



LOS MEGANOS EAST CONTRA COSTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Issue August 2020
Editor: Ginny Karlberg

<http://www.eastcontracostahistory.org>



DRIVE-THRU BBQ

Sunday, September 13

eastcontracostahistory.org

925-634-4049

EAST CONTRA COSTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL COMMUNITY BBQ
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2020

DRIVE=THRU PICKUP (By Surname)

A to G-2:00 p.m. H to R-2:30 p.m. S to Z-3:00 p.m.

At the Museum Grounds

3890 Sellers Ave., Brentwood/Knightsen (just south of Sunset Rd)

Adults \$25 Children 6-12 \$15 Under 6 Free

0411

Adults \$25
Children 6-12 \$15
Raffle 12 tickets
for \$10

With restrictions on large gatherings, we will have to forego the fun of visiting with old friends this year, but we will not have to miss out on a

FABULOUS BBQ MEAL - Covid style.

As our major fundraiser of the year, the BBQ will help keep ECCHS finances in the black!

As an ECCHS member, you have received your BBQ letter with tickets and information. Be sure to purchase your tickets, see if friends want to enjoy a pick-up meal as well, and put September 13th on your calendar to pick up your fresh BBQ meal to take home!

Included in your BBQ letter are also tickets to purchase for raffle prizes on the day of the BBQ. The fun raffle prizes will be on display at the drive-thru BBQ, so send in your \$\$ or buy those raffle tickets at the drive-thru. All winners will be contacted that afternoon by phone and delivered to you..

It does take many helping hands to make the BBQ a huge success each year, and as a Drive-Thru, the jobs may not be the same, but we still need those helping hands! Call 925-634-4049 and join us make this event memorable.

*Looking forward to seeing
you waving at us as you
DRIVE – THRU to pick up
your BBQ dinner!*

We will be working at the museum

Saturday, Sept 12 at 9:00 A.M.
organizing materials for packaging the
meals.

Sunday, Sept 13 -we need people to
collect tickets, direct traffic, assemble
and help distribute meals

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2020

Join in the Raffle Bonanza!

You need not be present to win
Prizes will be delivered to the winners



TICKETS

5 for \$6, 12 for \$10

Prizes include:

*One-night stay at Harveys in Lake Tahoe
Gift Basket from Sprouts Farmers Market*

Wine & Cheese Basket

Tupperware 10-piece container set

Homemade Quilt

And many more! PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Resource Center: Kathy Leighton said the committee has been down for a few weeks but will start meeting on Monday nights. They are ready to build shelving and

continue to do clean up. They are continuing to empty boxes and organize into files and binders. Thank you to Shirley McCall for organizing Vasco Region information into 3 binders. RoseAnne Yanas said bookshelves have been re-labeled and asks that the new place markers are used if someone removes a book. On these shelves are 1,000 titles of books, not including binders and yearbooks. Staff is networking with other museums in order to find homes for items that do not relate to our area and/or items we cannot use.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

Because of COVID-19, it was necessary to cancel the General Membership Meeting normally held in May. This is the time when the newly elected officers are usually installed. With the shelter-in-place mandate, the election was conducted through election ail this year.

At the end of the Board of Directors meeting on June 3, 2020, Mary Lou Klovee installed the 2020-2021 slate of offices.

President: Doreen Forlow
1st Vice President: Gretchen Tovar
2nd Vice President: Magdalena Northcut
Recording Secretary: Randi McCall
Corresponding Secretary: Shirley McCall
Treasurer: Kathy Bushman

OVER THE COURSE OF THE LAST 50 YEARS, there have been numerous fund raising events in addition to the Annual Community Barbecue that is still held each September. They include soup luncheons (catered by Rose Pierce), a fashion show, an equestrian tea, a craft boutique, participation in the Super Bowl Cookoff event, the Blues, Brews, and BBQ festival, the Festival of Trees, a Garden Party, sales of engraved bricks and school desk name plaques, yard sales, plus other one-time events. So after fifty (sometimes tranquil, sometimes turbulent) years, the East Contra Costa Historical Society thrives! Its mission “to collect, maintain, preserve, and protect historical artifacts and information of culture and historic value relative to the area of East Contra Costa County and to maintain and preserve our historical museum, the Byer-Nail House.

A BIT ABOUT DAVIS CAMP and O. R. DAVIS

The following was written by Clelland “Spike” Nail to preserve his recollections of his childhood for his children. It was originally published in the *Los Meganos* in April, 1989.



