

UNION CITY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Founded by Myrla Raymundo, MBA

3841 Smith Street, Union City, California 94587, Tel. (510) 324-3298

Three Components

(1) Museum & Artifacts, (2) Oral History (3) Preservation of Historical Homes

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Visit us at www.geocities.com/ucmuseum/

Myrla Raymundo, Founding Editor/Writer

MISSION STATEMENT

The Union City Historical Museum is a non-profit organization committed to the preservation, maintenance and protection of, and the education of the public about the architectural, cultural, natural and historical heritage resources of the City of Union City.

THE PAGAN FAMILY OF DECOTO

By Barbara Friedrich

Little did Valentine and Manuel Garcia and Maria Pagan know when they arrived in Decoto that they would be founders of a clan that now numbers in the hundreds. The Garcias had left Spain

for Hawaii in 1911. The Pagan family had arrived in Hawaii from Puerto Rico. One of Maria's sons Ramon married Valentine and Manuel's daughter Lucy in Hawaii. Ramon and Lucy had been

working at the sugar plantations. Their terms of employment required them to work for five years. When the time was up, they fulfilled their dream of coming to the United States. They, along with their parents and many siblings, came first to Oakland. Around 1920 Manuel was able to buy property on 12th and 13th streets in Decoto. He subdivided the property among his six children. The parents' home is still standing at 14th and H but is no longer owned by the family.

Ramon and Lucy lived in one of the homes on this property for the rest of their lives. They had fourteen children of which nine survived early childhood. The children attended Decoto School and Washington High School. Three of their daughters, Julia Mateo, Gloria Pacheco, and Judy Preciado still live in Union City and came to the Museum to be interviewed. The building was familiar to them since Judy's husband had been a fireman there.

They had many memories of their family and of their growing up years. Ramon worked on construction at the Masonic Home; Lucy worked in the fields and at the Decoto cannery and packing shed. The sisters described "downtown" Decoto on 10th street as having a post office in Olson's store, a library, a bakery, a blacksmith shop and a barbershop.

Growing up, much of their life centered on the Puerto Rican community and the Puerto Rican Hall. At some point, after Ramon's arrival in Decoto, about 30 Puerto Rican families organized the Puerto Rican association and acquired a hall at 7th and E streets. There were dances, family parties and plays. The

basement was rented for a boxing club for the boys of the area. Mr. Agundez was in charge. Meetings of the Puerto Rican Union of Mutual Aid (PRUMA) are still held there, as are many parties. However, now other groups also rent the hall. The association has become a Puerto Rican/Hawaiian group.

During World War II, Ramon organized some of the parents of men and women in the service to raise money to build a monument. Members of the community outside of the Puerto Rican association also contributed. Bras Monument Company in Hayward built the monument following Ramon's design. It listed the name of all who served during the war and was installed in 1946 at the intersection of 4th St., Decoto Road and H St. The plaque reads: "Erected by the people of Decoto, Ramon Pagan chairman, dedicated November 16, 1946." When the streets were realigned, the monument was moved to Kennedy Park where it now stands. During a 4th of July parade in 1999, the family created a replica of the monument and put it on a float. The picture will soon be posted in the museum.

The Pagan family is still active in Union City. All the sisters are active at Our Lady of the Rosary Church. The family continues to be very close knit with many reunions. Most of the younger generation stay in the area and take part in the gatherings. They have reunions for the father's side (Pagans) and reunions for the mother's side (Garcias). The Garcia family usually celebrates a "kissin' cousin" reunion at Christmas. On the Fourth of July the Pagans and Garcias all go to Kennedy Park and hang huge American flags on ropes between the trees where the entire family

congregates to share food and fun. Last year there were about 70 family members present, and they are looking forward to this year's reunion. In addition to Julia, Gloria and Judy, there are two surviving brothers, Paul of Fremont and George of Newark. Although they have left Decoto, they are still very much a part of the family.

At a time when so many families are dispersed in all directions and are rarely able to get together as a group, it is refreshing to see a family who continues the traditions and passes on its history to the younger generation and to the community. – by Barbara Friedrich

**Commissioner Georgia Megue
dela Cruz**

By Myrla Raymundo

I captured the real meaning of life from Georgia Megue dela Cruz, a longtime resident of Union City and one of our lifetime members.

