

Published April 1st, 2020

Moraga Historical Society puts even more info at your fingertips

By Vera Kochan



Moraga Historical Society's History Center Photo
Vera Kochan

If you love history, especially Moraga's, you'll be happy to know that the Moraga Historical Society has revamped its website to offer users more information than ever before.

MHS was founded in 1965 when Saint Mary's College's Brother Dennis Goodman and Moraga resident Maggie Skinner began storing town history at SMC. With a mission to "preserve knowledge about the history of the Rancho Laguna de los Palos Colorados, land now occupied by the Town of Moraga and portions of the cities of Orinda and Lafayette," the basis for today's MHS was formed.

The MHS home base now resides in the History Center, a three room structure attached to the Moraga library located at 1500 St. Mary's Road. Archives, vertical files, books, photos, historical paperwork and a meeting room are manned by volunteer members of the historical

society. Past longtime archivists have included Elsie Mastick, Margaret DePriester and Mary Ostrander.

MHS president Susan Sperry is excited about the new website and how it offers users a wider range of information that was previously only accessible by visiting the History Center. "John Kaiser and Susan Skilton are responsible for upgrading our website," said Sperry. "Rather than continue mailing out a newsletter, we've discovered that we can save money by setting one up electronically."

The new Key People Archives page is probably one of the more impressive additions. It lists persons of historical interest, where they resided and birth/death dates. Under "Notes" there's a brief description of their ties to the area along with what sources for further research are available at the History Center.

The website also offers maps of Saint Mary's College, the town of Moraga and Rheem, while the history section describes turning points in Moraga's history along with historical sites and a section on railroads with photographs.

A timesaving feature is the Repositories section where numerous regional historical society websites and libraries offering historical sections are just a click away for anyone doing an extensive research project or merely satisfying their inner history-buff cravings.

The online store offers Moraga-related items such as a large throw depicting historic locations, note cards and books.

Lest we forget one of Moraga's agricultural icons, there is a History of Pears in Moraga section that contains an award-winning Moraga Pear Pie recipe.

Several MHS members have received awards from the Conference of California Historical Societies through the years. The website lists 14 of its recipients who have won recognition in the fields of merit, preservation, author/scholastic and individual accomplishment.

"We had a much larger membership in 2000, but people have either moved or passed away," said Sperry. "Our membership has declined from several hundred to about 100 now." The MHS makes its presence known with booths at the Moraga Community Fair, the Fourth of July celebration and the Pear Festival. It is hoped that the new website will be an attractive lure to increase interest and membership. To that end, there is also a Contact page with information about becoming a member or volunteer.

To check out the new MHS website, visit Moragahistory.org. For additional information call (925) 376-3053.

Reach the reporter at: vera@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA