

# THE MIRROR

The Richmond Museum Association Newsletter

Richmond Museum of History & Culture

Summer 2021

SS Red Oak Victory

## WOMAN'S IMPROVEMENT CLUBS, RICHMOND CARNEGIE LIBRARY, MORRIS COHEN, CITY DIRECTORIES, AND THE RICHMOND MUSEUM OF HISTORY & CULTURE

by Oliver B. Pollak\*

\*Oliver B. Pollak is the author of eleven books, including *A State of Readers* about Nebraska's 69 Carnegie Libraries, and over 700 articles. The author thanks Melinda McCrary and Victoria Stuhr of the Richmond Museum of History & Culture and Angela Cox of the Richmond Public Library for their assistance. He can be contacted at [obpomni@gmail.com](mailto:obpomni@gmail.com)

The internet and ever-expanding collection of digitized newspapers has revolutionized our capacity to gather evidence in a fraction of time and labor that had hitherto made some projects impractical and impossible except for the most obsessive or patient. Bernard Freedman (1917-2017) preparing *Pioneer Jews in California's Contra Costa County* (1993) closely read nineteenth-century Contra Costa County newspapers, many of which have since been digitized. Since arriving in Richmond in November 2016, I've harbored writing about the Richmond Carnegie Library.

Twenty cities and towns of Contra Costa County published at least 69 newspapers. Contra Costa County English language journalism started in Martinez in 1858 with the *Contra Costa Gazette*. "Historical Contra Costa County Newspapers: Holdings by City" lists seven Richmond newspapers beginning in 1910, a significant undercount.<sup>1</sup> Point Richmond and Richmond actually published at least seven newspapers between 1900 and 1910. The *Richmond Daily Independent*, published from 1910 to 1952, is digitized from 1910 to 1920 on newspapers.com.<sup>2</sup> The *Richmond Record Herald* published from at least 1930 to 1950. The **California Revealed** project digitizing the state's legacy newspapers included the 1930 *RRH*. Newspapers start, prosper or fail, merge, change their name, and disappear.

The tumultuous second decade covered momentous city, national and world events: the 1910 establishment of Richmond's Carnegie Library and *Richmond Daily Independent*, and America's 1917 entry into the First World War. The last California veteran, George Johnson, a Richmond resident, died at the age of 112 in 2006. The *RDI* provides local reporting of the 1918 Influenza epidemic. Richmond's population grew 147.6% from 7,500 in 1910 to 16,843 in 1920. [Continued on p. 4]



Before the Museum was the Museum, it was the Richmond Public Library, a Carnegie Library.

### In This Issue:

Oliver Pollak on Research p. 1  
Director's Message p. 2  
Poster Contest Winners p. 2  
Recent Acquisitions p. 8  
Upcoming & Current Events p. 3  
From *SS Red Oak Victory* p. 5  
Wish Lists pp. 6 & 7



# UPCOMING MUSEUM EVENTS

## LABORFEST 2021

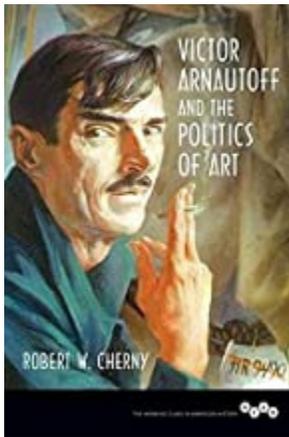
Location: Richmond Museum of History & Culture, 400 Nevin Avenue, Richmond, California

Sunday July 11, 2021 at 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Dr. Robert Cherny, author of *Victor Arnautoff and the Politics of Art*, will speak on "Richmond Industrial City," the mural by renowned and controversial artist Victor Arnautoff. The mural is currently on display in the Museum's Main Gallery.

Join us for this rare East Bay Laborfest event.

**Register for the event** at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/victor-arnautoff-richmond-industrial-city-with-robert-cherny-tickets-158255371075>.



# UPCOMING EVENTS ON THE RED OAK VICTORY

## 4th of July Open Day

Sharing the day with **Riggers Loft Winery**

See From *Red Oak Victory* on page 5 for details.

## October 10, 2021 -- Fleet Week

Time: 10 am - 4 pm

We'll feature the **Rossmoor Big Band**.



## Jimmy McCracklin 100th Anniversary Celebration

August 13/14 2021 -- SAVE the DATE!

Renowned musician Jimmy McCracklin was a Richmond resident.

Presented in partnership with the North Richmond Blues Foundation.