I believe that our Creator, who created life on earth, is betting that his creations will do something quite wonderful-like

live up to their fullest potential. I'm looking at Georgia's accomplishments of a lifetime and truly wonder how could a woman like her, fill a very large book of accomplishments. And why not the others? I come to believe that each of us has a responsibility for being here on earth-one responsibility to "creation", of which we became a part, another to our Creator – a debt we repay by trying to develop ourselves and to render service to our community and to mankind in general.

Georgia became a part of the "creation". She first saw light in the little town of Butuan City, Agusan del Norte in the Philippines. Immediately, she started showing her talents, when at an early age, she was adjudged the Best Declaimer in the whole province of Agusan of which all schools were represented.

Georgia has a very important responsibility to our Creator. She developed herself in the way of education. She studied and completed Bachelor of Science in Education, Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, master of Arts-Guidance and Counseling, a California Teaching Credentials-Life and California Guidance and Counseling Credential – Partial.

She was a teacher and school guidance counselor in Manila, Philippines when something suddenly hit her. She had reached her peak while in the Philippines, so she decided to immigrate to the United States in 1967. She immediately plunged into services to mankind. She became the executive director of the Philippine Center in Oakland, an organization committed to

assisting newly arrived immigrants from all countries in securing jobs, counseling, and employment training, and in dealing with problems related to immigration, citizenship and welfare issues. She was formerly an Instructor (P.T.) at Laney College in Oakland and a teacher at Oakland Unified School District.

She has been a member of different commissions and boards in Union City and the Alameda County, a State of California commissioner of Fair Employment & Housing Commission, a member of numerous non-profit organizations and has received numerous awards and recognitions. She is presently a commissioner of Human Relations in the Alameda County.

She had been an officer of many non-profit organizations and had occupied almost all of the chairmanship positions in the organizations. Presently, she is still very active with many organizations.

Georgia worked at the State of California Employment Development Department (EDD) as Job Agent in Oakland as account responsible person for Filipino-speaking clients and other minorities. She was one of the top producers in the department.

Georgia lives in Union City with her husband, Mike dela Cruz. She has three grown children from a previous marriage, Romero Abellar, named Outstanding Grand Knight by the National Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus, August Abellar, a businessman, 4th degree Knight of Columbus, and Virgie Abellar Sanches, a registered nurse at Agnew State

Hospital and recently awarded Employee of the Year 2003. She has nine grandchildren.

Her military experience included being a Sergeant in the Guerilla Movement – Intelligence Division. She had traveled to different places such as Mexico, the Caribbean, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Austria and Japan.

On the lighter side of her very busy life, she collects beautiful quotations and expressions, and guess what? She collects personal pictures. Her hopes and aspirations for the future are to help more people who may need her help. She said she wished she were still young to do more services to mankind. Which seems to be her part in the “creation”.

Her favorite adage “Do something good for somebody everyday; what accounts most in life is the service you give to others,” seems to go back to what I believe that our Creator, who created life on earth is betting, that his creations will do something quite wonderful. George Megue dela Cruz did something quite wonderful. She lives up to her potential and will continue to do so

ORAL HISTORIES

Do you know of old-time residents in Union City who are willing to tell their stories about the early Union City and about themselves?

Please call the Editor (Myrla Raymundo) at the Museum, (510) 324-3298 or (510) 489-0133 for an interview.

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY....

Council-Manager Government (1967-1968) Union City, CA

(From the Museum old files)

Union City operates under a “Council-Manager” form of government. Five councilmen are elected to four-year overlapping terms on an at-large basis. The Council determines policy, adopts ordinances and resolutions, adopts the budget, and sets the tax rate. The City Council appoints a City Manager who is the chief administrative officer. It is his responsibility to carry out the Council’s policy in terms of the day-to-day administration of the city.

One of the most important policy determinations that the City Council faces is the adoption of the city budget. The City Manager gathers the information and prepares a preliminary budget for the Council’s study and review. The Council studies and revises the budget as necessary and then adopts it. The City Manager is responsible for putting the budget into effect. The annual budget is an expression of policy by the council. The budget outlines the goals and tasks, which the council sets for the forthcoming year. To accomplish the goals and tasks set forth in the budget, the council appropriates money which the city receives from various sources. Funds of the city are thus committed to specific purposes for the fiscal period, and can be used only for those purposes.

