



# Joaquin Moraga Adobe Newsletter

Adobe Remodel  
1941

[www.MoragaAdobe.org](http://www.MoragaAdobe.org)

December 2025

## Moraga Adobe Project Update

2025 has been a busy year at the Moraga Adobe!

Landscaping the adobe grounds was a huge improvement. A wooden rail fence "corral" is now at the rear of the adobe, with native gardens surrounding the building. Historic cacti saved from the now-demolished Briones Adobe in Palo Alto have been planted, and the view area with a stone wall and personalized pavers is nearing completion. Many thanks go to **Ryan Cummings** of **Cummings Landscape Architecture** who designed and is implementing our beautiful garden!

Inside, the three traditional Rancho era rooms have been outfitted with both antiques and custom reproductions to recreate the era when the Moragas lived at the adobe.

Initial exhibits are now on view in both the Museum room and Bruzzone Gallery showcasing the history of the adobe.



Moraga Adobe, October 2025



View Area Wall Construction, November 2025

After acquiring our general use permit from the City of Orinda in March, we have been able to begin hosting some group tours. Feedback from these early visits has been very helpful to develop our tour program. An online reservation system is being set up so that the public can sign up for tours via our website. We expect this to be available early 2026.

We are looking forward to sharing this historical building with the community. More information can be found on FJMA's website [MoragaAdobe.org](http://MoragaAdobe.org) and the [Moraga Adobe Facebook page](#).

## St Mary's College - Artifact Recovery



St Mary's College Students working an archaeological dig site at the adobe.

Under the guidance of **Professor Cynthia Van Gilder**, Anthropology and Archaeology students from St. Mary's College in Moraga began research work to find and recover artifacts on the Adobe property. We are happy to provide these students a rare opportunity for hands-on field work!

The students are using a cultural resource report from 2009 as a starting point. They have established a datum grid on the property within which future excavations will be organized and recorded. The student activities also include logging artifacts and other museum collections into a formal, comprehensive on-line cataloging system.

Dr. Van Gilder oversaw the creation of a short video by her students documenting these accomplishments. This video, *Joaquin Moraga Adobe Artifacts Collection*, is available for viewing at the adobe or on our [Moraga Adobe YouTube channel](#).



Looking for artifacts.

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



## Letter From Our President

Dear Supporters –

Thank you all for helping us make tremendous progress this year towards opening the Moraga Adobe to the public. We are truly tying up the final loose ends, and we have begun having at least a trickle of visitor groups through. It is very satisfying to finally see actual reactions as kids and adults see what we have done!

We are in the process of setting up an online reservation system that will let the general public sign up for tour times. So, you should all be able to visit in 2026!

I'm particularly thrilled with the landscaping and other outside improvements we have added this year to get the adobe ready for visitors. Our designer Ryan Cummings, himself an Orinda native, has very artistically used native and historic plants and a hand-crafted stone sitting wall to really enhance the sense of space and make the adobe feel like it is still on the open rancho.

*Special note to our patient Paver Purchasers:* Your time is finally coming! We so appreciate how you all have been waiting through this long process along with us. Your personalized pavers are being installed to form the viewpoint plaza in front of the new stone sitting wall, with an incredible view of Mt. Diablo and the entire Moraga Valley. Everyone who purchased a paver will receive more info when the installation is complete!

Thanks again for all your interest and support, and best wishes for 2026!



Kent Long, FJMA President

## New Museum Exhibits



Los Californianos members visit Museum Room  
October 2025

FJMA has acquired many wonderful artifacts through donations and purchases this year. One of the most significant acquisitions was a generous donation of clothing, flags and chairs from Shirley Jolliff, an expert clothing historian who creates handmade reproduction Rancho era clothing. Among the many things she made are the fandango outfits now on display in the adobe parlor and the Mexican soldier uniform in the Museum room.

A handmade Californio saddle inspired by an 1855 saddle owned by the Moraga family is now on display in the museum room. An early 19th century Chinese camphor chest, very common in the Rancho era, is on display in the bedroom.



Chinese Camphor Chest 1830/40s



Fandango Outfits



Reproduction Californio Style Saddle

## Visitors at the Adobe



8th graders dancing at the Moraga Adobe  
May 2025

Hearing the kids' comments about the history presented and the furnishings we had on display was rewarding and insightful. The class really enjoyed trying out the reproduction rawhide beds!

As FJMA worked to get the adobe ready for visitors this year, we have hosted "preview" tours of the adobe for groups including St Mary's College students, Los Californianos, the Orinda Historical Society, and AAUW.



Los Californianos, October 2025

## Boy Scouts Building Walking Path

August saw collaboration among FJMA, the Orinda Trail Dogs, and a service project by Orinda Scout Troop 237 in laying out and breaking ground on a walking trail from the foot of Adobe Lane up to the Adobe.

Further work, including hand excavation and laying down a walking surface, will wait until the soil softens and is more workable.

Once complete this trail will provide Del Rey Elementary students and others an alternate path to the Adobe, avoiding the more arduous and steep Adobe Lane sidewalk. This path will be open to the public on days that the museum is open.



Orinda Troop 237, August 2025

## Bruzzone Gallery



Bruzzone Gallery

The Bruzzone Gallery is our rotating exhibit room in the adobe. This space will host special displays to be shown for a limited time.

Currently on view is a photo exhibit documenting the recent rehabilitation of the adobe that began in 2020 and completed in 2024.

The adobe was in a state of disrepair in 2020, so seeing the progress that has been made to restore it to its former Rancho era 1800s home is inspiring.

## Thank You to our Recent Donors

Karen Adams  
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**Double Your 2025  
FJMA Donation!!**

**Thanks to a very generous  
donor, all donations through  
December 31, 2025 will be  
matched 100%\***

\* Up to \$20K total

**Newsletter Editor: Teresa Long, [TeresaLong@MoragaAdobe.org](mailto:TeresaLong@MoragaAdobe.org)  
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*Music at the Adobe*



Marilyn Merlino & Lance Beeson, FJMA members in period costumes playing traditional Rancho era music for 8th grade class visitors in May 2025.

**Friends of the Joaquin**

★ **Moraga Adobe**

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