Location: Civic Center Plaza (tentative)

# CURRENT MUSEUM EVENTS

## Friday Drop-In Programs Restarting!

Beginning July 16, 2021, join Ms. Tatiana every Friday from 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. for drop-in enrichment programs about local history, art and culture! The programs are free, family-friendly and designed to use everyday materials commonly found around the home. Participants are invited to join a curator-led tour of the permanent exhibit as part of the program. No registration needed. The link for the programs is on the Museum website at:

<https://richmondmuseum.org/education-school-tours/>.

# HIV/AIDS IN RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA

The Richmond Museum of History & Culture seeks personal narratives about lives in Richmond impacted by HIV/AIDS. RMHC is planning an exhibition about the history of health and medical care in the City of Richmond. The exhibition will explore the impact of HIV/AIDS in accordance with the goal to interpret the more recent past. We are particularly interested in the impact of HIV/AIDS in the early 1980s. Preliminary research in the newspaper clippings files in the Museum archives reveals Richmond had the highest caseload of AIDS patients in 1990. Did HIV/AIDS impact you or your loved ones' experience in Richmond, California? If so, please come forward with your story to help us explore this pivotal time in the history of medical and health care.



# FROM SS RED OAK VICTORY

By Kim Abbott, ROV Executive Committee Chair  
and Fred Klink, ROV Marketing Director

SS *Red Oak Victory* reopened to the public on May 9, Mother's Day. Thank you to all of our members and patrons who made the reopening a great success. We sold out all available tickets and there were still demands for more. Crew member Lisa Kreppella and her trio provided wonderful entertainment on a



Guests who came to the ship on Mother's Day enjoyed perfect Bayside weather while touring the ship. (Photo by Dori Luzbetak)

sunny, warm day by the Bay! The Ship's Store was set up on deck and did a land-office business, too. And best of all, some lucky Moms got to sound the Ship's whistle as a special Mother's Day treat.

And then we did it all over again—this time for Father's Day, June 20. The Lovin' Harmony Trio, a favorite of *Red Oak Victory* patrons for years, provided the musical entertainment. Thanks to the state reopening for most business operations, we were able to sell an unrestricted number of tickets. Over 100



Six lucky Dads had the winning raffle tickets on Father's Day, June 20. They got to sound the ship's whistle much to the delight of their kids and family members. (Photo by Dori Luzbetak)

guests came to the Ship for Father's Day. Shades of Mother's Day, six lucky Dads were selected by raffle to sound the Ship's whistle.

If you missed these great events, there is no need for despair. We'll be open from 10am to 4pm on July 4 with the usual range of tours available. We will make the day special with featured vocalist Jeovani Abenoja. On July 4 we will also introduce a new joint program with the **Rigger's Loft Winery** (right across from Red Oak Victory). When you pay your admission fee to the Ship you will receive a coupon entitling you to a \$2 discount on a glass of wine at Rigger's Loft.

We also have a big event planned for the last Sunday of Fleet Week, October 10. We'll feature the **Rossmoor Big Band** for your listening pleasure. We can't make any promises, but every time we've had a Fleet Week event, the Blue Angels have flown right over *Red Oak Victory* on their way into the airshow. In any case, with our great views of the Bay, our Ship is a perfect place to watch all the Fleet Week activities. Keep an eye on our website and Facebook page for details when tickets become available.

And that's not all—we're working on a surprise event for the Fall. Stay tuned for more information about that!

*Red Oak Victory* is delighted to welcome new crew members to the Ship. Maxfield Hunt is our new Chief Steward and will be taking care of event planning and administration. New docents Colyer DuPont, Fred Page, Dan Engstrom, and Andy Bradshaw have already been greeting guests and leading tours. Welder Stanley Buck and deckhand Anthony Yopez have also recently joined the *Red Oak Victory* crew. The Ship is now open every Sunday, 10 am to 4 pm, so please come by and say "hi" to our newest volunteers.

## Report from the Deck Department

Once COVID restrictions had been reduced and the deck crew was able to return to work, we started right in on resuming exterior painting. The four-person painting crew works Thursdays and is back in full swing. They are progressing on the starboard side bulkhead painting as well as working some of the heavily-rusted deck areas on the stern of the Ship. Nothing like a fresh coat of paint to spruce things up as seen from the before-and-after photos.



Port side gunwale before painting.

Work has also resumed on restoring the 5-inch aft gun and

[Continued on page 8]

## Pollak [Continued from p. 4]

Richmond Public Library online Rosie catalog indicates 27 directories, 1910-11 to 1964-65. The RMHC's 36 directories cover 1907 to 1964-65. Directories are historical records; many digitized copies are available online. Electronic technology and aggregating metadata assists historians restoring overlooked and informative stories not previously contemplated.

Richmond's urban growth and literacy suggest further inquiry. The Richmond Museum of History & Culture in the former Carnegie Library and the Richmond Public Library at the Civic Center since 1949 are vital repositories of our urban past for future research pursuits.

### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Frederick J. Hulaniski, "Evolution of Journalism in Richmond" in *The History of Contra Costa County*



On the left is the Richmond Record Herald (1930-1950). On top, and to the right, is the Richmond Daily Independent, 1910-1945. 1910-1920 is digitized. The Richmond Public Library has a microfilm copy of the RRH and RDI.

*San Francisco Chronicle*, December 18, 1908; "Carnegie Library for Richmond assured," *San Francisco Call*, January 22, 1909.

<sup>5</sup> "Library Site Question in Air," January 26, 1909. Clipping in "History of Richmond Club Scrapbook, 1907-1933," RMHC. Mrs. Katherine H. Smith, "Woman's Improvement Club of Richmond, Origin and History," M. J. Borden, "The Clubs of Greater Richmond," and "The West Side Woman's Improvement Club of Richmond," in *Special Souvenir Magazine Edition of the Richmond Independent*, July 1910, edited by women, to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Richmond's founding RMHC, Special editions, reproductions of historic newspapers.

<sup>6</sup> "Carnegie Library Proves Popular, First day sees rush of people to enjoy its facilities and conveniences," *RDI*, August 19, 1910.

<sup>7</sup> "Children's Hour at New Library," *RDI*, August 20, 1910.

Librarian Whitbeck left the Richmond Library in 1913 to become the



RMHC's City directories and telephone books

(Berkeley: Elms Publishing, 1917) 342-48. Hulaniski edited the Richmond *Record-Herald*. "Historical Contra Costa County Newspapers: Holdings by City," (online, 18 pages) identifies hard copies, microfilm, and online.

<sup>2</sup> David Lindemann "A History of the Richmond Daily Independent Newspaper," (Typescript, 11 pages, September 3, 1954) RMHC.

<sup>3</sup> "Life History of Richmond's Library," *Record* [?], May 17, 1910. Clipping in "History of Richmond Club Scrapbook, 1907-1933," RMHC.

<sup>4</sup> "Richmond to have a Carnegie Library," *San*

## RED OAK WISH LIST:

*SS Red Oak Victory* needs a lot of attention. We hope you can help. We appreciate all donations, large and small, monetary and otherwise. Here is a partial list of physical things the Ship needs; some of them are very specific—please email us at [info@redoakvictory.us](mailto:info@redoakvictory.us) to get details:

Face masks (N95 only, new, unopened)

Starboard-side steel hull plate replacement (to donate, email us at [info@redoakvictory.us](mailto:info@redoakvictory.us) to make arrangements)

Restore the insulation (lagging) on our high-pressure turbine

Repair Main condenser isolation valve

Clean and re-hang the curtains in the Lois Boyle Theater

Improved lighting for Hold 5

Replica light shades to replace those lost or broken throughout the Ship

New canvas covers for the two port lifeboats

New canvas covers for the guns and miscellaneous deck fixtures

New Ship's Name Boards Port, Starboard and Aft

New 12-volt car battery for the portable lighting generator

Emergency locker with lid, 3' x 4'

AA batteries

Seat cushions for the Theater seats

Paint, paint, and more paint!

To make a donation by credit card or PayPal, go to [www.redoakvictory.us](http://www.redoakvictory.us) and click on the DONATE button at the top of the home page. To make a donation by check or other means, email us at [info@redoakvictory.us](mailto:info@redoakvictory.us). You can also use this email address to request more information about any of the items on our wishlist and to inquire about volunteering to become a crew member.

Thank you for your help and support!

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first Contra Costa County Librarian in Martinez. In January 1916 Richmond dropped out of the CCC library system.

<sup>8</sup> "City Librarian's figures show the local institution to be in excellent condition," *RDI*, June 4, 1911. The scrapbook and Carnegie archives at Columbia University would provide a richer account.

<sup>9</sup> See Philip Sutton, "Direct Me NYC 1786: A History of City Directories in the United States and New York City," 2012, online. For my early interest in city directories see "The City Directory: A Tool in Researching Jewish History," *Local Jewish Historical Society News* 1(Fall 1988): 2-3.

<sup>10</sup> Your author recalls the excitement of new telephone books arriving in the 1960s and yellow pages in the 1980s when he ran a business. Printed personal and commercial information has waned.

<sup>11</sup> Announcements of the directories availability appeared on November 18, 19, 21, and 22. Richmond news-stands and bookselling awaits its story.

# A THANK-YOU TO SOME OF OUR LOCAL SPONSORS

The Richmond Museum Association thanks the organizations that have helped us endure the past year. Please shop local and support Richmond businesses.