The City Council selects one of its members to serve as mayor and one as vice mayor. The City Council is currently led by Bernie Morales as Mayor and Tom Kitayama as vice-

Mayor. Other members of the City Council are Leo J. Alvalais, Willard E. Davis and Irving A. Williams.

The City Council meets the second and fourth Mondays of each month for regular sessions. Study sessions are held on specific matters that may arise.

The City Council also appoints various advisory commissions and committees to assist the work of the legislative and administrative branches of the city government—they are the Planning Commission, Park and Recreation and the Citizens Advisory Committee.

THE PLANNING COMMISSION
Chairman Charles Maraman; Norman Silviera, Vice Chairman and Commissioners Henry Franco, Aurio Nieves and Joseph Rose.

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Chairman Jess Martinez and Commissioners Marce Campa, Fred Castro, Hem Henry and Myron Tejada.

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
This committee consists of 50 members and meets as a general assembly every quarter. Chairman Daniel Lopez, Vice Chairman Mary Rodriguez and Robert Garcia.

NEW IN UNION CITY.....

General Municipal Election - There was an important public notice to registered voters from the City Clerk, City of Union City. It states that beginning November 2004, the General Municipal Election will be held in

November of even numbered years. Therefore, the General Municipal Election for November 2003 has been cancelled.

Union Landing Transit Center – The transportation hub, being constructed right now, will make life easier. It will provide safe and convenient connections to several local and regional bus routes. The 30,000 square foot transit hub is located near the Alvarado-Niles Road entrance to Union Landing. It is designed to simultaneously handle up to nine busses. UC Transit, AC Transit and paratransit drivers will have easy access to the facility and its numerous loading areas.

Skateboard Park – The much-awaited park is being built right now. It is a haven for the youth that had been wanting to spend their time here in Union City instead of other places.

New Postmaster - Oscar Munoz is now the new Union City Postmaster. He will oversee the Union City Main Post office, which is located at 33170 Alvarado-Niles Road and the old Alvarado Post Office, which is at 3861 Smith Street.

Drigon Park – Our pets now have better lives with the opening and improvement of the dog park. It has a shade structure for the plaza area and a bench.

Island Pacific Market – An ethnic supermarket is now situated in the place of where the Lucky Supermarket once stood. This market caters to Filipinos, Chinese, Vietnamese and all the other groups in Union City and the neighboring cities. Filipinos from Dublin, Hercules, Vallejo and Tracy come down to Union City to buy their

groceries and ethnic ingredients from this market. It is a big boost to the revenues of the city.

<p style="text-align: center;">UNION CITY HISTORY PRESENTATION IN FULL SWING</p>

The elementary school children from Alvarado, Cabello and Kitayama Schools are coming to the Union City Historical Museum for a Museum Tour and Presentation of History.

Myrla Raymundo shows the children pictures of many of the city's "firsts", its first church, school, post office and businesses, which are on display at the Museum. She also does the slide presentation about the history of Union City.

In May, around 120 school children came for presentation and tour.

They came to know that the Ohlone Indians were the very first people in Union City; that the pioneers Henry R. Smith, John M. Horner, E. H. Dyer, Ezra Decoto and many others built Union City; that the small steamship named "Union" carried fruits and vegetables to nearby cities. They also learned about the early rails and trains, and the Masonic Home.

They were always anxiously waiting for the time to see the antique firetruck and have their pictures taken riding the firetruck.

We anticipate more children coming in the next few months.

**COMPLETE LIST OF THE
UNION CITY LEADERS
(1959 through 2004)**

The Union City residents who have served and those who are still serving as councilmembers and commissioners have done so much for the community. They will not go unnoticed.

Myrla Raymundo, Union City Historical Museum, compiled this list, with assistance from Linda West, City Clerk, City of Union City.

