



BULLETIN

WINTER 2010-2011



Cool Rudolph the Rednosed Reindeer

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AND

ANTIOCH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

INVITE YOU TO OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON
AT THE HISTORIC ANTIOCH MUSEUM

WHEN: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2010

11:30 HAPPY HOUR

12:00 LUNCH

WHERE: 1500 W. 4TH, ANTIOCH

COST: \$25.00

ROUTE TO MUSEUM:

TAKE CA-4 EAST, EXIT AUTO CENTER DRIVE, CONTINUE ON AUTO CENTER DR UNTIL IT BECOMES W. 4TH ST. MUSEUM IS ON LEFT. MAKE A U-TURN

EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO HELP CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS

- LIVE MUSIC BY SPINNING WHEEL, A LOCAL GROUP WHO PLAY AND SING AMERICAN OLD TIME, BLUEGRASS AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC LIKE YOU HAVE NEVER HEARD IT PERFORMED BEFORE
- DINE IN A HISTORIC BUILDING THAT IS DECORATED TO THE HILT WITH COLORFUL SYMBOLS AND REMINDERS OF THE CHRISTMAS SEASON
- BROWSE THE GIFT SHOP AND THE NUMEROUS HANDSOME EXHIBITS OF ANTIOCH'S RICH PAST
- CATERED LUNCHEON PREPARED BY OUTBACK STEAKHOUSE OF PITTSBURG

RESERVATIONS AND CHECK MUST BE RECEIVED BY THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2010

MAIL BOTH TO CCCHS, 610 MAIN ST., MARTINEZ CA 94553

ENTREE WILL BE FILET TENDERLOIN WITH WILD MUSHROOM SAUCE OR GRILLED CHICKEN BREAST ON THE BARBIE. LUNCH INCLUDES HOUSE SALAD WITH VINAIGRETTE DRESSING, GARLIC ROASTED MASHED POTATOES, HONEY WHEAT ROLLS, NEW YORK-STYLE CHEESECAKE AND COFFEE OR TEA. VEGETARIAN ENTREE IS A VEGGIE GRILLER ON A BED OF RICE.

CHOICE OF ENTREE:

BEEF _____

CHICKEN _____

VEGGIE _____

NAME(S) _____

E-MAIL _____

QUESTIONS? PHONE: 925.254.2295

Antioch Historical Society Museum Building

A short history
Elizabeth Rimbault, Curator



Our museum is housed in the old Riverview Union High School building. We were lead to believe it was the first "Public" high school built in Contra Costa County in 1910. However, we may have to make that first "Union" high school physically built in Contra Costa County from the legislative funding that passed for Union high school construction the year before.

The Union district included Somerville, Nortonville, Pittsburg, Antioch, Oakley and Live Oak districts. Construction started in June, 1910 and school opened for the first class on Nov. 4, 1911. By 1926 Pittsburg broke away from the Union District and the building continued on as Antioch School District in Riverview Union High School building. The last class was 1931. In 1932 the Antioch High School opened on 'D' Street.

Throughout the 30s and 40s the building was occupied by the Bureau of Reclamation and housed the engineers that designed the dams for California and the Contra Costa Canal system. In 1947 the school district sold the building to Fibreboard Research and the building was converted into several laboratories and testing chambers for containers. In 1950 the Milk Carton was developed in this building revolutionizing the liquid container.

In the late 1960s the building was sold to the newly formed Riverview Fire District which again was a combination of the Antioch and

Pittsburg fire districts. The building acted as a fire district administration building. In 1996 the fire district consolidated with Contra Costa Fire and the building was abandoned and placed for sale. The Antioch Historical Society became the successful bidder for the building with the board of Supervisors and was able to occupy for the first time in September of 1999. Within 2 1/2 years the Society was able to raise the funds to pay off the option and outright purchase the building from the county. It has been under continuous renovation and restoration since that time. In 2008 the Society received the Governor's Historic Preservation Award for the restorations to date of the building and lower level. In June, 2010 we celebrated 100 years from the ground breaking.

Our Centennial Quilt is pictured below. Each row of blocks represents a different use and decade of the building. The 4 corners are the logos of the 4 occupants beyond the school. The last row is called "Ladies Aid Society" blocks to represent the Historical Society being founded by the Woman's Club of Antioch in 1975. These are mixed with printed blocks of historic homes in Antioch.