There is a lot of farm history, mostly lost now, about the depression years. We all have heard of the “Okies” and “Arkies”, those good farmers from the mid-west states who were forced to leave their land before, and as it blew away, in the dust storms of the late 20’s and early 30’s.



They crowded into any truck or auto that would run and headed to California in hopes of a new start or even a handout of fruit or potatoes. One such family was headed by O. R. Davis. He, his wife, and several children in their tired old vehicle made it as far as the bend in Marsh Creek, where Sunset Road meets Highway 4. There it sat while the family bedded down and made their plans for the next day.

It happened that the spot was already well-used as a local dump ground, so there were several scraps of cardboard and pieces of galvanized sheet-metal to be found. The county had decided to get rid of the dumping ground, which was never intended to exist anyway. So in a very short time, and by steps unknown to me, the Davises eked out a shelter of car bodies and cardboard, and the dump was hauled away.



While O. R. Davis struggled to build his shelter, the rest of the family walked to nearby farms seeking work. Soon they were picking “cots” and all the other crops that grew so plentiful in

Diablo Valley. The Davises were good workers, and soon farmers were seeking O. R.’s relatives to help on their ranches. Before long, cousins and brothers were rushing to the Davis Camp, where O. R. would help them gather scraps of anything to begin a shelter. He even staked their first meals until the first payday came around.



Within a few months, O. R. Davis had managed to stock groceries and other necessities in a small shed he was able to nail together. The shed grew in size and reputation as the Davis Market. It became known, not only as a good place to get a start in feeding their (Dust Bowl travelers) families, but also a reliable source for farmers to obtain workers.

As the years went by, the Davis family built several houses for friends and former neighbors from the mid-west. Eventually time took its toll, but not before the Davis family became a well- established name in the community. Leo Davis, one of O. R.’s sons, is still well- known in Brentwood. He sold the family holdings, including the market, and has retired in recent years. If you have never read the “Grapes of Wrath” by Steinbeck, you should. His story of the depression years in California has seen its fitting and rewarding endings in Contra Costa County at Davis Camp.

One little additional memory: Mom often shopped at Davis’s store and Grandpa frequently went along. I went because I had

learned that Grandpa was usually good for a nickel and I was very fond of strawberry Nehi! We'd go in and I would look longingly through the soda pop tank, while Grandpa would pretend not to notice until I found my choice flavor. Then when I was sure he was not going to come up with the nickel, he'd toss it to me with a chuckle.

About this time, in about 1931 or 32, a new brand of soda pop came into popular being, called Pepsi Cola. In those days, it came in a 12-ounce clear glass bottle with a paper label, and I think it was more heavily carbonated than it is now. I hadn't tried it until one day Mr. Sauls, a neighbor farmer of ours, came into the store and headed directly to the soda tank and pulled out a Pepsi, which he opened and then did what I still find amazing to this day. He tipped back his head and began to literally pour it down his throat.

I feel sure he had somehow learned to open his swallowing valve, for as far as I could determine, he didn't stop once until the 12 ounces were in his stomach. From then on, I always watched to see if Mr. Sauls was in the store so I could slyly watch this performance. Never did learn how it was done, but sooner or later I learned to like his brand, too.

(Photos of courtesy of the Dorothea Lange Collection/Oakland Museum of California and Stacey Bay Studios.com)

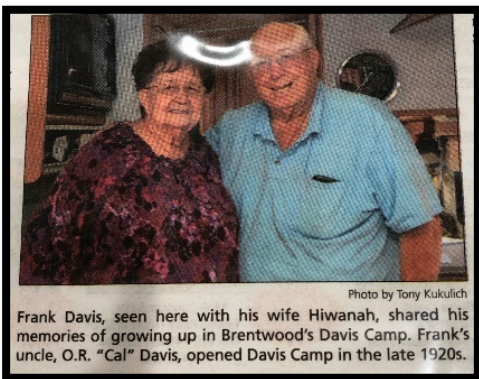
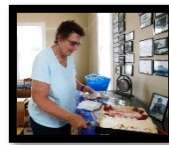


Photo by Tony Kukulich
Frank Davis, seen here with his wife Hiwanah, shared his memories of growing up in Brentwood's Davis Camp. Frank's uncle, O.R. "Cal" Davis, opened Davis Camp in the late 1920s.

Camp. The notebook was compiled by Shirley McCall and can be seen in the Resource Center.



TREASURER'S REPORT:

Treasurer Kathy Bushman handed out Treasurer's Report for May to all board members at the meeting. Total Monthly

Income: \$1,384.62 Total Monthly Expenses: \$1,241.21 Year to Date Income vs Expenses: \$2,152.46 Balances as of May 31, 2020: \$37,096.07 (Operations) \$151,129.27 (Money Market/Savings). Kathy stated that the interest rate has changed to about half.

