



El Cerrito Historical Society

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The Forge

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JULY MEETING: After kicking it around for awhile, the Board decided that our annual picnic should not be in July when the weather is often cold, but in the Fall when it is usually warmer. So, look forward to a pot-luck at Huber Park in October. The meeting will be held on **Sunday, July 26, at the El Cerrito Senior Center, 6510 Stockton Street, behind the library. A short business meeting of the Historical Society starts at 1:30, followed by our program.**

PROGRAM: "Visiting People Was A Big Thing" A look back at the Italian community in El Cerrito, CA.

The El Cerrito Historical Society is proud to present this lively, informal yet informative panel discussion featuring several longtime members of El Cerrito's Italian community, including **Gino Martinucci, Theresa Parella, Fred and Bev Granzella** - and perhaps others. The illustrated talk will range from the origin of the city's large Italian Community and the many businesses they owned (ceramics factories, dairies, shops, and such entertainment venues as the Six Bells) to winemaking, education, life during the Depression, World War II, and more.

Please attend this event, soak up stories from the old days - and contribute some of your own . Refreshments will include homemade biscotti prepared by **Mary Barkey**.

HISTORICAL NEWS

Finances: Treasurer Ruth Kibby has closed our books at the end of our fiscal year, and will have a report available at our next meeting.

The Creeks Committee continues its work to locate all watercourses in this city. It is the goal of the committee that creeks be preserved, and that suitable names be proposed for prominent creeks.

Japanese Flower-Growers will be honored with a photo exhibit, and other art, starting October 2, at the El Cerrito Senior Center. Event Chair, **Tom Panas**, has solicited donations to argument the special fund held by the Society. Thanks to **Ellen Paasch** for making the Senior Center available, and to **Sakura Kai** for its support.

Mira Flores: This is a project by the Richmond Redevelopment Agency, at the site of two former Japanese nurseries where green houses still stand, on the City of El Cerrito's border. The EIR is now available, and the comment period is running. **Tom Panas** plans to comment for our Society.

Displays: The Society had informational booths at Earth Day, and at the Independence Day event. There seemed to be substantial public interest in the community's history.

Shadi Room: The Historical Room in City Hall is now equipped with all of its furniture. The Board is conferring with the City on arranging access, and is puzzling on how to move our extensive archives from the Library basement, and

other places, to the new room

Land Use Planning: The Society has been asked by the City to study and report on a couple of pending projects, and has done so. We reported on the historic features of the Tradeway Property, but we're a little perplexed that the City's expert omitted from its evaluation what the society had determined. We have also delivered an opinion letter to the City asking that the historic features of the Rodini property at 1715 Elm Street be retained.

Study Pending: We have reported before that the City has agreed with this Society that the City should have an Historical Resources Survey, and has put money in the budget to do. Staff has been communicating with the State Historical Preservation Officer on the best method, but progress has been slow. Thus, properties like Rodini and Tradeway have to be dealt with individually and by re-action rather than in advance.

The **Pinole Historical Society** will premier its new book, "**Images of America, Pinole**" at a reception and book signing, Wednesday, **August 5th, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.** in the **Alex Clark Room of the Pinole Public Safety Facility, 880 Tennent Avenue.** The event is free and will feature refreshments and entertainment.

THE TONY LOMBARDO BUILDING

On the east side of Richmond Street in the 1920's, between Central and Fairmount in the middle of the block, stood the **Tony Lombardo Poultry Business.**

Tony was a short, stout, gray haired, Italian fellow, and was very active in the city. He had a regular poultry shop where he cleaned and dressed his poultry for market and also sold to people in the surrounding area.

In conjunction with this store, he ran a poultry stand in Oakland at the 6th Street Market, several days a week along with his shop in El Cerrito.

When one drove by his building, one would often see a loose duck or chicken running around the yard that had escaped from the crates that were stacked at the rear of the yard. His International flatbed truck would be parked in the driveway loaded with chicken crates and feathers would blow all over, especially on windy days.

Tony later decided to haul in olives, which he crushed in a large press and made olive oil in a small building at the rear of the lot. This he sold either by five gallon cans or one gallon jugs to his buyers, but along about 1933 he gave up this business.

He moved to San Pablo Avenue in Albany and opened up a poultry shop which he ran for a number of years with the help of his wife, son and his daughters.

Tony's son Vincent, who passed away in 1975, played an important part as a witness in convicting the bandits who robbed a Southern Pacific Train at Nobel Station in Albany in 1936.

Story from the Society's Collection authored by Melvin Belfils