

Cotati Historical Society Newsletter

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Preserving Cotati's Past
P.O. Box 7013 Cotati, CA 94931
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Fall 2018

Marie McNaughton, Editor

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BOARD POSITIONS OPEN
YOU can direct the future of the
society and museum.
SEE THE CHS MISSION
statement below.

COTATI MUSEUM HOURS

Every Saturday, 1-4 p.m.
2nd Tuesdays, 5-7 p.m.

For tours, research &
other appointments,
call 707-794-0305.

Inside Cotati City Hall
201 West Sierra Avenue

THE CHS MISSION

As stated in our Articles of Incorporation, dated April 11, 2007, the specific purposes of the Cotati Historical Society are 1) to protect and preserve the history and culture of the City of Cotati, 2) to provide a permanent resource (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, and 3) to reach out to the general community and to support similarly guided educational and historical agencies.

“Wa” Exhibit Explores Local Japanese American Stories from the 19th to The 21st Century

The story of Japanese American immigration, citizenship denied, and Sonoma County homesteads rescued has only recently become known outside the Japanese community. CHS is pleased to announce a new year-long exhibit showcasing local bravery, kindness, and resilience through oral history, images, documents, news stories, art, music, and treasured artifacts.

The exhibit's title, “Wa,” can mean peace, harmony, tranquility, and self-understanding. More, it conveys the idea that a person alone is incomplete and that engagement in the community is essential for both self-fulfillment and social unity.

The opening reception will be held Sunday, Nov. 4, 1-4 p.m. in the Museum and the Cotati Room of the Miller Community Center.

This event is free to the public and will feature local speakers, question-and-answer time, personal sharing, antiques, art, activities for adults and children, and Japanese food, drink, and music.

The exhibit will cover 1880s emigration from Japan, local schools, community centers, and the Enmanji Buddhist Temple; Executive Order 9066, war service by local Japanese American citizens, life in the camps, and the art created there. It will also tell the story of non-Asians who preserved Japanese American property for families who returned here after the war.

The Japanese American Citizens League, other local agencies and historians, and the individuals who have shared their private stories—some for the first time outside their families—are making this exhibit and event possible. If you are interested in sharing your story, loaning special objects, or otherwise helping, please call 529-0739.



This Japanese character “wa” was drawn by Sachiko Knappman, especially for the CHS exhibit running 2018-2019.



Japanese children and teachers stand in front of the Analy Township School in the 1880s. Photo courtesy the History Collection of the Sonoma County Library.



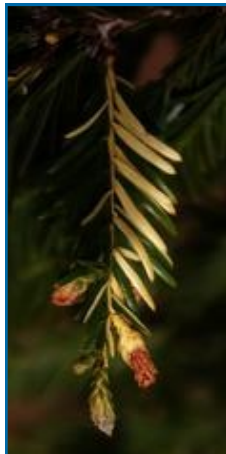
Buddhist minister Inshu Masachika Yonemura, in ceremonial garb, poses with his daughter Mae at Colorado's Camp Amache during their Second World War incarceration. Behind them is their uninsulated barrack. Image donated to CHS by Mae Fisk for “Wa,” 2018.

CHS Members Ask: “How IS the Chimera Redwood Doing?”

It has been four years since SMART transplanted Cotati’s rare variegated redwood (having green and white needles) from the west side of the Cotati train tracks to a spot prepared east of the new train station and near Windmill Farms. The tree, the tallest and largest known specimen of its kind, is acclimating to its new home and with continued careful maintenance and irrigation may shade future generations.

In 2012, certified arborist Tom Stapleton reported that both male and female chimeric cones had been identified, making the tree a possible one-of-a-kind. He posited that the tree could replicate if it were allowed to continue maturing.

A July 2018 report to SMART by Stapleton indicates that the tree is recovering from damage to the



Rare albino needles can be seen on the chimera redwood tree next to Cotati Station. Photos courtesy Tom Stapleton.



new site and irrigation system that were noted and corrected in 2014. Now, supporting cables, the misting system, and one set of irrigation lines that were necessary for the transplantation are no longer needed. According to the report, they are restricting growth of the root ball, trunk, and upper layers, and need to be removed quickly.

