

# ***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  
Museum Board meets on the first Monday of the month at the Museum at 7 PM**

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[www.geocities.com/ucmuseum/](http://www.geocities.com/ucmuseum/)

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**Myrla Raymundo, Founding Editor/Writer**

**e-mail [RAYMYR@aol.com](mailto:RAYMYR@aol.com)**

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## **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.

## **MUSEUM'S FIVE (5) YEARS COMMEMORATIVE RECEPTION**

The Union City Historical Museum celebrates five years of saving history. Marking the achievement of unprecedented milestones in history, the Union City Historical Museum celebrated its fifth anniversary, commemorating a period of saving the culture and heritage of our city, the City of Union City.

When she realized that Union City was the only city in the area that did not have a historical society or museum, Myrla Raymundo, interested in preserving the local history, founded the Union City Historical Museum in 1998.

She and a group of residents, equally interested in history, was able to get some funding from the City of Union City to develop flyers and brochures to help disseminate information on the creation of a Historical Museum.

In 1998, the Museum's artifacts, donated by local citizens, were housed in the Union City Library. In 2001, the city leased an old fire station, a historical structure, to the Museum for one dollar a month to house and display its collection.

The City of Union City wanted the Museum to thrive and serve the residents

of Union City. The City gave the Museum a grant of \$6,000 a year to cover expenses in running the Museum.

From those modest beginnings, guided by the objective of saving history, the Museum has grown into what it is today.

Through the years, with great pride, the Union City Historical Museum helped the residents learn about our history. Our commitment is not only to educate our residents in history today, but to leave a legacy to our future generations.

Museum members, city council dignitaries, city staff, guests and local historians graced the impressive gathering.

Local historian, Myrta Raymundo and other guest historians presented the history of Union City. Refreshments were served to the guests.

It was a day to remember. It was a golden moment, reminiscing the days gone by. Guests went home with their culture and heritage unfolded to them.

HAPPY 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY, UNION CITY HISTORICAL MUSEUM.

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**MISSION GATEWAY  
APARTMENTS**

The Mission Gateway Apartments, located at the corner of Whipple and Mission Streets will be accepting tenants soon. It is an affordable housing development provided by the City of Union City. It is a row of beautiful apartments with colors that are very appealing to the eyes. It is a very nice addition to the City of Union City.

**UNION CITY TEEN COMMISSION**

The Union City Teen Commission, composed of 15 members, ages 13 to 17, was launched on December 13, 2005. Ariel Leary of Union City's Leisure Services Department will serve as the commission's advisor. Their duties range from making plans for local youths' extracurricular activities to addressing problems such as gangs and youth violence.

The young commissioners are:

- Ava Albano
- Michael S. Cheng
- Samuel Gomez
- Phong Ho
- Leilani Lopez
- Laurie Len Magers
- Rajiv Narayan
- Candice Nguyen
- Jonathan Pai
- Alexis Ratcliffe
- Gabriela Sierra
- Ignacio Torres
- Maurie Velasco
- Gregory Jiang
- Vanessa Johnson
- Mathew Topete (Alternate)

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF YOU!

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**RAJA SWEETS & INDIAN CUISINE**

At Raja Sweets, authentic Indian dinners are served that are both exciting and delicious. If you are interested in an elegant introduction to the mysteries and marvels of Indian cuisine, stop at Raja Sweets located at 31853 Alvarado Blvd.

**FRANK PEREZ, Longtime Alvarado  
Resident**

By Myrla Raymundo

Frank Perez will turn 100 on March 11, 2006. The Perez family came from San Martin, Spain, but immigrated to Hawaii. They lived in Hawaii before coming to San Francisco in 1922. They eventually met other Spanish families in the Decoto and Alvarado townships and settled in Alvarado in 1925. Frank considers himself more of a Hawaiian than Spanish, and continues the old Hawaiian traditions such as hand making fishing nets, which he uses and sells to friends. He fondly recalls his youth in Lihana, Hawaii, where he and his brothers worked on the sugar plantations and, later in Honolulu, where he and his friends would dive for coins thrown by the tourists off of the Lurline cruise ships.