WHAT PROJECTS ARE BEING DONE AT THE MUSEUM By "Breaker" Chuck Hunter

It's been a few weeks since I sent out an update on what's happening at the museum. Having come to the realization that working by myself in Homer's Shed poses no threat to anyone except me through tripping or falling off a ladder I decided it's time for the remodeling to continue. Consequently today I finished hanging nearly all of the pictures on the left hand side of the room. The first third of the room on both walls provides a pictorial display and story of how farming in the area evolved from wheat and smaller fields of vegetables to the wide variety of fruits, vegetables and nuts which we see growing today. This change was primarily due to the development of irrigation canals, a project headed by the Balfour Guthrie Corporation. There is a wonderful collection of photographs depicting the evolution of the canal system beginning with the initial digging of channels using horse drawn scrapers through the final photos showing how the water ran through the groves of trees. Along the wall underneath these pictures there are a variety of pieces of equipment which will ultimately have information identifying them and explaining how they were used. First is

a seeder, which would have been mounted on a wagon and used to plant fields. Next to this is a fanning mill, which was used to separate stones, dirt, dust, weed seeds from wheat and other grains. Then we have a bee box, used to attract colonies of bees to the fields where they would pollinate the plants and provide honey. Then we have a honey separator which removed the honey from the combs. Then we have a cream separator which, through the use of centrifugal force would separate whole milk from the cream. Next there is an incubator used to hatch baby chicks. Finally we have an apricot drying tray which sits atop a wheeled cart which would run on tracks laid in a field to facilitate moving a crop from field to shed or barn for further processing. Photographs showing these processes and written explanations will help make it possible for visitors to do self-guided tours. You will notice that various long handled tools are mounted above the photos in the first part of the room. This type of display will continue all the way down to the end of the room. But wait! There's more!!!

Our dynamic duo of Bob and Dan continue to labor long and hard to improve things.

Special Thanks To:

**Clay Plummer of Sign Pro for photographic



Project 1:

The plantings on the side of the farmhouse which were done in 2014 as a project for Liberty High School students, has been allowed to become overgrown to the point that the walkway in the garden wasn't passable. We have groomed the garden walkway to allow you to again walk into the area. Additionally, the irrigation system which had been placed there had suffered damage from overgrown plantings and neglect, and that has all been taken care of. Next, the blue flowering bushes adjacent to the ramp leading to the entrance had become overgrown.

Project 2: The wood rot on the supports for the front porch have been replaced. There is one project which the "Breakers" do not want to undertake because of the danger, however. This is the rotted wood in many of the windows and sills on the second floor. We are in the process of seeking bids for these repairs. It obviously is going to be expensive, but individually and collectively are not willing nor in most cases able to do the work on ladders which will be required. We are exploring how to pay for this need.

reproduction vinyl signs. 550 Valdry Ct.
Bentwood, CA 94513, 925-308-4836

*** "Breaker" Dan Wilkerson for all of his donations of material and supplies that help keep the Museum and its grounds in tip-top shape. Plus donuts each morning**McCauley Pest Control for weed abatement on the Museum grounds

RESOURCE CENTER



RoseAnne Yanes,
Gretchen Tovar,
Doreen Forlow, Kathy
Leighton, and Maggie
Northcut, are



organizing all of the old local newspapers in ECCHS new archival metal shelving units. That included copies of The Brentwood Press, Discovery Bay Breaker, and the Oakley Gazette. Then in the long room, Roseanne Yanse is working on sorting newspaper clipping starting as far back as 1931 that deal with East County history.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

A gift to East Contra Costa Historical Society, P. O. Box 202, Brentwood, CA 94513 is a special way to remember or honor friends and loved ones. The family of the individual will be notified (no amount will be mentioned). The person's name will be honored on a plaque displayed on the Rose Garden Memorial Board. Your gift of \$100 will be used to help preserve the history of East Contra Costa County. Thank you to the following for their memorial donations:

Mike Ambrosino	Mark & Sharon Johnson
	Richard Gonzales
Tom Cakebread	Linda Taylor
Leonard Celoni	Enrico Cinquini, Dewey DeMartini
Jack Ferrill	Joanne Byer
Myra Harrison	Richard Gonzales
Vasili Millias	Enrico Cinquini Meredith Nunn Dewey DeMartini
	Richard Gonzales
Ralph Pombo	Richard Gonzales