City Council

Oscar Dowe
Mick Ratekin
Tom Kitayama
Joseph Seoane
Joseph Lewis
Will Davis
Irv Williams
Bernie Morales
Leo Alvelais
Shorty Garcia
Henry Franco
Don Miller
Marshall Stone
Steve Martin
Dick Oliver
Delaine Eastin
Jean Westgard
Sue Boyle
Mark Green
Manuel Fernandez
Alice Arce
Robert Garfinkle
Carol Dutra-Vernaci
Benjamin Elias
Richard Valle

Planning Commission

Henry Franco
Norman Silveira
Aurio Nieves
Charles Maraman
John Monahan
Joseph Rose
Tom Kitayama
Harold Strickland
Marshall Stone
Robert Eichler
Gail DeLalla
Anthony Najera
Jean Westgard
Caspar Ritter
Acey Worthy
Peter Pinto
Arthur Bras
Don Miller
Dan Lopes
Wilbert Hendricks
Raymond Orozco, Jr.
John Comer
Charles Di Bari
Harold Cruze
Tom Miller
Paul Meyes
Jaime Jaramillo
Jim Lamona
Lindsay Trummell
Sue Hernandez
Ron Moscoso
Alice Arce
Van Crandrall
Delaine Eastin
John Chambers
Dennis Greenberg
Mark Green
Manuel Fernandez
Frances (Mattie) Rousseau
Lynne Mattos

**PLANNING COMMISSION
(Continuation)**

Maureen Hart
Maria-Ester DeAnda
Cathi Sweeney
Myrla Raymundo
Carol Dutra-Vernaci
Elizabeth Ames
Sunjay Nair
Balbir Singh
Rosemary Savage
Lamont Allen
Tikisa Anderson
Bob Kelley
Jo Ann Lew

**Park and Recreation
Commission**

Jess Martinez
Marce Campa
Fred Castro
Kenn P. Henry
Myron Tejada
Bill Ferreira
Patricia Laramie
Michael Nemecek
Graham Hornel
Linda Lang
Lynne Mattos
Richard Palma
James Brass
Richard Fitzmaurice
? Martin
Mark Green
Rudy DeVera
Stan Velasco
Mandy Kleykamp
Pat Morgan
John Comer
Mattie Rousseau
Richard Allen
Gerald Kiefer
Del DuMond
Ruth Levin

**PARK & RECREATION
COMMISSION
(Continuation)**

Elvin Smith
Leonard Silva
Robert S. Smith
T. W. Farley
Raul Orozco
Bruno Goletto
Anna Riotoc
Walt Fyar
Julian Hinojoza
Gina Lewis
Bruce Stanley
John Tester
Daniel Rivera
David Acosta
William S. Boylan
Adam Lopez III

Senior Commission

Miles Price
Rosie Larsen
Ralph Ruggieri
Clemente Golaw
Buster Bellomo
Frank Potje
Augusta Stein
Hermenegildo Baylon
Gordon Messegee
Cap Ritter
Irene Wolfe
Hugh McNamara
Anthony Vierra
Eva Kamakea
Josephine Pando
Richard Gonzales

Human Relations Commission

Cornelius Hall
Pat Gacoscos
John Hernandez
Fouad Modjarrad
Georgia Megue Santa Maria

**HUMAN RELATIONS
COMMISSION (Continuation)**

Mary Lou Hipolito
Sheila Somosierra
Dev Bhatia
Denise Mayfield
Sandra Holder
Rev. Jerome Brown
Hardev Grewal
Phil Verzola
Yolanda Triana
Dianne Gates-Anderson
Breda Conroy

Sister City Commission

Myrla Raymundo
Kenny Garcia
Cyndy Hardwick
Mary Olsen
Mark Tayo
Cohen
Ruben Uriarte
Richard Mullmeyer
Georgia Megue Santa Maria
Santosh Wadhwa
Cherlyn Spencer
Shiekh Iqbal
Richard Arthur
Ramon Tendencia
Yolanda Triana

Arts Council

Kathy Borgogno
Myrla Raymundo
Ollie Smith
Jolinda Locquiao
Bill Wentworth
Eva Kamakea
Diane La Mountaine
Jo Ann Lew
Belinda Maloney
Jo Ann Allen

City Managers

The following City Managers helped in carrying out the City Council's policy in terms of the day to day administration of the City of Union City.

