

# Cotati Historical Society Newsletter

A non-profit 501 (c) (3) California corporation Tax ID #30-0421172

Preserving Cotati's Past

P.O. Box 7013 Cotati, CA 94931

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Prue Draper & Connie Martin, Editors

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## Cotati Museum Hours:

Saturday 1 - 4 P.M.

2nd Tuesday of each  
month 5 - 7 P.M.

Special times by appointment  
Phone 707-794-0305

Learn more about Cotati history and  
the Cotati Museum at our [website:](http://www.cotatihistoricalsociety.org)  
[www.cotatihistoricalsociety.org](http://www.cotatihistoricalsociety.org)

## SOCIETY OFFICERS

**President:** Terry Dutra 795-3977

**V.Pres.:** Connie Martin 795-2772

**Secretary:** Marie McNaughton

**Treasurer:** Yvonne VanDyke

**Historian:** Prue Draper

**Art Director:** Judy Pagnusat

**Archive Admin:** Judy Gustafson

**Essay Contest:** Velma DiMeola

**Volunteer Coordinator:**

Barbara Jean Veronda 795-4545

## Our Mission Statement

As stated in our Articles of Incorporation, dated April 11, 2007, the specific purpose of the Cotati Historical Society is to protect and preserve the history and culture of the City of Cotati, California. Our goal is to provide a museum and interpretive programs for the preservation of artifacts, memorabilia and documents illustrating the past and present life of the Cotati community, municipality and its citizens.

## They Came, They Saw, They Admired

A cheerful crowd accepted our invitation to attend Open House at the Cotati Museum on Oct. 27 and get to know their museum better. (Photo at right) They browsed through our collections, shared wine, cheese and crackers, coffee and homemade cookies as they learned more about our community. A special attraction was a large 1988 collection of black-and-white photos of Cotati people and scenes recently donated to the museum by **Clifton Buck-Kaufman**.



**Gary Santero**, an incoming member of the Museum Board of Directors, reminisces with **Connie Martin** as they examine maps of the area. (Photo at left) Both Gary and Connie are members of long-time Cotati families, and grew up here. At right is a figure of the late **Jim Boggio**, one of the founders of the famous Cotati Accordion Festival. The figure is holding one of Jim's accordions, recently donated to the museum with other Boggio memorabilia.



Lots of memories were shared by long-time local residents **Bob Herrerias**, left, and **Izzy Oretsky**. (Photo at right) Mr. Oretsky, who went to Cotati Elementary School, remembered when the room that is now the museum was the first grade classroom. He admitted it's been completely changed to display collections of Cotati history.



**Judy Gustafson**, left, our society archive administrator, chats with **Mr. and Mrs. Gene Buvelot**, officers of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. (Photo at left) The Buvelots presented the museum with a large assortment of books about the early Coast Miwoks who inhabited our area. They are now for sale at the museum.

Photos by Rick Sager

# WHAT'S NEW AT THE MUSEUM?

**Fred Keppel typed here.** This remarkable antique typewriter (photo at right) was in a collection of unneeded artifacts at the Sonoma County Museum, and was given to the Cotati Museum since we are also a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving local history. It is an Oliver Standard Visible Writer, patented Nov. 5, 1912. The machine is remarkably heavy and has a triangular bar that rises up to print each letter. Fred Keppel was a famous man in old-time Cotati: ranch manager for the Thomas Page Family, member of the Cotati School Board of Trustees, volunteer fireman and Cotati Progressive Club officer. He lived on William Street in a house which is now a Montessori School.



**Thanks Mike! Mike Sheehan**, (photo at left) gets a hug from **Yvonne VanDyke**, our treasurer, after his generous donation of \$500 to the Cotati Historical Society.

Mike, who was one of our earliest and most generous donors, in 2009 gifted us with \$1500 to finance the purchase of Past Perfect, our cataloging software. It was an invaluable gift that has made it possible for our museum to keep track of the varied items in our growing collection. Like many of our supporters, Mike grew up in Cotati and is proud of the history of our community. Mike is founder and owner of BioResource, Inc., an importer and distributor of homeopathic medicines from Germany.

## FIELD TRIP AND ESSAY CONTEST

One of our favorite projects is the historical essay contest, chaired by Velma DiMeolo. We sponsor it every year to help fourth graders at Thomas Page Academy explore the history of Cotati. They begin with a field trip to Cotati City Hall, which this year is scheduled for February 5, 2014. Students, teachers and parents will tour the departments of Cotati City Government, and the Cotati Historical Museum, and learn more about Cotati's past as a land grant rancho and why their school is named Thomas Page. We award \$50 to the winning student and his/her class.

## HISTORICAL RESOURCE GUIDE

New member Rick Sager has prepared an informational flyer of Historical Resources that can be a great help in doing either historical or genealogical research. This flyer is available at the Museum at no charge and we thank Rick for his contribution.

