

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

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.¹ 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.² 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.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends:

The Richmond Museum Association is enormously grateful to the community who continues to support our work during good and bad times. I am so happy to report the Richmond Museum of History & Culture (RMHC) and SS *Red Oak Victory* are once again regularly open to the public.

The Historical Monument and Rose Garden is in full bloom and gorgeous. The garden includes over 50 rose bushes in full bloom! The Native Plant garden on the west side of the building that was planted in January 2021 is thriving and beautiful. Big thanks to Moving Forward 510 and Richmond Rotary Club for helping clean up Nevin Park on May 8 and installing new native flowers in the Museum's entrance courtyard.

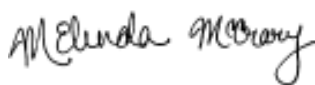
The "*Ohlone Voices*" kiosk is also available when you next visit the Main Gallery. The Ohlone Voices interactive exhibit is presented on a 55-inch touchscreen monitor. The audio is presented by Deja Gould and is coupled with original artwork by Beatriz Ortiz. It is incredibly exciting to watch people interact with the Chochenyo dialect of the Ohlone language. We are so grateful to the California Humanities Council for supporting the RMHC through the completion of this important project.

RMHC will be rebuilding from COVID-related losses through the course of 2021. We need to take time to bolster our finances so we can continue to bring excellent exhibits and programs to the public. RMHC needs to rebuild our volunteer corps due to understandable attrition during 2020. The Museum also needs to develop our staff and contractors as key positions still remain unfilled. The good news is the gallery has new attractions to draw visitors and programs despite the pandemic-related losses.

The forthcoming exhibit in the Seaver Gallery will explore the history of health care in Richmond. We will be exploring a variety of topics including medical care facilities, health care at the Kaiser shipyards, home remedies, midwifery, curanderas, pharmacists and more. We will also be exploring how to live your healthiest life in Richmond today. We are seeking to honor health care workers who so bravely cared for our community through the Covid 19 crisis. Do you have a story to tell about the history of health care in Richmond? If so, please reach out to me.

I look forward to seeing you in the gallery soon!

Sincerely,



Melinda McCrary

HEALTHY LIVING POSTER CONTEST WINNERS!

The Richmond Museum of History & Culture is excited to announce the winners of the 2021 Healthy Living Poster Contest. RMHC is proud to boost local artists representing the City of Richmond and Vallejo. The posters will be displayed at the forthcoming exhibit exploring the history of health care in Richmond. A limited number of posters will be distributed free of charge to community centers and others will be sold in the RMHC gift shop. If you're interested in receiving one of the free posters, please contact Melinda at melinda@richmondmuseum.org.

The contest is supported by a grant through the Neighborhood Public Art Grant Program through the City of Richmond Arts & Culture Commission.

Rebeca Garcia-Gonzalez



Eddy Chacon



Grace Saechao



UPCOMING MUSEUM EVENTS

LABORFEST 2021

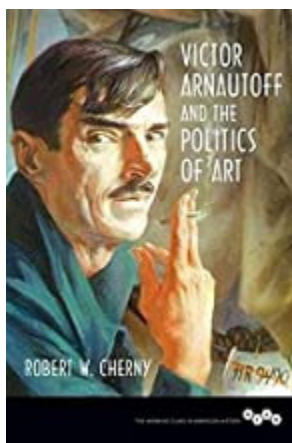
Location: Richmond Museum of History & Culture, 400 Nevin Avenue, Richmond, California

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.

Pollak (Continued from p. 1)

The Women's Improvement Club of Richmond began in March 1906. They formed a Library Site committee in January 1907. The 25-book library opened in August 1907 at "the office of the 'Record' through the kindness of Mr. Clarence Jenkins at that time the owner of this newspaper."³ The women acquired \$17,500 from Andrew Carnegie to build Richmond's library.⁴ The West Side Woman's Improvement Club started a library in July 1908 and wanted the new library site to be convenient for all parts of the town.⁵ The Richmond Women's City Club 1907-1960 files await a fortunate researcher.

The *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, *San Francisco Call*, *San Francisco Examiner* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* covered the McKinley Lodge Masons laying the cornerstone at 400 Nevin Ave. on February 26, 1910. The library was dedicated August 17 of that year.

"Both the Woman's Improvement Clubs have presented the books, pamphlets, periodicals, etc., contained in the reading rooms and libraries on either side of the city, and these good sized collections will go far in starting the filling of the shelves of the new building." The library trustees wrote a receipt to the women for 1,150 volumes. County Treasurer Louis N. Buttner presented "an elegant set of books on the *History of the World.*" California's 86th of 142 Carnegie public libraries was "thrown open" to the public on August 18, 1910.⁶ Librarian Alice G. Whitbeck at the first children's story hour on Saturday, August 20, 1910, read *An Old Irish Tale* by Shumas McManus; *Chinese Mist*, and an *Old Negro Nonsense Tale*.⁷ By May 1911, the main library had 2,544 volumes including 28 directories from M. Cohen.⁸

Morris Cohen made a curious publicized donation of city directories. According to the 1900 Census, Morris, born in New York in 1866, married Amelia Jalumstein in 1894. They lived with Amelia's widowed mother Hannah in San Francisco. He listed his employment as "solicitor (advertising)." His brother-in-law David Jalumstein owned Printing and Directory Publishing Co. in San Francisco. In 1907, 1908 and 1909, they published city directories for Richmond and ten other Northern California cities. Richmond directories varied in price; 1907, 1908, and 1909 cost \$2, \$4, and \$3 each.

