

# ***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 quarterly at the Museum at 7 PM**

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

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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.



**RICHARD SEALANA  
SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC  
WORKS**

Meet Richard Sealana, Union City's Superintendent of Public Works. He handles weighty projects, a demanding day job and lots and lots of extracurricular activities.

He's been with the city for 26 years and oversees the maintenance operations of the city, such as streets, parks,

landscapes, building maintenance and fleet operations.

When he started in 1981, he worked as a Grounds Specialist, taking care of plants and supervising buildings and grounds.

Richard was born in San Francisco, California on December 4, 1953, and raised in Hayward by a merchant marine father from Cebu, Philippines and mom from Texas. He attended grade school in Hayward, moved to Southern California and back to Union City, where he graduated from Logan High School in 1972. He has ten brothers and sisters.

After high school, Richard was employed as a manager at the Tom Kitayama Nursery in Union City.

He has a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Cal State Hayward, (now Cal State East Bay) and a Masters

Degree in Business Administration from St. Mary's college in Orinda

He is just a few courses shy of a doctorate degree. He is currently doing his dissertation on his EDD-Doctor of Education from the University of San Francisco.

Richard and his wife, Katherine have two boys, Richard, Jr. age 33 and Daniel, 29. They have been married for 33 years. Richard, Jr. works in Homeland Security in San Francisco and Daniel is studying to be a priest.

Richard takes on as much as he can. Besides his regular work, his continuous studies and education, and his family, he joins a lot of extra curricular activities.

Four years ago, he replaced former mayor Tom Kitayama, as a member of the Board of Directors of Alameda County Fairgrounds. He is on the Operating Committee of Southern Alameda County Geographic Information Systems Authority; and Officer with Phi Delta Kappa Organization of Professional Education. He still has time to teach. He is a Professor at the University of Phoenix, San Jose Campus.

He is the founder of the Institute for Horticultural Studies. He wrote Researched in Adult Learning Theory Andragogy and published in areas of horticultural and arboriculture. He has articles pending on community problem solving.

Richard is not one to relax much. The only down time is vacation. He and his wife will go to their property in Northern California, a 31-acre mountain retreat

haven, and spend time away from it all. Then he comes back refreshed and back to his city work

As for his co-workers in the city, he said, "They are a great group of people to work with." As for the city, he reminisced, "I've been in Union City for a long time; I've seen the city grow as a child. I used to visit my godfather in Union City and I used to play in the tomato fields in Whipple Road. Then I would go home to Hayward to my parents."

He is so proud to say that he, together with Councilmember Carol Dutra Vernaci, their class president, and members of the 1972 graduating class will be celebrating their 35<sup>th</sup> year reunion anniversary. They are preparing for a great event.



What a great treasure to have in the City of Union City. Richard Sealana is a well-educated guy, a great leader and an asset for the city.

We salute you!!!

## FOUNDER'S "LONG" NOTES



**By Myrla Raymundo**

I bet most of you do not know what interesting events transpired in Union City in the years **1770 through 1957**. Well, here goes.....

**1770** – Spanish Explorers crossed Union City plains and discovered thousands of Costanoans Indians (Coastal People.) The Costanoan Indians were the people who greeted the Spaniards who crossed the Union City plains in 1775. The Costanoan Indians lived in Indian villages along Dry Creek.

1790 – Spanish Missionaries developed settlements in Union City area.

1797 – 1836 – Franciscan Padres attempted to “Christianize” and colonized Indians at Mission San Jose.

1842 – Mexican Governor Juan Alvarado granted his cousin, Jose de Jesus Vallejo, land in Decoto area.

1844 – Mexican Governor Manuel Micheltoarena gave land grants to Tomas Pacheco and Augustin Alviso (Alvarado area.)

1846 – Mormon farmer’s ship, the “Brooklyn”, arrived at Yerba Buena. The ship carried the Horner and Mowry families.

1850 – John Horner formed the Union City settlement. Union City was named after a river steamer, “The Union.” Horner was the founder and builder of the first warehouse on the banks of the creek.

1851 – Union City first sprang into existence. It is located on the banks of Alameda Creek near a point chain known as the Devil’s Elbow.

1852 – “Horner Stage” was the first stage line between Mission San Jose and Union City.

1853 - The first school in Alvarado was a private one, but was soon made into a public school.

1853 – The first County Court House was on the 2nd floor of Smith’s store.

1853 – First steam powered mill.

1853 – Alvarado Post Office was established.

1854 –First stage line between Alvarado and Mission.

1854 – Union City and New Haven settlements combined to form Alvarado, named in honor of former Mexican Governor Juan Bautista Alvarado.

1854 – First bridge over Alameda Creek built by the Horners.

1854 – First Alvarado hotel built by A. M. Veasy.

1854 – Decoto brothers Ezra, Adolphus and John sailed through the Golden Gate from New York via Panama.

1860 - Dyer brothers, Ephraim and Ebenezer, imported sugar beet seed from Germany and planted 150 acres as a test plot.

1860 – First formal Alvarado School erected on Smith Street. Served until 1924. Prior schools operated out of homes.

1860 – Saint Anne Catholic Church was built in Alvarado on Smith and Watkins Street.

1862 – John Quigley began salt production on a large scale in Union City.

1863 – John Whipple came to present day Decoto to begin farming.

1864 – Old Fellows Hall was built as the Armory for the Alvarado Guards.