We are looking forward to our joint membership meeting with the Contra Costa Historical Society, on Saturday, December 18. To cap the event, we will be raffling off our special Centennial Quilt

Hope to see you all there!



Foto Flashes
Lee Taylor

We recently received a photo from an unknown source with

only one clue-- Wells Fargo & Co. over a tall barn opening (probably to facilitate station wagons). It's been added to the CCCHS database as photo No. 13364, with location "unknown."



Wells Fargo & Co. Structure for Stagecoach, etc. & 6 stock tenders

If anyone has knowledge of a similar structure and its location, please let us know. We have already tried Wells Fargo in San Francisco without success.

As always, if anyone has time and interest in Contra Costa photos and some computer skills and would like to volunteer in Martinez, please contact us. We've still got lots of photos in backlog waiting to be processed!!

An Interview with Lee and Avice Taylor

Leland (raised in Walnut Creek) and **Avice** (nee Hatton, raised in Lafayette) **Taylor**, volunteers for the last ten years in the History Center,



originally came to us while doing research on Avice's grandparents and other relatives while CCCHS was still in Pleasant Hill. They decided to volunteer when the move to Martinez was in progress. They helped with the setup of the shelving at the History Center. They are very interested in all aspects of history.

Both graduated from Acalanes High, Avice one year later than Lee. She went into the Kaiser Foundation School of Nursing program. Leland went to the University of Santa Clara to major in civil engineering and graduated with a BSCE in 1954. Shortly thereafter Leland joined the US Army; during this interim Leland was dating Avice and frequently picked her up while in training at the Vallejo Rehabilitation Hospital. They became engaged about the time Leland was transferred to Fort Lee, Virginia. Subsequently, Avice graduated in 1955, receiving her RN license, specializing in emergency room and surgery. Later that year they married, and by year-end she had joined him, living off base. Upon discharge they drove cross county back to the Bay Area.

Leland found work with Bechtel in San Francisco (via contacts from his prior 1953 summer Michigan job). This was to the start of a 31-year Bechtel Career.

Then, they purchased their first home in Walnut Creek, which was remodeled in time for arrival of daughter Audrey; she was later joined by brother Lee (Jr.). This led to their 2nd of four different WC home addresses to date; 'Believe it or not' they all have had the same "Taylor" last 7 digit phone number! Even after family lived in Europe from 1963-67 (1.5 yrs. in Paris+ 2.5 in Munich). It's hard to find a climate better than in WC.

Leland's first major project involvement was initially known as the Alberta/California pipeline. It was built to transport natural gas to its terminus near the south side of the Antioch Bridge. This involved lots of aerial photos and maps in selecting cost effective routes in difficult areas traversing some 1,400 miles. Computers at this time were using punch cards. Estimates and budgets were as important as design.

Following other interim project engineering pipeline and terminal construction projects in California, the young Taylor family of four accepted a move to Paris. The office there was undergoing a flow rate expansion. Then a new project Trans Alpine (Munich office), which needed a budget ASAP. These big budget pipeline systems transport crude oil from Mediterranean ports and connect to terminals throughout Europe. Budget/Cost forecast meetings were held quarterly

in Trieste, Italy, Innsbruck, Austria and Munich, Germany. The Taylor family, school permitting, absorbed lots of countryside and historic spots.

Back in San Francisco, Leland eventually became the Pipeline Division's Manager of Division services. This led to lots of worldwide extended trips to individual projects. Lots of time away from home while the children proceeded through high school. During this "Walnut Creek time," Avice enjoyed volunteer work at her children's schools, the Assistance League, Children's Hospital, the Mt. Diablo Rehabilitation Center's Terrace Tea Room and the Rainbow and DeMolay organizations.

Coincidentally, the Pipeline Division headquarters was moved to Houston; since their children were now attending college, Avice and Leland also moved. Shortly thereafter, Leland assumed Resident Manager and Project Manager roles in Stavanger, Norway, (about 4 years) on major Gullfaks 'A' North Sea offshore project. They also resided in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Over this period their children also visited to absorb more countryside & history.