The Perez family had three sons, Joe, Frank and Chris. Joe and Frank remained in Alvarado, while Chris settled in Mountain View. Joe worked for Holly Sugar, and passed away a few years ago. His wife, Carmen Perez, who turned 90, still lives in Alvarado, as does his daughter Marie Perez. Marie has recently retired after a long and successful career with the Alameda County Office of Education.

Frank Perez' wife Mary passed away at the age of 45. They have one son, Frank

Perez, Jr. who studied at the Alvarado Grammar School, Logan High School and Cal State Hayward. Frank Jr. now works for an insurance company in Walnut Creek and resides in the Redwood Heights area of Oakland.

Frank Perez worked for Mr. John Whipple as a truck driver. His wife Mary worked for Leslie Salt in Newark for 36 years, and was later joined by Frank. Mary then worked for Alvarado Grammar School as the head cook with two (2) girls working for her. Frank left Leslie Salt to work as a welder at the US Navy yard in Alameda. After the war, Frank was employed by Friden Calculators in San Leandro.

Frank Perez reminisces: "Alvarado was wide open. Stop it – too many cars, too many houses. Loaf of bread was four cents. The Chinese and Japanese were in business in Union City. They grew cauliflowers and sugar beets in Alvarado. No transportation. It was hard to get a job. I remember Dinsmore Store (now Uncle Joe's Pizza House.) Alvarado was a wide-open town with a China camp with lots and lots of girls lined up in saloons and plenty of gambling. Then one day at three in the morning, the gambling dens were set on fire. The town got a reputation as Little Tijuana and families would lock their doors as they drove through town." (Before the Nimitz Freeway was constructed, Highway 17 was the main route between Oakland and San Jose and wound right through downtown Alvarado along Union City Boulevard.) There was a movie theatre in town owned by another old Spanish family, Naharro. The old Alvarado Hotel was owned by a member of another old Spanish family, Fernando Paredes. The

hotel had six rooms. (The building still exists at corner of Smith and Union City Blvd.) Fernando had done a lot of repair work refurbishing the hotel, and it was an instant success. It drew crowds because the food was good. For 40 cents you could have a meal. The restaurant and the hotel closed when Fernando retired. For many years the site of Mr. Parades' stately, old, gray Desoto sedan, sitting in front of the hotel, was a landmark nearly as much as the hotel.

The descendants of the Navarro and Parades families still reside in Alvarado.

Frank Jr. recalls, "The slaughter house, every once in a while, they would wash the place down with water into the storm drains rather than the sewer." "We had ditches in front of our houses rather than sidewalks and underground pipes for the storm drainage. The ditches would fill up with the mixture of water and blood (and God knows what else) in front of our houses. It was disgusting to say the least." Frank Sr. would go out there and yell at the workers at the slaughterhouse, but by then it was too late.

Marie Perez recalls the Union City flood of 1952, when Uncle Frank came with a rowboat to rescue her and her family. We later learned from Uncle Frank that the levees had been breached by employees of Leslie Salt to save the salt ponds. The town of Alvarado was sacrificed to save the Leslie Salt ponds. Frank also recalls seeing the plane crash (there is an exhibit in the museum about this occurrence), which crashed into the foothills. He was on his way to visit his mother who was in a hospital when he saw the crash occur.

This Editor is so lucky to have interviewed a permanent fixture of Union City, a longtime resident who could tell in person the stories that happened many years ago. The Union City Historical Museum thanks the Perez family for bringing their patriarch to the Museum to contribute to the collection of our culture and heritage. The Union City history must go on.

**MICHAEL S. RIBACK**  
**City Attorney**  
**Union City**

By Myrla Raymundo

Michael S. Riback was appointed as the City Attorney for Union City in 2002. It is Michael's responsibility to provide legal counsel to the City Council and the administrative staff, as well as provide prosecutorial services on behalf of the City.

Michael attends all city council meetings, and sits with the City Manager, Assistant City Manager and other city staff, along-side the city council. As City Attorney, it is important for Michael to listen intently to all discussions in order to be prepared to provide legal advice when needed by the city council.

The City Attorney's Office also represents Boards and Commissions

when requested to do so; prepares ordinances, memoranda of law, drafts and reviews contracts; is responsible for quasi-judicial appeals; and represents the City in civil litigation.

