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## Friends of Moraga Adobe start spring fundraising as they close in on goal

By Sora O'Doherty



With later additions removed, the adobe is back to its original footprint and restoration is proceeding. Temporary supports hold up the roof pending reinstallation of the old pillars. Photo Sora O'Doherty

The final deadline for the Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe to submit the last payment to J&J Ranch LLC to acquire the county's oldest building is coming up in September, and the friends are embarking on a vigorous fundraising campaign. In addition to seeking sufficient community support to secure the building, the Friends are also looking for funds that will be necessary to outfit and run a cultural center at the Moraga Adobe. The building is located in Orinda, above Del Rey Elementary School.

The group will be putting up banners and yard signs urging contributions via its website. In addition, there is an ongoing paver program, in which contributors can donate and have a paver inscribed with their information. President of the FJMA, Kent Long, will be giving a talk about the history of the adobe on March 31 as part of the spring fundraising drive. In the past, the Friends have hosted a fundraising annual fandango, but have not been able to do so during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe is a group of community members from Orinda, Moraga and the surrounding area who are dedicated to preserving the Moraga Adobe and making it accessible to the public as a History and Learning Center. The Friends have agreed, as part of its acquisition of the adobe and its surrounding 2.3 acres, to raise and contribute \$500,000 to the cost of its renovation. This will be matched by the developer, who will further absorb any additional costs. Beyond this \$500,000 the FJMA is committed to raising an additional \$500,000 as an endowment, to provide for ongoing costs, for a total fundraising goal of \$1 million.

The Friends currently need about \$80,000 to make the final payment of \$365,000 in September, which will complete the \$500,000 purchase price agreed to under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Friends and J&J Ranch, a housing development on the lands around the adobe. Under the MOU, J&J will renovate the building to its appearance as depicted in the earliest available documentary evidence (circa 1848), provide a parking lot and another small building with ADA-compliant bathrooms and room for storage of artifacts.

The Joaquin Moraga Adobe is the oldest surviving building in Contra Costa County. It was built in 1841 by Don Joaquin Moraga as one of two family homesteads on the 13,000-acre "El Rancho Laguna de los Palos Colorados" land grant from the Mexican Government. It has been recognized as a California State Historic Landmark since 1954 and was designated as an Orinda City Landmark in 1995. J&J Ranch is named after Joaquin Moraga and his cousin Juan Bernal, recipients in 1835 of the Mexican land grant.

More information on the adobe can be found on the Friends' website, where contributions can also be made. [www.MoragaAdobe.org](http://www.MoragaAdobe.org)

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