

Cotati Historical Society Newsletter

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

Preserving Cotati's Past
 PO Box 7013 Cotati, CA 94931
 chsinfo@sonic.net www.cotatihistoricalsociety.org

Spring 2022

Marie McNaughton, Editor

Vol. 15 No. 1

CONTENTS

Cotati School Records Return	1, 2
Martin Family Donates Displays	2
Volunteer Activities & Appreciation	3
New & Renewing Members	3
Memorial & General Donations	3
Walking Tours to Begin in May	4

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President John Allred, 795-2791
Vice President Ed Gilardi
Secretary Velma DiMeola
Treasurer John Dell'Osso
Archiving Administrator
 Judy Gustafson
Directors Bobbie Veronda
 Susan Kashack

STAFF

Website Coordinator Stephen Gold
Docent Coordinator Marie McNaughton

COTATI MUSEUM HOURS

Saturdays, 1-4 p.m.
 & by appointment

For research, donations &
 other concerns,
 call 707-794-0305.

Inside Cotati City Hall
 201 W. 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.

Early Cotati School District Records Discovered, Donated to Cotati Museum

By Marie Thomas McNaughton

Historic records locked for many years in the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District office safe were entrusted recently to Ed Gilardi, current CHS vice president and school district board member for 20 years, from 1996 to 2016. The Cotati Museum is featuring them in its new exhibit cases donated by the Martin family (see photo and story inside). The documents include:

- School District Accounts and Minutes Book, July 1913 to June 1937
- School Board Minutes Book, February 1934 to June 1939
- Ledger Book, July 1937-December 1938
- Sonoma County Schools District Accounts, July 1937 to June 1943
- School Board Minutes Book, January 1944 to June 1955, and
- Miscellaneous documents.

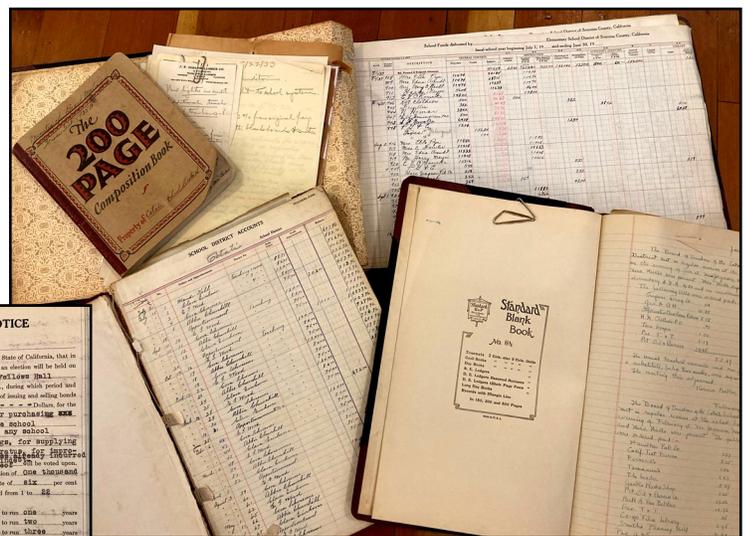
Ed personally studied each of the record books and has written a fascinating chronological summary of the board notes from 1912 through 1955, starting with a 1912 water hook up for Cotati's third schoolhouse at what is now the corner of West Sierra and School streets. In 1918 electric lights were installed in the principal's office. When that schoolhouse burned down in 1921, an election was held approving \$22,000 for the new building, furnishings, and insurance. The low bidder for construction was Myrl R. Crane for \$20,670. That bought five rooms and a small auditorium, the core of the building that serves as today's Cotati City Hall—one hundred years later.

Below, a 1921 School Bond Election Notice outlines payment obligations of six percent over 22 years. The election was held at the Odd Fellows Hall.