Michael Riback is a 1968 graduate of the University of California in Los Angeles. He received his J.D. degree from Loyola University School of Law in 1971. He has practiced public entity law since 1972.

He was a former president of the Bay Area City Attorneys' Association and of the Contra Costa City Attorneys' Association and has served on committees of the League of California Cities and the National Institute of Municipal Law Officers.

He has also conducted workshops for city councilmembers, county supervisors, commissioners, board members, city clerks, managers and other staff on the Ralph M. Brown Act and conflict of interest laws, throughout the state.

Michael was born and raised in Los Angeles. Michael's grandparents emigrated to the United States from Russia and Lithuania in the early part of the 1900's.

Michael met his wife Betty in college. Michael and Betty loved the San Francisco Area and when he graduated from law school in 1971, they decided they wanted to make the Bay Area their home. Michael was fortunate to be appointed deputy city attorney of the City of Redwood City in January 1972 and Michael and Betty moved to the Bay Area. They have been here ever since, and have raised two daughters, Jennifer

and Bethany. They have one grandchild, Jonathan.

Michael is a very pleasant man, ready to help in however he can. He is a welcome addition to the City of Union City.

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**E-MAILS TO THE EDITOR**

From: Joe Perez (mailto:[perez4@ltnl.gov](mailto:perez4@ltnl.gov))  
To: Union City  
Subject: Native of Old Alvarado

Good Day,

Thank you for the wonderful web site of Union City.

I was raised in the Alvarado area of present day Union City and graduated from Alvarado elementary School in 1962 and as well as graduating in 1966 from James Logan High School. I currently live in Tracy, California but my mother Carmen and sister Marie still live in the old houses on Brooklyn St.

While growing up in this little farming community, I remember seeing old photographs and heard many stories for example of the life and times of these residents. I mean stories of the old canal that ran from the San Francisco Bay all the way to Riverside Street to the Old Hotel that was once there. The building that was across the street from the Dinsmore Store. That building was the site of the Armory from the 1860s. I saw a picture of soldiers in Civil War era uniforms. (Union) lining two sides of the giant building.

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What I am trying to say is that there is a lot of historical information just waiting to be gathered up by an enterprising amateur historian. Please try to preserve Union City's past for our future generations.

Alas, as a young lad my friends dad who was born in Alvarado before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century told us about the "endless" line of "Doe Boy's" marching with equipment and caissons pulled by horses for he most part, from the Fremont area down and through Alvarado and Mr. Eden, Hayward etc. to the departure point at Oakland. They went off to help fight in Europe in WW1.

Please pass this on to someone who could record this information, and share stories.

Thanks you,

Joseph Alan {Perez

P.S. My uncle Frank Perez still lives in the same house he built, with his own hands in Old Alvarado. He's currently 98 years young.

-o-

Dear Joseph Alan Perez,

Your e-mail was forwarded to me by the City Clerk, Union City. I am so glad you gave some history about Union City.

Editor

From: [ehschultz@mindspring.com](mailto:ehschultz@mindspring.com)  
To: [RAYMYR@aol.com](mailto:RAYMYR@aol.com)  
Subject: Alvarado Sugar Factory Information

Dear Ms. Raymundo,

While researching my grandfather, I came across this in your Union City Historical Museum newsletter: "During her employment, Mr. Ratekin gave Mary some aerial photos of the early Sugar Mill. Those photos are now in the hands of the local historian, Myrta Raymundo, for display at the Museum."

The Alvarado Sugar Company engaged my grandfather, Henri Vallez, in 1890 as a chemist. He was 19 years old and just graduated from college. He went on to become a major figure in the sugar beet industry. The job at Alvarado is what brought him (and my mother's side of the family) to this country from France.

I was wondering if you have any photos or history of the sugar factory, particularly around 1890, or if you have any suggestions as to where I would look. I am also researching my grandfather's brother in law, Emile Brysselbout, another pioneer in the sugar beet industry, who may have also worked at Alvarado.

Sincerely,

Eric Schultz

-o-

Dear Mr. Schultz

Your e-mail is weaving some history in Union City. Anyone who will read this and who knows your folks can provide

some answers. I will send you any information that I could gather.