In their retirement years, they enjoy time with daughter Audrey Katzman's family in Walnut Creek and with son Lee's family in Houston as well as Scotland and Singapore. Above all, says Avice, "we really *really* enjoy spending time in the company of our four marvelous grandchildren!"

At the Center, Lee's expertise is in the use of computer systems and organizing data and materials for future research. This is why he ended up in the photo department and is the person who writes the *Bulletin's* "Foto Flashes" column. His "other" hobbies and interests include gardening, DVD creation, and woodworking, especially in home and cabin projects.

Avice is a researcher who responds to inquiries that come in to the History Center. She also sorts photographs and clippings. A most interesting part of her job is checking between photographs to identify specific people and places that are in a "mystery" photograph. Both Lee and Avice are in the History Center without fail each Thursday from 8:30 until closing. They are great volunteers. Come in and meet them when you are in Martinez.

Start thinking about 2011

Each year the Conference of California Historical Societies looks forward to recognizing outstanding accomplishments of individuals and organizations by presenting awards of merit as its way of honoring individuals, groups and businesses whose *contributions to California history add luster and significance to the lives around them. They help nurture and preserve our priceless heritage.* Recipients are presented with their awards during a special luncheon in their honor at the annual meeting in June.

Think about colleagues who consistently go the extra mile to assure the continuing success of your organization. One or more surely stand out in your mind as deserving of special recognition.

An explanation of the seven categories of awards including criteria for eligibility, rules for nominators and nomination forms are on the CCHS website. Go to www.californiahistorian.com and click on About the CCHS. Then click on Awards of Merit Information.

Compiling the necessary supporting documentation for a successful nomination is vital. It takes time, usually more time than you expect it to take.

Inquiries should be directed to: John Anicic at anicicjr@aol.com or 909.823.6163 or Christina Essex at chriscalover@yahoo.com or 310.821.0108

The deadline for nominations for 2011 awards is February 28. Check with John or Christina early in the year for any change in the deadline.

The CCHS annual meeting in 2011 will be held in Berkeley which makes accepting awards in person especially convenient. There are many dedicated workers for history in Contra Costa County so a lack of nominees should not be an issue.

Mary-Ellen Jones
Conference of California Historical Societies
Regional Vice President
Contra Costa County
925.254.2295 jonesmaryellen@prodigy.net

Los Californianos Visit History Center

Betty Maffei

The Los Californianos visited our center Friday, October 22. Leland and Avice Taylor joined Betty Maffei in staffing from 12:30 until after 4.

The Los Californianos are descendants of the Anza Expedition—the first settlers of California. Their annual meeting was being held at the Hilton in Concord and they requested some time to research at our center.

The first gentleman to arrive wanted to find two family names we all know—Martinez and Castro. His next request made all of stop and think—he said: “I’m looking for the Martinez and Castro who served in the Civil War.” His name is David Jackson and he lives in Sherman Oaks. We started with our Civil War files and then moved to court cases—he was here three hours, and found many answers to his questions in our files.

Ken Cusenza and Ruth Craft are from Sacramento. They were looking for their family in the Pacheco land grant. They found the ranchos listed in Leonora Fink’s cards on the ranchos. Leonora was Ruth Galindo’s sister and a member of this organization. Her work was done with county assessment books and we have those books. Ken and Ruth renewed their membership and, after searching the books, went away happy.

Michael and Margaret Turner from Lakewood were looking for the Martinez family—not the California family—but the ones from Spain. Our member, Ann Protopoff was a member of the Los Californianos. Her family came from Spain and were part of the Anza trek. Ann’s collection is in our center and has so much information, the visitors were delighted. Carol Eber from Petaluma came with a prayer. Her ancestor had married a Pacheco in Sonoma County and died in Santa Rosa. She had one bit of research she had found—The name Ortega was listed in something she had read as one of the original families of Contra Costa County. There were Pachecos in the file names, but not in our biography file of Pachecos. We really thought we had finally hit a wall, when Lee suggested the 1852 census. As all of our friends were leaving, and thanking us Carol said: “Betty I found Ortega in the census.” There will be much more researching for Carol, but

she went back to the meeting happy and left us feeling very satisfied that we had helped all six of our visitors and found something for every one of them.

