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A Tradition Lives On



Celebration at the home of Theodore Wagner (Wagner Ranch), July 4, 1890. Photo courtesy Orinda Historical Society

first shots were fired at Lexington and Concord. Happy birthday, America! L.Snyder



Celebration at the Orinda Community Park last year Photo Ohlen Alexander

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

Words that shook the world in 1776. On July 4, 1890, they rang out again - this time from the hills surrounding Orinda as Thomas Wagner and his wife hosted residents from across Contra Costa County at a Natal Day Celebration - the great-granddaddy of Orinda's present day Fourth of July revels.

According to a copy of the invitation, issued by the Wagners and now digitized by the Orinda Historical Society, the Wagner Ranch festivities began at 11 a.m. with a "National Salute," followed by a prayer, reading of the Declaration of Independence, singing of national hymns, and poetry recitation before participants sat down for a luncheon. A program of patriotic songs and music were enjoyed by all throughout the remainder of the day, which closed with an evening display of fireworks.

Food, fellowship, fun - and a hefty dose of pride for all that America has achieved, along with moments of reflection about our responsibilities as citizens - and genuine gratitude to those who have fought to preserve our freedom since the

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