SCHOOL BOND ELECTION NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the qualified electors of the City of Cotati, State of California, that in accordance with the provisions of the Political Code of the State of California, an election will be held on the 22nd day of March, 1921, at 10 o'clock P.M., at the Odd Fellows Hall, to wit: District, between the hours of eight o'clock A.M. and six o'clock P.M., during which period will be voted upon the following proposition, to-wit: That the sum of Twenty-two thousand (\$22,000) Dollars, for the purpose of raising money for the purpose of building a new school building, for making alterations and additions to any school building or buildings, for furnishing school buildings, for supplying school buildings with furniture and apparatus, and for the purpose of paying the interest on any bonds or other securities issued by the Board of Directors of the City of Cotati, be and lawfully be authorized to issue and sell bonds of the City of Cotati, in the sum of Twenty-two thousand (\$22,000) Dollars, and that the bonds shall be sold at the rate of six percent per annum, payable semi-annually, and that the bonds shall be redeemed from time to time, respectively, payable as follows:

Bond No. 1.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
Bond No. 2.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
Bond No. 3.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
Bond No. 4.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
Bond No. 5.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
Bond No. 6.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
Bond No. 7.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
Bond No. 8.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
Bond No. 9.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
Bond No. 10.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
Bond No. 11.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
Bond No. 12.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
Bond No. 13.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
Bond No. 14.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
Bond No. 15.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
Bond No. 16.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
Bond No. 17.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
Bond No. 18.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
Bond No. 19.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
Bond No. 20.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
and \$22,000.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years
and \$22,000.	one thousand	Dollars, to run	20 years



Above, a variety of formal ledgers, letters, receipts, recipe-style notecards held together with rusty paper clips, and one low-budget composition book tell the five-decade story of one small school district—the players, the expenses, the struggles, and the controversies.

Continued on page 2

Custom-built Display Cabinets Donated by the Martin Family

In memory of the late CHS founding member and volunteer extraordinaire Connie Martin, her family has donated two oak display-and-storage cabinets to the Cotati Museum. Built specially for our exhibit space, the matching pair feature display lighting, glass shelves, Plexiglas doors, and storage cabinetry. Each carries a brass plate: “Donated in memory of Connie Revard Martin by her family.”

Museum volunteers are evaluating the collection for items deserving of special attention, with an emphasis on art objects. These displays join two history panel arrays purchased in memory of Lloyd Draper by his family and of Julie Berkemeier by her family and friends. CHS is deeply grateful for all memorial donations.

At right, Connie’s husband Bruce Martin, after the cabinets’ January installation.



Photo by Judy Gustafson.

Cotati School District Records, continued from page 1

In 1926, the board voted to hire a visiting nurse, and in 1929 agreed to pay \$7.50 a month for sewing classes, and \$5.00 a month to purchase lumber for a manual training class. The school received a gift from Mr. Palmgren of his collection of journals recounting his life and voyages as a sea captain.

According to Ed Gilardi’s records synopsis, the board in the 1930s agreed to donate a small piece of land on which to erect a Boy Scouts hut, but rejected a request by Mr. Morgan of Petaluma to present a religious play at the school. The board authorized the purchase of a ditto machine, agreed to construct tennis courts and to allow the Sonoma County Sportsman Association the use of the schoolhouse for monthly moving pictures—but no smoking would be allowed. New bookcases were ordered from the shop at San Quentin State Prison and funds allotted for materials covering the Constitution in order to instill patriotic attitudes among the school children.

In 1945, the community discussed the future of the junior high schools in Cotati and Penngrove. Cotati chose to maintain its junior high, while Penngrove students moved to Petaluma. By 1948 Cotati parents were required to send their older children to Petaluma.

In 1951, the school board went on record as offering the school for civilian defense, but declined the use of the school to the Cotati Chess Club as the building could be used only for public meetings. Cotati School was selected as the location for a special education class, with the county paying for a teacher and classroom space.