## ***THANK YOU and welcome to our most recent new and renewing members and donors***

Joyce Arnold	John Richardson
Catherine Bevanda	Mike Sheehan
Beverly Colburn	Rhonda Smith
Elyse Lord	Louise Steacy
Sylvia Palmer	

## BBQ DATE SET FOR APRIL 13

Even though **2014** is still a month away, we hope you'll mark your calendars for Sunday, **April 13**, for our annual chicken barbecue in the Cotati Room. In our first year, we decided to hark back to the days of the annual barbecues in the Plaza. It was a wonderful day, and bigger crowds have come every year as the word got around that it's not only the most delicious and generous chicken barbecue anywhere, but it's a chance to reunite with old friends and meet new ones. This will be our sixth annual barbecue!

If you'd like to volunteer to be part of this fun day, please contact us.



**Dedicated BBQ chefs: Left to right, Ed Gilardi, Jake Martin, Gary Martin and Fred Carrasca, pictured on duty in 2013.**

## MAIL BRINGS TALES OF LONG-AGO RESIDENTS

We never know, when we check our e-mail or website, what sort of interesting things we'll learn about Cotati's history. One of the more unusual messages came this month from a lady named **Ranjini Woodhouse** in England, inquiring about the place where her father from Sri Lanka stayed in 1952/3 while attending the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley.

Ranjini, who sounds like a very pleasant lady, is planning to publish her father's thesis at the end of November, and she knew that he had stayed on the "Dimpfl Ranch" in Cotati. His name was the **Rev. Bramwell Christopher Devratnam Mather**. What, she wondered, could we tell her about the Dimpfl Ranch, the Dimpfl family, any descendants; anything else that might be of interest to her children, who never knew their grandfather.

We remember the **Dimpfls** – **Ludwig**, better known as Lou, and his sister, **Josefina**, usually called Fina.



Bev Roberts Colburn displays dolls made for her by Josefina Dimpfl.

In fact, by an odd coincidence, **Beverly Roberts Colburn** had just donated a handsome collection of dolls to the Cotati Museum – cloth dolls made by Fina Dimpfl.

Lou Dimpfl was associated with the Dex Bakery, located on Old Redwood Highway in the 1940's and '50's. He was an accomplished cake decorator. He and his sister Fina, lived on Page Street in a fairly small house with a fairly small yard. Could it be called a ranch?

Then Ranjini sent us a photo of her father and Lou Dimpfl, taken on the "ranch" and we decided that, indeed, the building in the background was a typical Cotati chicken house and in front of it was a typical chicken-catching crate. On the back was written "Dimpfl Ranch, Cotati, 1953".

So we wrote to Ranjini what we could about the ranch, and hope it helps her with her project. She seems very grateful, and sent us her website called soul-journey.

If anyone remembers the Dimpfls or the Rev. Mr. Mather and can add to our information, we would be happy to relay it.

We also received an interesting note from **Esther Lebeck Loveridge**, who wondered if we knew that East Railroad Avenue wasn't straight in the old days. She sent a photo of her grandparents' home to prove it.

Of course, we were fascinated with this illustration of old-time Cotati, and asked Esther for more information. She says the house at 645 E. Railroad Ave., which is still there, was built by her grandfather, **Andreas Lebeck**, and her father, **Albert J. Lebeck**, was born there in 1907. It burned years later when her mother left the iron on while the family went to church, and it was rebuilt in 1933.

Esther then sent us a charming motion picture in DVD form showing her father and uncle as small boys when their family came home to the grandparents' house for Thanksgiving, about 1938-39.

The movie shows the family traveling from Sacramento, stopping at the Old Adobe (not then a state park), also a giant chicken statue that used to be in Petaluma, and a huge Indian statue (location unknown), and finally the family reunion on the E. Railroad Avenue ranch with the little boys riding a horse and feeding chickens.

The DVD is in our collection at the Cotati Museum and may be seen there on one of our Saturday afternoon open hours.



The Rev. Branwell Christopher Devratnam Mather of Sri Lank and his host, Ludwig Dimpfl of Cotati in 1953.



East Railroad Avenue has straightened out a lot since Andreas and Freda Lebeck built this house about 1907.

## Time to think about 2014 dues

We collect dues every January and you too, can help preserve Cotati's history. **Dues are still only \$10 per person per year.** Please complete this form and send with your check to:

**Cotati Historical Society  
P.O. Box 7013  
Cotati, CA 94931**

*Yes I want to renew my membership for 2014*

Name/s \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

*We can save postage by sending quarterly newsletters on-line.*

**Cotati Historical Society  
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*Happy Holidays  
from all of us at the  
Cotati Historical Society.*