The tree was planted over 60 years ago by Peter Tapan, a local rancher, and was “adopted” by CHS in 2013 to publicize its rarity and to promote its transplantation. Arborist Stapleton continues to lobby for Cotati street signage directing visitors to the site, as well as interpretive panels at the site to explain why the tree is special. For more about albino redwoods and how to help ours, visit <https://www.chimeraredwoods.com/>.

Cotati Family Descendant Learns and Shares Local Stories

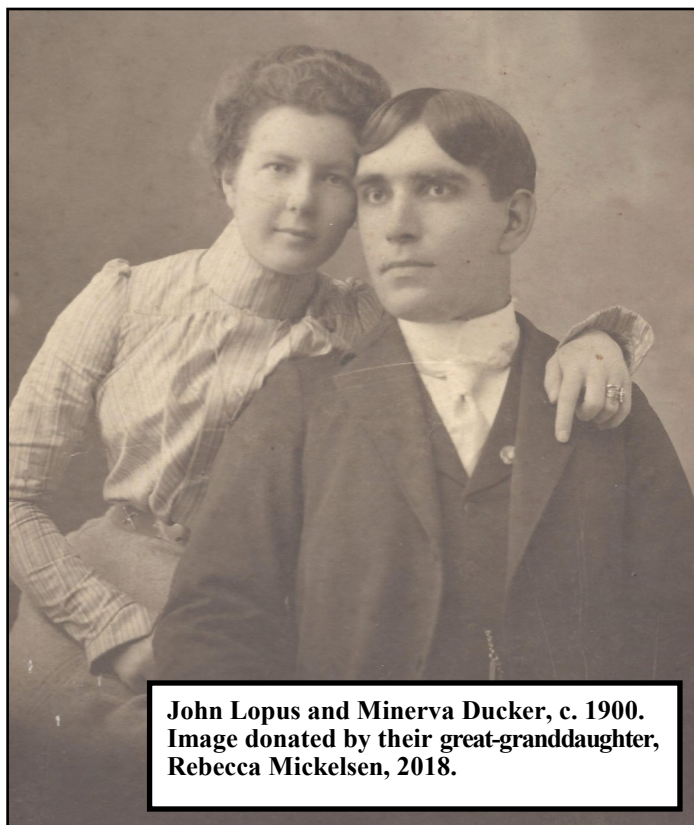
This summer, Utah resident and the great-granddaughter of early Cotati Hotel owner John Lopus, Rebecca Mickelsen, visited Sonoma County to attend a family reunion and to marshal a team of historians from Petaluma, Penngrrove, Cotati, and Santa Rosa to help her document her family history.



Rebecca Mickelsen

On August 14, Rebecca met with board members Connie Martin and Judy Gustafson at the Cotati Museum. Judy, our archiving administrator, reports that Rebecca “has done a lot of genealogy research and shared a huge binder full of information she had already gathered. She was also hoping to discover even more about her ancestors and the Cotati area. The museum had a few photos and maps showing the location of family property, and other items that Rebecca had not seen.”

Two hours flew by as she told Judy and Connie about the stories and information she had gathered, and shared images new to our collection. She revealed that



John Lopus and Minerva Ducker, c. 1900. Image donated by their great-granddaughter, Rebecca Mickelsen, 2018.

Portuguese immigrant Antone/Antonio Lopus and his wife, Flora, owned a very large ranch in the Cotati area in the late 1800s. Rebecca’s great-grandfather John Lopus managed several bars and businesses in the area as well as Cotati’s first hotel.

Two Model As Win Our *Fifth* First Place in the Penngrove Parade

It took two antique cars in a row to win First Place in the Penngrove Fourth of July Parade this year, but with two generous car owners answering the call for “float” entries, we just couldn’t miss. Marc Libarle drove his 1930 red two-door Model A, followed by Dennis Drew in his 1931 black four-door Model A.

Both Cotati-area natives had fun preparing their cars for the event. “Dennis, whose dad, Bill, once owned the Washoe House, got his entry running for the first time in 40 years,” said Libarle. “He spent two, three days getting it ready, changing the radiator, but not the oil. Didn’t wash it, either.”

Libarle, also not particular about auto detailing, photographed his car in the weeds on the family’s Railroad Avenue ranch.

Previous vintage autos winning the Penngrove event for CHS were owned by Jaime Llopis (2010) and Gary Santero (2013, 2015, and 2017).