In 1953, the PTA installed new playground equipment but stopped serving lunches due to “damage done to paint and desks.” Principal Eleanor Mills had a busy year, picking up 14 musical instruments loaned “quite a number of years ago to the Red Cross” and stopped “at the Sheriff’s Office for a report on the process of collecting money from the boys who robbed the school.”

The records conclude in 1955, when polio immunizations took place at Penngrove School, the children in instrumental music took part in the Cloverdale music festival, and the board agreed to take over the Milk Program, previously funded by the PTA.

Overall, the records, often scribed in meticulous handwriting, tell the story of a small town invested in its school children, trying to do right by them and the future of the community, and to maintain local control in the face of huge regional and global challenges. CHS thanks the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District for donating them to our collection, thereby returning them to their original home.

SCHOOL DISTRICT ACCOUNTS			
Cotati School District			
Orders and Apportionments	Drawn for	Debit Orders	As
Maudie Fahl	Teaching 1 week	\$ 8.75	
Olava Lindholm	" " 3 "	56.25	
E. J. Wood	" " 4 "	120.00	
Corra Schreiner	" " " "	80.00	
Abbie Churchill	" " " "	75.00	
Apportionment			
E. J. Wood	Teaching	120.00	

March 21-1944

The Board of Trustees of the Cotati School District met in regular session at the school-house on the evening of March 21. Announcement was made of the recent marriage of the Janitress, Mrs. Anna Halvorsen to Mrs. Juvie. Warm appreciation of Mrs. Juvie's services was expressed in view of more substantial recognition in the future. The Board is fortunate to have anyone as reliable, capable and cooperative.

The following bills were ordered paid:—

Ferrero's	1.03
Empire Paint Co.	1.80
Alder E. James	156.00
Two Rock Commercial	43.88
Calif. School Book Dep.	8.34
Pacific T. & T.	.56
The Fair	4.21
Pet. Oil & Burner Co.	19.89
Pet. Radio	4.99
W. P. Evans	108.00
Frank J. Hairup	18.00
R. A. Clothier - P.O.	.45
American Legacy	11.40
	<u>398.35</u>

Part-time teachers in 1913 earned \$18.75 per week, full-time teachers \$20 to \$30. In March 1944, district bills included \$19.89 to Petaluma Oil & Burner Co., \$1.03 to Ferrero’s mercantile, \$1.80 to Empire Paint Co., and 56 cents to Pacific Telephone & Telegraph. Janitress Anna Halvorsen announced her marriage, receiving thanks and congratulations from the board.

Community Outreach, New Programs, New Signage Mean We Need More Volunteers!

With COVID-19 restrictions abating, recent press coverage of CHS activities, and our new signs attracting attention, the Cotati Museum is hopping.

Do you have some Cotati stories to tell? Do you know someone else who might? We need more new docents to keep the museum staffed on Saturday afternoons, plus volunteer guides to lead walking tours of downtown Cotati in a new joint program by CHS and the Cotati Chamber of Commerce. The walking tours will be held on the first Saturday of the month, starting at 11 a.m. A brainstorming tour is planned for Saturday, April 2. If interested in this or other volunteer opportunities, please send an email to chsinfo@sonic.net.

Volunteer Notes

The CHS Board of Directors welcomes **Susan Kashack**. Now retired, Susan spent 32 years at Sonoma State in communications and public relations. We look forward to benefiting from her marketing expertise. **Judy Gustafson** has done it again! For the 13th year in a row, she has won CHS a \$500 grant from State Farm Insurance for her many hours of volunteering, especially in managing the Cotati Museum collection. New museum cabinets have allowed us to develop a variety of new exhibits, including one featuring items from Cotati's famous Green Mill Inn, once owned by **John Dell'Osso's** family.



Photos by Marie McNaughton



Above, docent Margie Arthur Cassero and vice president Ed Gilardi ready a new portable banner to attract visitors on Saturday afternoons. At right, a new permanent sign designed by Jake Page of Hines Signs replaces the old City Hall sign installed when the museum opened in 2010.

