Louis and Geneva Ivanovich

Don Cooley

- Hugh and Pat Hudson

Steve Bankhead

- Alice Bankhead



Donations

Archive

- Forrest Richardson

General

- William and Cloy Codiga
- Ken and Anne Dobler
- Dominic and Martha Muzzi
- Chuck and Ramona Allen
- Jeff and Lisa Rosendale



Welcome

New Members

- Patsy Rodriguez Ronat
- Ted Hernandez
- Nelle Lyons



Membership Renewals

November

- Karen Bustier Basiulis
- Lynn Clough
- Mary Eves
- Diane Robey
- Mark and Karen Sambrailo
- Helen Ukestad

December

- Chuck and Ramona Allen
- Doug and Noris Anderson
- William and Patricia Barton
- Sharon Bystran
- Peter and Kristy Bobeda
- Daniel and Patricia Davis
- Carl and Fran Dobler
- Annamarie Dugger
- Bob and Linda Erbe
- Fred and Gail Haas
- Rod Hudson
- Marilyn Hyde
- Jeff and Karen Kane
- June Ivelich Pierce
- Kathleen Reynolds

- Adolph Rosekrans
- Jeff and Lisa Rosendale
- James Scurich
- Nate Smith
- Susan Scurich (S.F.)
- Susan Scurich (Wats)
- Lorraine Washington

January 2024

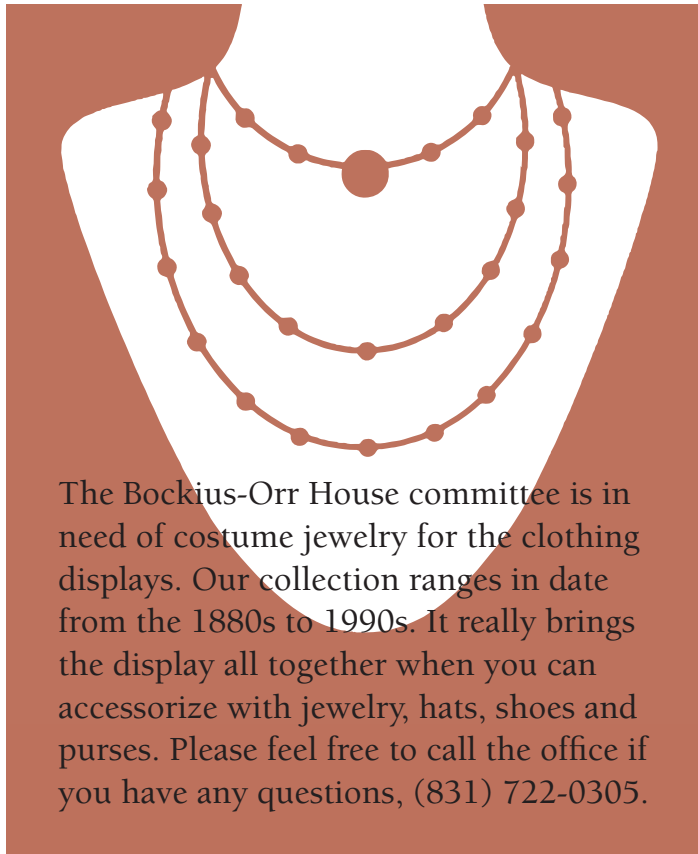
- Kelly Anderson
- Scott and Jodi Frensley
- Rosa Guerrero
- Lawrence Lease
- Donn Marinovich
- Clint and Karen Miller
- Bill and Karen Moncovich
- Joann Petznick
- Deborah Rider
- Susan Scurich
- Jim and Shirley Spain
- Bob Wall

February

- Ed and Kathleen Banks
- Luann Lauesen and Emmanuel Brion
- Rose Marie Cardona
- Nancy Ruiz DePuy
- Frank and Loretta Estrada
- Ron Gordon
- Donald and Diana Henrichsen
- Mary Ellen Irons
- Dobie and Ann Jenkins
- Mark and Cathy Lauesen
- Elizabeth Ludden
- Arlene Okamoto Minami
- Terry Locke-Paddon
- Barney and Marlene Radovich
- Patricia Rebele
- Alex Solano
- Eugene Valla

March

- Colleen Brunetti
- Jeanette Crosetti
- John Espinoza
- Pat Johns
- Joyce Kalich
- Tamia Marg
- Jan Onufrey
- Katy Kralj Scott
- Billie Jean Sorensen
- Lynn Sullivan



The Bockius-Orr House committee is in need of costume jewelry for the clothing displays. Our collection ranges in date from the 1880s to 1990s. It really brings the display all together when you can accessorize with jewelry, hats, shoes and purses. Please feel free to call the office if you have any questions, (831) 722-0305.

Ways to Donate

- Become a member.
- Upgrade your membership level.
- Make a general donation to the PVHA.
- Make a donation to our endowment funds: The Historic Preservation Fund or Archive Fund, both established at the Community Foundation.



Saturday, June 29, 2024
 11:00 am to 3:00 pm
 with Buffet Lunch
 Catered by Carmona's
 and Keynote from
 PJ. Mecozzi, CEO and
 Owner of Del Mar Foods

•••••
 Tickets: \$45.

No tickets sold at the door.
 Pay by check or online by
 June 25, 2024.

Call 831.722.0305 or send
 check to PVHA, P.O. Box 623,
 Watsonville, CA 95077-0623.
 Buy tickets online at www.pajarovalleyhistory.org.

Please Join Us For Pajaro Valley Historical Association's Annual Vintage Picnic