I have photos and stories of the Alvarado Sugar Mill.

Myrla Raymundo

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From: [b.j.rich@juno.com](mailto:b.j.rich@juno.com)  
To: [RAYMYR@AOL.COM](mailto:RAYMYR@AOL.COM)  
Subject: Phillips family of Alvarado, TX  
Dear Myrla,

This message is directed to Al Rose whose daughter in law is sister to Lucy Phillips Waddington.

I'm doing research on the Phillips family who were residing in Alvarado, TX in 1880. I am wondering if Lucy Phillips Waddington's grandfather Walter Phillips is a son of Lee Phillips who was born in NC in about 1832? I'd be very grateful if this message could be passed on to Lucy Phillips Waddington or her sister, wife of Stanley Rose (Al Rose's son.)"

This is the message I obtained off the Union City Museum site: "Lucy Phillips Waddington lived in 3722 Smith Street since she was 4 years old. Walter Phillips is her grandfather, who worked for U. S. Pipe in Union City. Her sister is married to Stanley Rose, Al Rose's son." (Near Alvarado, TX)

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Billi Jo Richter (a Phillips descendant)

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Dear Billi Jo Richter,

Your message was relayed to Al Rose.

Myrla Raymundo

**VICKY GALINDO**  
**Union City, CA**

Contributed by Daniel Becerra  
Chula Vista, California

Dear Ms. Raymundo,  
I found this item on the computer. It features the young lady from Union City who plays on the US Softball team. I watched her hit a Grand Slam Homerun against the National Team of Japan.

I know almost nothing about her. But she played outstanding softball throughout her high school, junior college, and university career. Her position is third base and she appears to be a shoo-in for the Olympics in 2008. I am very proud of Vicky Galindo.

Daniel Becerra

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To our readers,  
Does anybody know about this amazing lady, Vicky Galindo? Please let the Editor know so we can write about her.  
Editor

**HISTORIC VISITS TO THE MUSEUM**

The Museum's displays bring people into the Museum. Some were connected one way or the other to the displays in the Museum. The following visited recently to tell their stories as they connect with the artifacts and displays.

**Jerry C. De Poe**

By Myrla Raymundo

Jerry C. De Poe is President, Branch 111 of the National Association of Letter Carriers. There are 3500 letter carriers. He worked for the Post Office for 37 years as a letter carrier. He is now a union representative and has monthly meetings in Richmond. He has a daughter aged 27 and son, 32, and girlfriend Colleen Cheng, 45 years old who also works for the Post Office. Colleen's father, Milton Cheng, was one of the first farmers in Union City.

**Martha Bustamante**

By Myrla Raymundo

Martha Bustamante has been a letter carrier since the opening of Union City Post Office in 1959. She was the only woman carrier for 31 years. Her only daughter Cindy Safdari has a daughter Janelle Hernandez, 22 years old, studying at SF State University.

**Jose Gonzales**

By Myrla Raymundo

Jose Gonzales visited the Union City Historical Museum to look at his pictures that are hanging on one of the walls. He also saw a pair of shoes and

helmet that he used in his work. He was so glad that his son Jose Gonzales, Jr. gave the artifacts to the Museum.

Jose Gonzales was born in Texas on June 27, 1928. He and his wife Clementina, who passed away in 2002, settled in Union City in 1962. He worked at Drywall Sheetrock Hanger from 1962 and retired on disability in 1987. He lived in Decoto for a long time.

**Norma de Salles**

By Myrla Raymundo

Norma de Salles and her son Doug de Salles donated a 6" x 8" Old Alvarado map to the Museum. The large map used to grace the front office of the old Central Bank at the corner of Smith Street and Union City Blvd. When the bank was closing in 1951, they were disposing of a lot of materials. The huge map was one of them. Norma and his young son Doug requested that the map be given to them. They kept the map for more than 50 years until they decided that the map should belong to the Museum.

Norma, a Portuguese descendant lived on Horner Street before moving to Fremont. Her son Doug is a doctor and her daughter Cristi is a teacher.

Norma is the daughter of John Bettencourt and Lulu De Kidos, longtime Alvarado residents.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

I wish the officers and members of the Union City Historical Museum a very good year. It is my hope that we will continue to work on our goals in the coming months.