Naturalizations Documents 1850-1980s: Exclusive and Rare—a “New” Resource at the History Center

Dean McLeod

A young woman came into the History Center the other day. She was just “killing time” until a friend came to meet her. Less than a half hour later, she had seen the naturalization papers of her great grandmother. These included not only the naturalization petition itself, but the ship on which her grandmother had entered the United States, her residence address at the time, the names and birthdates of all of her children, and personal information like height and eye color. Many times there is also a picture of the individual in the file. For many, this is the most exciting kind of information they can find. And it is exciting for the History Center that they are able to help such people to this great historical information.

The Contra Costa County Historical Society at 610 Main Street is a treasure house of original documents, indexes, compilations and historic photos. Professional research firms, scholars and students use its resources as the richest one-stop shop in the county for East Bay historical materials.

Less known is the fact that it holds valuable records for family historians and genealogists. As anyone who has done much genealogy knows, not everything one needs to trace one’s genealogy is found on the Internet. Although wonderful resources exist at www.familysearch.org, www.ancestry.com and hundreds of other on-line sites, many records are off-line and in local historical repositories. Also, the kind of local records that bring life to family histories are found exclusively at the local level. The Contra Costa County Historical Society is the Mecca for these kinds of records.

As of October 2010, one of the most important genealogical sources for Contra Costans became

much more available. Margie Newton, one of the regular volunteers at the History Center, completed indexing the Naturalizations for Contra Costa County. The Contra Costa County Historical Society holds many volumes of naturalization documents in care for the County's Superior Court. The index to over 11,000 naturalization records can now be viewed on the Historical Society's website at www.cocohistory.org.

Naturalizations are the single most important record class used to trace immigrant ancestors to their home countries. They contain direct evidence of specific date and place of birth, among much other information, as noted above. Over the years, naturalization records have been the responsibility of different Federal, State, or County courts. From 1850 to around 1990, naturalizations in Contra Costa County took place in the County's Superior Courts. About 1990, the naturalization process moved to San Francisco. An extensive article on U.S. District Court Naturalizations is on-line at www.sfgenealogy.com/norcal/resourcecenter/natural.htm. Because it describes only what the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has, this great resource does not list the History Center as a source. But the ONLY place to find naturalization records created in Contra Costa is at 610 Main Street, Martinez.

Margie Newton—Naturalization Index Volunteer *Margie Newton*

When I began the task of typing the names of those who had become citizens of the United States in



Contra Costa County, it didn't occur to me that it would take years. The first obstacle to overcome was copying the Index Book without taking it apart. Wrestling it onto the small office scanner was too hard on the volunteer as well as the index. Two boxes of index cards were discovered which had the names of those who had become citizens. Problem solved! The cards could be taken home

and worked on.

It took several months before all the cards had been transcribed. Upon entering the final card, a joyous victory dance took place. That was when Kathleen Mero did some calculating and found that there were about 6000 names in the book which weren't on those cards. New problem. The index is in chronological order and the cards in alphabetical. Which names had been done and which had still to be done? There must be more cards somewhere.

Another search turned up a rolodex of cards. This time no dance when they were done. There were still about 4000 missing. The first and last names were there but not the middle. The solution was taking pictures of each of the index pages and finding the missing names. There were many duplications in the 12,600 names finally transcribed. The index has been copied but we have just discovered some more books that contain names, so, like Mrs. Winchester and her house, I may never be done.

This has been a most interesting experience. I learned that there was a period of time when women who were born in the U.S. and who married foreign nationals became citizens of their husband's country. In order to regain U.S. citizenship, they had to be repatriated. Men born in another country could become U.S. citizens by serving in America's armed forces. Minor children, adopted from other nations, could become citizens through the naturalization process.

Much information is contained about each person: age, hair and eye color, scars and tattoos, height and weight, occupation, place of birth, and where, when, and how the person entered the United States. Some include photographs. Names and birthdays of children are listed. Some applications were denied because of inability to understand English, some because they were deemed to be lacking in morals. Others, because they would not serve in the U.S. armed forces. And some because they failed to report to court at the appointed time.

Transcribing our county's history is edifying and entertaining. Become a volunteer and you will see!