Here are a few of them:

**The Factory Bar**, 12517 San Pablo Ave,  
Richmond (510) 778-1079



**Richmond Rotary Club**, email: info@richmondcarotary.org



**Watershed Nursery**, 601 A Canal Blvd., Richmond  
(510) 234-2222, email: sales@thewatershednursery.com



**The 7 Stars Holistic Healing Center**, 3219 Pierce St.,  
Richmond, (510) 527-7827



**Moving Forward 510**, Richmond, (510) 478-3167



**Maggiore & Ghilotti, Inc.**, San Rafael, California



**Bragg Crane Service**, Richmond



**Chevron Richmond**



**Riggers Loft Winery**, 1325 Canal Blvd, Richmond  
(510) 233-2065

RIGGERS LOFT

## MUSEUM WISH LIST

The Museum, like all non-profit organizations, always seeks and greatly appreciates donations, monetary and otherwise. Here is a list of things we need to continue sprucing up our garden area:

New or gently-used hand tools for the garden including shovels, spades, hoes, claws, clippers.

Clean garden work gloves

Wheelbarrow

Clean buckets

Ceramic flowerpots and/or garden decorations

Unopened bags of compost and mulch

If you can donate these items, contribute to their purchase or volunteer, please call the Museum at (510) 235-7387, or visit our website, [www.richmondmuseum.org](http://www.richmondmuseum.org) and click **DONATE**.

Thank you for your help and support!

## From *Red Oak Victory* (Continued from p. 5)

improving access to the 3-inch forward gun. Once the access improvements to the 3-inch gun are complete, we hope to include visits to the gun as part of the docent-guided tours.

Currently the lifting gear for hold 4 is off-line for maintenance and overhaul. We have evaluated the gear and found that a number of the wire ropes and fittings need replacing. An itemized list has been prepared and we are in the process of obtaining estimates to restore the lifting gear. If you know of a project manager who can assist us with working on this project, or can help with raising the needed funds, please let us know.



*Starboard gunwale section after painting.*

Fortunately, the lifting gear for holds 2 and 1 are still available for lifting loads on board.

There are numerous carpentry projects that could use a capable carpenter to replace rotten wood and repair wooden doors. It

is a steel ship but there are places where wood was used and the exposure to the marine environment has taken its toll on the wood.

If you are interested in any of these projects and would like to volunteer, please go to our website <https://redoakvictory.us/support-us/volunteer/> and sign up.

### Report from Engineering

We have done major overhauls to half of the forward and after steam reciprocating fire pumps. With the welders returning, we have been able to repair the aft gangway and replace rusted handrails and a 6-inch vent pipe.

### Shop in the Online Ship's Store

Shop in the Online Ship's Store. We are continuing to expand and improve the *Red Oak Victory* online Ship's Store. Be sure to come back and visit often to see new products and specials. Go to <https://shop.redoakvictory.us/> and stock up!

## RECENT ACQUISITIONS

### Carol Jenson

Santa Fe Railroad map

### Doug Dempster via Steve Gilford

Contra Costa College from 1948-1965 (Pamphlet)

Contra Costa Gazette newspaper (1947) with details about the county General Plan

## A SPECIAL REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

Anyone who knows how to operate a Scott SM300 engraving machine, please contact *Red Oak Victory* at [info@redoakvictory.us](mailto:info@redoakvictory.us). Here is a photo of the unit and its manual.

Thank you for your help!



*Red Oak Victory welder Lisa Kreppella and her trio provided Mother's Day entertainment on deck. (Photo by Dori Luzbetak)*



*The Mother's Day event on Red Oak Victory was the public premier of our "new" 5-inch gun. (Photo by Dori Luzbetak)*

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\_\_\_ \$50 **History Enthusiast**—Benefits include one digital file of a photo in the permanent collection for personal use

\_\_\_ \$100 **History Advocate**—2 adults/2 youth—Benefits above and one hour of staff research time

\_\_\_ \$250 **History Guardian**—Benefits above and “Behind the Scenes” tour of permanent collection

\_\_\_ \$500 **History Patron**—Benefits above and one ad in *The MIRROR* newsletter

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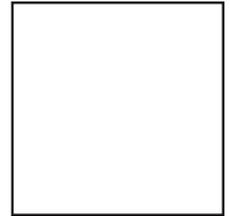
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Richmond Museum Association  
 P.O. Box 1267  
 Richmond CA 94802



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Richmond, CA 94802

Join the Richmond Museum Association on social media! We are on Facebook under Richmond Museum of History and Culture and SS *Red Oak Victory* (two separate pages). We are also on twitter @richmondhistory.

*The **Richmond Museum Association** is a 501 (C) 3 non-profit educational organization. Gifts and donations are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.*

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