M. Deane Seeger
Terrence Belanger
Bill Newton
William Zaner
Karen Smith
Mark Lewis
Dave Berger
Larry Cheeves (Interim)

**A TRIBUTE TO BILL MAY
Former Union City Parks Manager**

In 1970 Union City's park and recreation system included only two teen centers – one each in the Alvarado and Decoto districts and five playgrounds on school grounds

Bill May was a pioneer in developing Union City parks and playgrounds. He transformed Kennedy from a designated spot on a map to a community center. One of his favorite projects is the playground at the William Cann Neighborhood Park that he helped create in 1975.

Bill May will be remembered as one of the Union City leaders who helped formed the present Union City.

FOUNDER'S NOTES

Sergeant Jose Francisco Ortega and his army scouts could see the great flowing Alameda Creek, bisecting the area of present day Union City. Ortega's was one of a half-dozen exploring parties crossing the Union City plan between 1769 and 1797.

During that time, the sounds of a language and music they've never heard and the sight of people in strange costumes living in tule huts greeted the Spaniards who crossed the Union City plain in 1775. Indian Villages ranged along Dry Creek above where it joins Alameda Creek. They called the Indians Costanoans, meaning the coastal people. There were about 8,000 of the Coastal people. (From "Looking Back: Early Glimpse of Union City, 1978" published by the City of Union City).

History is kept alive in the Union City Historical Museum and made accessible to the residents for the enlightenment of everyone. The Museum has resources for people who seek to know the past.

The collection is a well-organized reference and research-collecting tool consisting of books, pamphlets, periodicals, newspapers, photographs, images, maps, posters and slides relating chiefly to Union City. The old photos depict our ancestors, the former city leaders, our schools, our churches, sports and many more.

The collection is also a display of very interesting artifacts, such as things used in old homes, Pacific States Steel and Holly Sugar artifacts, the first farmers of the city and many more.

The Museum provides programs and services. We do presentations on the history of our city. The Bi-monthly Museum Newsletter serves as a vehicle of information to the community. It contains a lot of historical tidbits and interesting information about the past and present Union City.

The history of Union City continues to be written and collected everyday. We write the happenings; we clip the local news articles and we make them available to Museum visitors, who want to know the past and also the latest happenings in the city. We have numerous photographs, both old and new.

The Union City Historical Museum stands majestically in the old Alvarado district and staffed by the members of the Museum Board of Directors and volunteers. Please come and visit us.

Myria

**ELECTION OF MUSEUM
OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR
FY2003-2004**

In an election held on May 5, 2003 at the General Membership Meeting, the slate of officers and directors submitted by the Nominating Committee were unanimously elected as the new officers and directors for Fiscal Year 2003-2004. (See the new Board of Directors FY2003-2004 listing)

There was a call for nomination from the floor. Myrla Raymundo was nominated as President, but declined. Jo Ann Lew was nominated as director, but declined. The Nominating Committee was composed of Timothy Swenson, Chair and John Tester and Bob Swartz as members.

**LANDMARK AND HISTORIC
PRESERVATION OF UNION CITY
HOMES**

In 1998, the Architectural Resource Groups, contracted by the City of Union City, with the assistance of the Union City Historical Museum, surveyed the historically and culturally significant buildings in Union City.

We are continuously asking owners of buildings that are included in the survey list of over 400 homes to have their homes included in the historical buildings.

We want to preserve these beautiful old homes in our city, so that Union City does not become a new city.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
FY2003-2004**

Myrla Raymundo,
Founder/Past President
Timothy Swenson, *President*
Mike Christ, *Vice-President*
Secretary-Vacant
Hugh McNamara-*Treasurer*

Directors- FY2002-2004

Miles Price
Ligfinio Ray Raymundo
Al Rose

Directors - FY2003-2005

Lupe St. Denis
Margaret Shepard
Bruce Hevelin

MUSEUM LIFETIME MEMBERS

Phil & Leila Verzola
John & Cathy Tester
Timothy & Catherine Swenson
Eva Kamakea
Georgia Megue Santa Maria
Ligfinio (Ray) & Myrla Raymundo
Gina Lewis
Reiner & Sheryl Glausch
Al & Marsha Badella
Barbara Schiefler
William & Dorothy Hubbard
Bob & Leslie Swartz
Steve Miller & Diane LaMountaine

EDITORIAL BOARD

Myrla Raymundo
Barbara Friedrich
Mike Christ
Bruce Hevelin
Jo Ann Lew
Ray Raymundo (Layout
Artist/Production)

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