From the Executive Director:

Dear Friends,

Walking the Lafayette Reservoir on a peaceful fall day, I realized how thankful I am for the many dedicated



volunteers who staff our Archive on a daily basis—entering data, researching various requests, and generally enjoying one another’s company. In both September and October, when extra time was required to leave the Archive open, first for the Mayors’ Cookoff, then for the third Saturday of the month, and finally for the visit of the Californianos (see elsewhere in this *Bulletin*), our volunteers came through!

As we approach the holiday season and begin to look back on a year that has gone by so quickly for many of us, I am feeling good about the Society’s accomplishments this year. Apart from fielding four very successful exhibits, we have added several indexes to the database and put much more information on line. Go to www.cocohistory.com to check out the depth of our website. Professional researchers are really excited when they come in and find out how much more information we have than they expected. We are beginning an initiative whereby the Society can become a centralized information center for the many other historical societies in the County (there are at least 22). We are now open on the 3rd Saturday of each month, and our membership and mailings are being streamlined. We have some new corporate partners. And we have a new brochure! Come in and visit. The History Center is a busy, friendly place.

I wish you all a rich Holiday season and a fruitful New Year. Please keep the Contra Costa County Historical Society in your minds and hearts and remember us as you give charitably at the end of the year.

Sincerely,

Priscilla

President’s Message:

As the holidays loom, we hope you are enjoying relaxed times with family and friends. 2010 has been a full, rewarding and sometimes challenging time for us.



We are talking to County representatives and others about the future of the History Center at the 610 Main Street site. It is ideal in many ways: easy for researchers to find and open to the public for book sales and exhibits. We will keep you posted.

The Trailblazers exhibit on Anza and Cardinet will come down at the end of November and a historical holiday exhibit will go up. On December 18 our annual membership meeting, lunch, music and a museum tour are scheduled in Antioch (see page 1) -- hope to see you there!

Beverly Lane

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> New	<input type="checkbox"/> Renew	<input type="checkbox"/> Gift
Date _____		
Name(s) _____		
Address _____		
City _____		State ____
Zip _____	Phone _____	
E-Mail _____		
<small>_____ Please check here if you would prefer to receive your newsletter by e-mail—saves money and trees</small>		
DUES:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$30	<input type="checkbox"/> Couple \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$75
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate \$500	
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> Student \$15	

(Remember that your membership renewal date can be determined by checking the address label of this newsletter—Thanks for your support!)

**Consider the gift of history this year.
Give a gift membership in the Contra Costa
County Historical Society.**

Mark Your Calendar:

- November 20 - History Center open 10-2
- Thursday November 25 – closed for Thanksgiving
- December 7 - Holiday Exhibit Opening
- December 18 – Gen. Membership Mtg.
- December 21 to January 4 - Center closed
- January 4, 2011 – History Center re-opens
- January 15 - History Center open 10-2
- January 16 – Opening Reception, “Natural Talent,” EBRPD Photo contest exhibit
- January 20 – Exhibit Opening, San Ramon Valley Hist. Soc., “Remember the Ladies, The Centennial of Woman Suffrage in California” Call 925-837-9382 for details

Mission Statement

The mission of the Contra Costa County Historical Society is the dissemination of knowledge about the history of Contra Costa County and the State of California through publications, lectures, workshops, and through the acquisition and preservation of pertinent historical documents.

Contra Costa County Historical Society

Officers and Directors:

President.....Beverly Lane
 1st Vice President.....Andrea Blachman
 2nd Vice President.....vacant
 Secretary.....Webb Johnson
 Treasurer.....Audrey Katzman

Scott Saftler	John Mercurio
Donald Bastin	Lucille Irish
Melissa Jacobson	Mary-Ellen Jones
Kathy Leighton	Mario Menesini
Traci Parent	Paula Wherity

Betty Maffei – Member Emeritus

Executive Director: Priscilla Couden

Newsletter Editor: Donald Bastin

The History Center

610 Main Street, Martinez, CA 94553

Phone: 925-229-1042 fax: 925-229-1772

Open Tuesday thru Thursday, 9 am – 4 pm

Now open 3rd Saturday, 10am – 2 pm!

Email: info@cocohistory.com

Website: www.cocohistory.com

Newsletter printed by PDQ Printing



610 Main Street
Martinez, CA 94533

Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Concord, CA
Permit No. 630