Marc Libarle’s red two-door (above) and Dennis Drew’s black four-door (below) caught the fancy of the judges at the Penngrove Fourth of July Parade. Photos by Marc Libarle.

CHS Honors its Founders as “Hometown Heroes” in 26th Annual Kids Day Parade

This year’s CHS Kids Day float featured longtime community leaders and spouses Pat and Ed Gilardi, who in turn honored spouses Prue and Lloyd Draper as hometown heroes in the July 14 parade.

Driven by Ralph Cota in his snazzy 1967 DeVille Cadillac, the Gilardis waved banners made by Sandra, Josh, and Zara Walton saluting the Drapers, who, among many other civic acts founded our historical society and made our museum possible.

Among the Gilardis’ many contributions to the community have been service by Pat on the Cotati City Council and by Ed on the Cotati-Rohnert Park Board of Education (as well as the CHS board).

CHS president John Allred was again announcer for the Kids Day Parade and Festival, which fills downtown Cotati with live entertainment, games, music, contests, food, family resources, crafts, vendors and activities.



Ed and Pat Gilardi wave hands and banners celebrating Prue and Lloyd Draper as Cotati hometown heroes in the 2018 Kids Day Parade. Photo by Dave Wasson.

CHS always needs new volunteers.

Currently our greatest needs are for people skilled in Microsoft Publisher and Social Media.

Please write chsinfo@sonic.net to help.

What's the BUZZ?

Don't Miss These History Notices & Events

The Sonoma County Library's **history and genealogy services have been temporarily relocated** to the Santa Rosa Central Library (211 E St., Santa Rosa) while the Annex undergoes a two-month remodel. For help, visit the reference desk on Central's main floor. There, staff continue to provide one-on-one research assistance daily, 1-5 p.m. (Monday through Saturday) and by appointment. Volunteers from the Sonoma County Genealogical Society also continue to assist visitors on Wednesdays and Fridays, 1-4 p.m. Call 707-308-3020, or email Katherine Rinehart, krinehart@sonomali-brary.org for more information.

October is popular for **local cemetery tours**: Saturday, Oct. 6, 1-3 p.m. By the Russian River Historical Society at Redwood **Memorial Gardens Cemetery Tour**, Woodland Ave., Guerneville, \$10, www.russianriverhistory.org for more info. Friday and Saturday, Oct. 12-13, 5:30, 6:15, and 7:45 p.m., 16th Annual **Sebastopol Cemetery Walk** by the Western Sonoma County Historical Society. Starts at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 500 Robinson Road, Sebastopol. Enjoy six dramatic performances of the lives of significant Sebastopol residents, plus a light dinner, \$40. This sell-out event also includes

dessert at the historic Burbank Farm Cottage, www.wschsgarf.org/. Saturday, Oct. 20, 10:30 a.m.-12 noon. Sponsored by the Petaluma Historical Library and Museum, this tour visits **Cypress Hill Cemetery**, 430 Magnolia Ave. Members \$11.34, nonmembers \$16.52 at <https://cemeterytour2018.brownpapertickets.com/>.

On Wednesday, Oct. 17, 7-8:30 p.m., the Petaluma Regional Library will host a free talk about the **1935 tar and feathering** of local union organizers. Barry Nitzberg, grandson of trade unionist Sol Nitzberg, and historian Ken Kann, author of *Comrades and Chicken Ranchers*, will examine the activities leading up to this event. 100 Fairgrounds Dr., Petaluma.

Please note that the countywide "Preserving your Family Archives" workshop (previously scheduled for May and November) has been cancelled for 2018.

THANK YOU TO OUR NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS AND DONORS

Sean Bressie, Kit Lofroos, Pat Marshment, Rebecca Mickelsen*, Janet Orchard*, Joe and Karen Panfiglio.

* General donation in addition to dues

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

Cotati Museum & Historical Society

Invite you to a FREE opening reception
Sunday, Nov. 4, 2018, 1-4 p.m.
for our new museum exhibit

Wa 和

Japanese Americans in Cotati

Local Speakers • Music • Artifacts
Refreshments • Family Activities



Otani family children, Cotati, c. 1950

Cotati City Hall & Miller Community Center
West Sierra Avenue at School Street
www.cotatihistoricalsociety.org