	Shirley McCall
Etta Sanchez	Linda Taylor
Robert Shellenberger	Dewey DeMartini
Beatrice Strle	Doreen Forlow
Pat Vaissade	Kathy Hampton
Robert Van Buren	Blanche Clark Dewey DeMartini Jack & Linda Gregory Betty Koski Margaret Kruse Keith & Marylin Lamport Norma Lewis Shirley McCall
Virginia Ybarra-Frazier	RoseAnne Yanes Margaret Kruse Keith & Marylin Lampor Norma Lewis Shirley McCall

ITEMS GIFTED TO US:

Alta Ackerman (LUHS yearbooks)
Cheryl Allegro (John Deere tractor)
Black Diamond Preserve (Trunk & carpentry tools)
Tom Bushman (Fork lift & rototiller)
Barbara Byer (Baldwin portrait)
John Fink (LUHS yearbooks)
Doreen Forlow (Balfour-Guthrie poster)
Ken & Betty Johnson (BIF produce crate)
Irv Klug (Child's wagon)
Rick Lemyre (Native American and early California history books)
Traci Parent (Black Diamond Mines book)
Wayne Weder (Ford tractor)
Leslie Young (Glass collection)
Joyce Zamora (Household items)
Brentwood Police Dept. (property surveillance)
Leslie Young (glass ware)
Doreen Forlow (Balfour-Guthrie cardboard poster)
Barbara Byer (William Baldwin portrait)

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING DONOR:



Mar Knittle donated the final School desk he restored FOR THE SCHOOLHOUSE. He restored 30+ school desks which are located in our 1800 schoolhouse which 1300 3rd graders set in a year in our

schoolhouse each year. Thank you, Mar, your work will be loved forever.

ADDITIONAL MONETARY GIFTS:

John Armanino
Delta Fence
The Men's Club
Dennis Drobisch

BAKELESS SALE

ECCHS wishes to express our thanks to the

following members who donated to the "Bakeless" Sale which so far has raised almost \$2,500 in this year when donations are meager. Not only did ECCHS benefit from this fund raiser, but no one had to turn on their ovens on these hot summer days!



Alta Ackerman,
Doug & Jackie Adams, Paul Krey
Roger & Mary Kay Aldous, Tim & Ginny Karlberg
Gayl Krumland, Frank & Diane Alexander
Marylin Lamport, Patty Andronico
Christine Lerch & Roger McMasters
Steve & Sherri Ayers, Norma Lewis
Barbara Bartzi, Dennis & Patricia Loosli
Lilly Beatty, Jim & Lynn Machado
Barbara Broach, Rich & Jayne Marchioni
June Bunn, Orlando & Megan Martinez
John & Kathy Bushman, Anthony & Cathy Massoni
Joanne Byer, Alan & Randi McCall
Patricia Casey, Ben & Lindy McCall
Gladice Celoni, Shirley McCall
Patricia Cheney, Bonnie McGuire

Jean Chrestenson, Patrick McHenry, James & Dorothy Clark, Lisa McLaughlin
Karen Cleek, Dawn Onalfo & Len Ferrier
Linda Cseak, Barbetta Pastor
Mike & Pam Currier, Nancy Roediger
Earline Dal Porto, Loren & Linda Robinson
Bob & Terry Damico, Joe & Marilyn Senn,
Dewey DeMartini, Tom & Wendy Snyder,
Les & Phyllis Ferguson, Amy Spanger,
Marian Ferrante, Marilyn Stacy, Robert Fletcher III,
Ruth Stonebarger,
Clint & Kathy Fredenberg,, Lois Stornetta
Judy Gerry, Dan & Dorothy Strauch,
Dianne Graham, Linda Taylor,
Frank, Grimley, ,Susan Thomas, Gursky Ranch,
Joe & Gretchen Tovar, Frank & Roberta Hill,
Nancy Roediger Chuck & Pat Hunter, Rose Anne Yanes, Mark & Sharon Johnson

Sidewalk Bricks

The sidewalk borders of the new Resource Center are being lined with engraved bricks.

These bricks can honor family members, organizations, pets, or

businesses. These bricks are enjoyed by many children and their parents who look to find their names. So, make a donation of \$100 for each brick. Contact Jody Merriam at 925-240-0288 (jody70shasa@gmail.com) for further information.

Thank you to the following brick purchasers:
Bob & Barbara Byer (6), Jody Merriam,
Gretchen Tovar, RoseAnne Yanes.



Closing Note: With all of us being quarantined for this past several months, it's easy to become depressed a bit. Just a thought, take a walk with loved ones, make a picnic or take a drive. See you in the car line to get your BBQ dinner. Take Care.