



Joaquin Moraga Adobe Newsletter

Adobe Remodel
1941

www.MoragaAdobe.org

December 2023

Purchase Almost Final— Moraga Adobe to Open in 2024!



Interior display shows original adobe bricks

The last three years have seen a remarkable transformation of the Moraga Adobe. With the rehabilitation in its final stages, the Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe (FJMA) now expect to complete the purchase of the Adobe by the end of this year and open it to the public in 2024.

Once the renovation work is completed by J&J Ranch and signed off by the City of Orinda, the final purchase of the Adobe by FJMA can take place.



Front porch & new walkways



Recent tree removal opened up the view

J&J Ranch made lots of progress to reach this goal in 2023. The outside and interior plaster work was completed. Flooring using repurposed old redwood planks has been installed throughout the interior and the front porch of the Adobe. The moldings and trim wood work is done, and new concrete pathways were just poured in October, which include ADA access to the front porch. The building is looking very good!

In 2023, FJMA funded and supervised the installation of a sophisticated security and fire alarm system. Thanks to the **Orinda Community Foundation** for making this possible; their generous grants paid for a significant portion of this system. The installation work had to take place alongside the renovation work.



Adobe with Mt. Diablo in background



Aerial view of the Moraga Adobe site

After FJMA takes ownership of the Adobe, there is still work to be done to create museum quality exhibits, enhanced landscaping, and an interesting and engaging visitor experience. While this will be an ongoing effort, we are excited that we will finally be able to open this building up to the public.

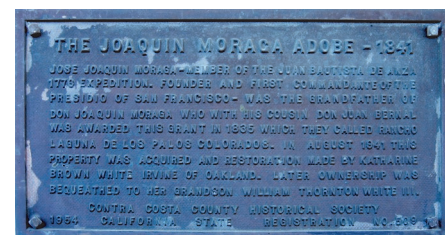
Stolen Landmark Plaques Being Replaced



City of Orinda Landmark Plaque

Thanks to a generous donation from the local **Acalanes Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution**, the missing Moraga Adobe landmark plaques have been recreated.

The Adobe's original plaques were stolen in 2010 and never recovered. We now have replicas of both plaques, one originally from the City of Orinda and the other from the State of California, which will be installed on the Adobe once again.



California State Historic Marker

Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe — PO Box 872 Orinda, CA 94563

Letter From Our President

Dear Adobe Supporters,

It's really happening!

This is truly an exciting time for our group and the Moraga Adobe project. The restoration work on the building itself is essentially done, which means that our purchase of the Adobe can finally move forward. As of this writing (mid-Nov), we expect the purchase to close by the end of December!

Earlier, we thought that the Adobe might be completed sooner, but having extra time has turned out for the best. FJMA was able to coordinate the critical installation of our new security system with the basic interior wiring work. We had time to get city approval and pay for tree and brush removal to open up the views from the Adobe, which are helping us plan our future landscaping and visitor experience. And planning for the museum interior has continued, so we will be that much more prepared to open.

This was also a year for our group to do a lot of community outreach. FJMA had booths at Orinda's 4th of July parade and Moraga's Pear Festival. I was honored to be a guest speaker for many organizations, including the Contra Costa Historical Society, Orinda Rotary Club, Museum of San Ramon Valley, and the Daughters of the American Revolution. Several local chapters of the DAR have offered support for the Adobe, and our project has actually prompted a statewide initiative by the DAR to support historic California adobe structures! It is great to see that the Moraga Adobe is becoming well-known beyond just the Lamorinda area.

Many thanks to our wonderful board of directors and volunteers who are planning for the opening of the Adobe, and who are in the process of acquiring period and reproduction furnishings to outfit the museum. And of course tremendous thanks to all our generous supporters, without whom none of this would be possible.

I hope to see you at the Adobe in 2024!

Kent Long, FJMA President



Working on the Adobe Rehabilitation

A first-hand perspective & profile of a true craftsman

When the Adobe rehabilitation began, one of the many talented craftsman hired by J&J Ranch to work on the project was Real Lapalme. Real has been a fixture up at the Adobe doing finish carpentry this past year. Many times when FJMA board members visited the site, they had the pleasure of meeting Real and seeing his skilled woodworking in action.