**Grants** – Myrla Raymundo, Chairperson – We are still waiting for approval of the Institute of Museum and Library Services-IMLS Grant 2006. Another grant, the CCHE California Cultural & Historical Endowment, Round Two, was mailed to the State of California on January 25, 2006.

**Fundraising** – Miles Price, Chairperson The second annual Sweetheart Dance was held on February 11, 2006 at the Ruggieri Senior Center. It was a nice gathering of Museum members and guests.

**Membership** – Hugh McNamara, Chairperson and Myrla Raymundo received new members and are continuously doing membership drives.

**Docents** – Ray Raymundo -The Museum is now open from Monday through Saturdays and is being continuously staffed by volunteers.

**Museum Newsletter** – Myrla Raymundo, Chairperson. Please continue to send your articles to Myrla Raymundo for the Newsletter.

**Website** – Tim Swenson, Chairperson – Tim Swenson is continuously working on the Museum Web Site.

**Preservation of Historic Homes and Buildings** – Myrla Raymundo, Chairperson – Ongoing.

**History Presentations** - Myrla Raymundo - Continuous walking tours around the Museum and Presentation of History to visitors.

**Artifacts** – Ray Raymundo and some volunteers who are on duty in the Museum are receiving artifacts from the community. One item is the 6'x8' 1938 Old Alvarado map donated by Doug De Salles. This old map used to hang at the Alvarado Bank building, which still exists. The building is now a Mexican restaurant. Artifacts are recorded in the Museum book.

### **Other Reports:**

The Union City Historical Museum approved the sub-lease of the Museum building to the Union City Chamber of Commerce

Their office hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM. The Museum will also be open on the same days and hours and also Saturdays from 10:00 AM– 4:00 PM. The Chamber employees will help the Museum by being docents and giving information about the Museum.

## FOUNDER'S NOTES

### “UNION CITY HISTORY GOES ON”

Do you know that the Union City Historical Museum, located at 3841 Smith in the old Alvarado district, is full of the city's history?

The artifacts housed in the Museum have been collected from local residents. Thus, the collection is closely tied to the cultural heritage of the community. These objects were used during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and were passed down from generation to generation.

Among the artifacts donated to the Museum are 1923 vintage trash-burning stove, 1920 steamer trunk, 1876 pedal-powered jigsaw, 1950 Kodak brownie movie projector, 1923 vintage refrigerator, 1800 iron, 1870 sewing machine and more than 100 objects that hold historical value for the residents of Union City as these were used by their ancestors.

The Museum holds a series of documents that trace back local history. There is a collection of newspapers from the 1800s. The collection is a well-organized reference and research-collection tool consisting of books, pamphlets, periodicals, newspapers, photographs, images, maps, posters, and slides relating chiefly to Union City.

The Museum continues to clip newspaper articles and historical documents for a continuation of the City's history.

The collections are used as an educational tool to instill a desire to learn about local history. The collections are available to scholars, students, and other researchers.

The Museum's library contains the most complete archival, reference and photographic materials on Union City's past. High school students and university students use these materials for research purposes. The library is used to develop educational programs for school groups and the general public.

I continue to keep my eyes open for current happenings, so I don't miss a single event about Union City. Some of them are the opening of the Conley-Caraballo School, the formation of the first Union City Youth Commission, and the openings of AlmaVia and Mission Gateway apartments.

So why not visit the Museum and walk through your city's past and glide through to the present times. You will surely enjoy your walk. See you there!

**Myrla Raymundo**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Myrla Raymundo, Founder

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**WELCOME LIFETIME MEMBERS**

**FRANK, JR & ELVAMAE BORGHI**  
Past School Board Member

**MUSEUM DOCENTS**

We're calling on the Museum members to help us. If you're available on any of the days that we are open, please call the Museum at (510) 324-3298.

**HISTORY PRESENTATION**

The history of Union City is being presented at the Union City Historical Museum on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Please come to the Museum and learn more about our city.

**MUSEUM LIFETIME MEMBERS**

Phil & Leila Verzola  
John & Cathy Tester  
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Eva Kamakea  
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**Myrla Raymundo, Editor  
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3841 Smith Street  
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