CHS Will Not Hold 2022 Chicken BBQ/Reunion

Due to continuing COVID-19 uncertainty and the need for significant advance planning, CHS will not hold a barbecue this year. We will begin historic downtown walking tours in partnership with the Cotati Chamber of Commerce. In addition, we hope to hold a fall member event, scheduled annually for the first Sunday in November (Nov. 6, 2022).

THANK YOU TO OUR NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS AND TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS (NOV. 16, 2021-FEB. 28, 2022)

Mark & Shannon Ackerman
Marie Aggio
Coren Andrews
Susan Bennett
Virginia Benson
Harold Berkemeier
Frank & Kathryn Bianchi
Lillian Blodgett
George Bunting*
Diane Canadas
Kenneth & Sherri Carli
Fred & Annie Carrasca

Margie Arthur Cassero*
Church of the Oaks
Beverly Colburn
Cotati Chamber of Commerce
Velma DiMeola
Ron Dodge
Robin Draper
Terry Dutra
Jane Ferina
Janet Gingham*
Judy Gustafson
Dave Heisel & Karen Braden

Mary Lou Issel Lentz
Gary & Robin Malone
Bruce Martin
Barbara & Terry McGee
Jeff & Donald Millerick*
Millie Nibe
Vi Nordman
DeLoris Osborn*
Ellen Ostrand
Bruce Pearson*
Stan Poncia*
Katherine Rinehart*

Spancky's-Kevin Gingham
Bill Tomrose*
Dan & Carolyn Torliatt*
Pamela Torliatt
Yvonne VanDyke
Pamela Wilford*
Carol Williams*
Nancy Yoshioka

*Indicates donation in addition to membership

Memorial Donations

Marion Ackerman
Mark & Shannon Ackerman
Egidio & Maria Andreoli
Gina Clark
RC "Tubby" Braden
Dave & Karen Braden Heisel
Dogterberfest
Ron Dodge
Prue Draper
Robin Draper

Jennie Falletti
Marie Aggio
The Halley, Park, Christensen & Jeffreys Families
Coren Andrews
Lorraine & Jim Issel
Mary Lou Issel Lentz
Connie Martin
Barbara & Terry McGee
Ed Nordman
Vi Nordman

Preserving Cotati's Past
Lorna King
Marge Rosselli
Kenneth & Sherri Carli

General Donations

Gary, Kim & Jake Martin
John R. Page, Jr.

Cotati Historical Society & Museum
Inside Cotati City Hall at 201 West Sierra Ave
PO Box 7013 Cotati CA 94931

Guided Walking Tours of Cotati to Begin in May!

CHS is taking names for guided walking tours of historic Cotati. To sign up, email chsinfo@sonic.net.

For a sneak preview, see our 13-minute video:

www.cotatihistoricalsociety.org

Cotati Historical Society Dues/Donations 2022

If you have already paid your dues for 2021 you will be marked paid thru 2022, since 2021 was gifted by CHS due to COVID-19. This form may also be used for donations, memorial donations and volunteering. Thank you for your support of Cotati Historical Society.

Yes, I want to join/renew my/our membership thru 2022 @ **\$10 per person** \$ _____

An additional donation of \$ _____ is enclosed.

Member Name/s _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Home Phone _____ Cell _____ Email _____

A memorial donation of \$ _____ is enclosed in memory of: _____

Please send an acknowledgment to: _____ Address _____

I would like to assist the Cotati Historical Society in this way:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help in the museum on Saturday afternoons. | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with membership mailings & data entry. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help with annual barbecue and silent auction. | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with student field trips and essay contests. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help with publicity and advertising. | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with cataloging of archives and artifacts. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other ways I might help _____ | |

Please send to: **Cotati Historical Society, PO Box 7013, Cotati CA 94931**