Real is an extremely interesting individual who began learning his woodworking skills at an early age growing up in Canada. As he tells it, "We had a cabin in Saint-Lin in the Laurentians north of Montreal to which we added two extensions, a kitchen and a storage shed. I had plenty of opportunities as a child to be introduced to the use of tools, such as driving nails straight and true."

In 1980 his dance teacher in Seattle, who worked as a landscape carpenter, needed a helper. Real remembers, "On my first day on the job he showed me how to use a combination square to mark out compound angles. We built fences, stairs, gazebos and whatever our client, a landscape contractor required." This experience set Real on the path to be a professional carpenter.

When asked what he likes most about his work, Real explains, "I mostly enjoy the teamwork with my associates, as well as the challenge of doing new tasks for the first time. The scent of freshly cut wood and the sensation



Real Lapalme on the porch of the Adobe

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A special thanks to Andrew Goett of Pacific Printing for printing this publication.

Working on the Adobe Rehabilitation (continued from page 2)



Real Lapalme & Kent Long inside the Adobe

endeavor by doing a series of puppet episodes for Radio Télévision Suisse. Classes with Etienne Decroux in a Paris suburb led Real to join La Giralte, an experimental theatre group. Today, Real is still using his experience with puppets in Switzerland and in Berkeley to put together a show based on a story by the Persian poet Rumi.

All his woodworking and life experiences really show in the meticulous finish carpentry work Real has done to preserve and recreate (when needed) the trim and moldings, both inside and outside the Adobe. This 1841 landmark is an excellent example of Monterey Colonial style architecture of the 1840's with its stylized pediments, wooden entablatures, and double hung windows.

Real has repeatedly mentioned that he considers it an honor to be working on this historic building. When asked about any challenges he faced with the rehabilitation, Real replied, "Installing a three piece crown [molding] on curved and irregular adobe walls and a wavy ceiling." However, he is quick to point out, "The Mexican style trim developed my own skills in a most welcome way" and added, "I enjoyed working as a finish carpenter with the two Oscars, father and son, the historical preservationists working for Treeline Construction on the Moraga Adobe. Even more than their phenomenal skill at preservation, I appreciated their joy at work, whistling, humming and singing, injecting a positive vibe into this building."

As an example of Real's creative work, visitors will be able to see the original 1841 bricks inside the Adobe through a "truth window" he created using some of the original boards. This will be a featured display in the main room of the Adobe.

Real has become a member of the Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe and says he is looking forward to the day when he can visit the museum with his grandchildren.

of dancing with large, heavy objects, the ribaldry with teammates makes my day."

The Adobe is far from the oldest structure that Real has worked on. There was a three hundred year old wattle and daub farmhouse in Normandy, France that he vividly remembers applying a solution to its naturally curved timbers that helped hold up the structure.

There is much more to Real than just his carpentry skills—he is a seasoned performer. In 1969, he spent time in Switzerland as an actor, financing this

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Get Involved! We can use your help with exhibits, research, docents & community outreach.

Contact TeresaLong@MoragaAdobe.org

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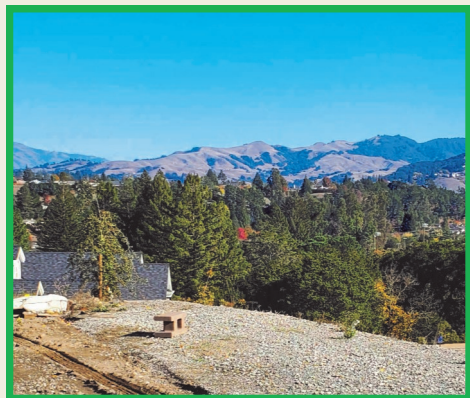
Stamp

Addressee



Haven't bought a paver yet?

***It's not too late! Go to MoragaAdobe.org,
click on "Buy a Paver"***



View from the Moraga Adobe of Las Trampas
hills & Moraga Valley . Planned site of FJMA's
personalized paver installation.