The 1907 Richmond directory indicated that houses and places of business had been numbered. Entrepreneurs could send the directory "with pride to different cities of the United States, and be a medium that will bring new residents to our city." In 1908 M. Cohen, Manager of Directory Publishing, claimed "The canvass for names has been thorough as every house and place of business has been visited" and the "names of transients have been eliminated." Cohen's third Richmond volume in 1909 had about 3,000 names.

Ralph Lane Polk established R. L. Polk & Company in 1870 in Detroit and published city directories. The ubiquitous Polk directories dominated the market.⁹ The 1910 Census identified Morris as "Directory Publisher. County, Towns" living in San

Francisco. He worked in Oakland, where as superintendent and manager, he mobilized canvass teams and publicity. Polk probably purchased Jalumstein's directory business and employed Cohen.

Morris used local newspapers in Richmond and Oakland for endorsements, boosterism and publicity. The newspaper characterized Cohen as the "Well known directory publisher," "a popular directory man," an "energetic directory man." Cohen equated prosperity with rising population. "Richmond is delivering the goods when it comes to growing." The directory would connect businesses, friends and strangers.¹⁰

Three August 1911 news stories built momentum for the 1910-11 directory. "The urgent need of the book becomes daily more apparent, and there is constant clamor on every side for its early publication." The *Oakland Tribune* noted "The [Richmond] book is urgently needed, and Cohen hopes to have it out within a very short time." "To date there has been a great deal of dissatisfaction among the people owing to the inability to locate their former friends owing to the great increase in population during the past two years. About twice the number of houses



May 2, 1911



July 11, 1912

and stores are in existence as there was at that time and the population has increased about fifty per cent." The 1910-11 Polk directory appearing in November cost \$4 at William Kinggett, Richmond News Stand and bookseller at 700 Macdonald.¹¹

The *Richmond Daily Independent* reported Cohen donated directories to the library in 1911 and 1912. Publicity and marketing could increase sales.

The 25 volumes in 1911 included seven for California cities. The 1912 30-book donation, valued at about \$250, included nine California volumes and the Italian Business Directory of New York.¹

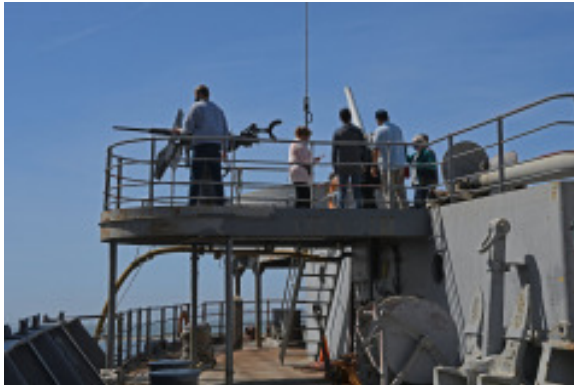
For most of the 20th-century, libraries kept 3x5-inch library cards in wooden drawers. The internet rendered card catalogs, printed city directories and telephone books obsolete. The

[Continued on p. 6]

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:

¹ 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.

⁵ "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.

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

⁷ "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. ² David Lindemann "A History of the Richmond Daily Independent Newspaper," (Typescript, 11 pages, September 3, 1954) RMHC.

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

⁴ "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 to get details:

Face masks (N95 only, new, unopened)

Starboard-side steel hull plate replacement (to donate, email us at 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 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. 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!

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

⁸ "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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ 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 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. 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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For \$100, your business card can appear in 4 issues (a year's worth) of *The MIRROR*.
 Current distribution is 2,000 copies sent and growing.
 Send an email to l.maack@comcast.net to reserve your space.

Become a Member Today

And receive these Benefits:

- « Free admission
- « Quarterly newsletter
- « 10% discount in gift shops
- « Membership card
- « And more:

___ \$35 **History Ally**—Seniors aged 62 and over—Benefits include quarterly e-newsletter and free admission for one to the Richmond Museum of History and the SS Red Oak Victory

___ \$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

___ **New** ___ **Renew** ___ **Gift**

___ **I would like to Volunteer!**

Name: _____

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City: _____

State/Zip: _____

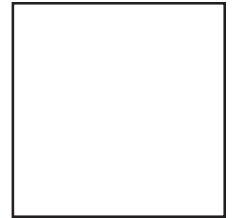
Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Date: _____

Join at www.richmondmuseum.org or mail a check to RMA at:

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



P.O. Box 1267
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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Richmond Museum of History & Culture

400 Nevin Avenue
Mail: P.O. Box 1267
Richmond CA 94802
(510) 235-7387 for information and Tour Appointments

Directors

Rich Chivers
Steve Gilford
Demnlus Johnson
Rebecca Riley
Lydia Stewart
Jeffrey Wright

The MIRROR

Lynn Maack, Editor
Contributors:
Kim Abbott
Fred Klink
Dori Luzbetak
Melinda McCrary
Oliver Pollak

SS Red Oak Victory Ship

1337 Canal Blvd.
Richmond CA 94804
Mail: P.O. Box 1267
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Email us at info@redoakvictory.us for information and Tour Appointments

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