1867 – First railroad line went through Decoto area. The Western Pacific Railroad line ran through Niles Canyon and turned north to Oakland and South to San Jose.

1868 – First recorded earthquake hit the Union City area at 7:45 AM on October 21.

1868 – Union Pacific Salt Company incorporated by John Whortum.

1868 – Brick shop in Alvarado destroyed.

1870 – Decoto founded. Decoto brothers purchased 284 acres from Western Pacific Railroad.

1870 – Streets in Decoto laid out after railroad put in.

1870 – Dry Creek Picnic Park.

1870 – Dyer brothers delivered the first ton of sugar to markets in the Western United States.

1871 – Sugar beet processing plant opened in Alvarado.

1871 – Decoto Post Office was established.

1873 – Glue factory was established.

1877 – Alvarado Post Office opened.

1878 – First Decoto general store opened by Andrew Jackson. Central Pacific Stadium Agent is the owner.

1878 – Second rail line built in Union City. Southern Pacific Railroad ran from Santa Cruz through Alviso, over the bay marshes of Newark, to Alvarado and then eventually Oakland. Alvarado Station built.

1878 – Alvarado slough connected with San Francisco. Captain James Barron took first load of Alvarado grain to San Francisco.

1878 – Hall shelter built.

1880 – Alvarado population reached 400.

1880 – International Order of Odd Fellows Hall built in Alvarado on Smith Street. Building served as a movie house and event center in the 1900s. Building demolished in 1964.

1882 – James Logan came to Union City. (The James Logan High School was named after him.)

1887 – Railroad spur to Alvarado Sugar Co.

1896 – Decoto population reached 600.

1897 – Masonic Home dedicated and built.

1900 – Decoto Volunteer Fire Department founded.

1902 – Alvarado Bank founded by I. V. Ralph.

1905 – Alvarado Fire Department founded.

1906 – Alvarado Volunteer Fire Department founded.

1907 – Our Lady of the Rosary founded.

1909 – Western Pacific Rail Line built in Decoto to the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART.)

1910 – Decoto population reached 950.

1910 - Decoto Branch Library opened.

1910 - Decoto Chamber of Commerce formed.

1910 – Decoto Station built, moved to San Jose in 1922.

1924 – New Alvarado School built with 13 classrooms.

1925 – New Decoto School built.

1925 – Holly Sugar Corporation purchased Alvarado Sugar Company.

1929 – Alvarado Pioneer Newspaper founded.

1930 – Betting parlors, salons and prostitution houses flourished in Alvarado in the 1920s. “Little Tijuana”, where Old Alvarado/Cesar Chavez Park is now, burned down in 1930.

1930 - Marlo Cannary founded in Decoto.

1936 – Mary Janeiro George was appointed Decoto Postmaster.

1937 – Pacific States Steel founded in Decoto.

1937 - The New Holly Sugar Factory completed. The company operated until 1967.

1937 – Salz Brothers warehouse built in Decoto.

1938 - September 16 – The Decoto Discussion Group was organized for Library study at the Decoto Branch of the Alameda County Library and has met monthly for 22 years.

1945 – The first Chinese farmer Wah Sing Cheng purchased land in Union City to farm.

1946 – World War II Memorial dedicated.

1949 – Elva Mae Rose Borghi was the Alameda County Fair Queen.

1950 – American Pipe Company founded (now known as U. S. Pipe.)

1951 - August 24 – The United Airlines flight No. 615, enroute to Oakland from the East Coast, crashed above the hills of Decoto and 44 passengers and six crewmembers were killed.

1952 - May 27 – Dr. Harold Schoenfeld was appointed superintendent of the Decoto Elementary School District.

1957 – Interstate 880 opened.

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**RECENT INTERESTING  
HAPPENINGS IN UNION CITY**



Maynard Estrellado is in charge of the sports activities in the newly opened Sports Center in Union City.



Some members of the Union City Historical Museum attended the preview of the Sports Center. Sponsored by the Union City Chamber of Commerce.



Kim Evans, a Union City Chamber of Commerce director and a Business Member of the Union City Historical Museum attended one of the mixers of the Chamber.



**Police Chief Greg Stewart at his installation ceremony.**



**Father Geoffrey Baraan of St. Anne Parish at his birthday party celebration**

## ALVARADO MEMORIES

*By Myrla Raymundo*

There is a grocery store across from the Union City Historical Museum on Smith Street. An Indian family runs it. Before, a Filipino family ran it. This store dates back to 1917.

Katsusaburo Matsumoto, who first worked in the salt mills and his wife Fusa, built and owned the grocery store. They started the store in 1917. They also had a boarding house next door. It was two stories high with the Japanese Association office on one side and a poolroom at the front.

Katsusaburo and Fusa's children are son Ben Matsumoto and daughters Grace Matsumoto Handa, Alice Matsumoto Motozaki and Dorothy Matsumoto.

His son, Ben Matsumoto, who was born in Alvarado, followed in his father's footsteps and operated the store. Ben was well known in Alvarado because of his grocery store.

The story goes that there was a store on Smith Street where the park is now. The store also had a Japanese language school in the backyard and rooms for rent on the second floor. The headman at the mill was Kakemoto, a contractor for laborers. He boarded his boys there and then took them to work at the salt mills each day. Later Leslie Salt built a camp on their property and the workers stayed there.

Across the street from Ben Matsumoto's store was a "whole string of gambling dens, a Chinatown." People used to come out of Oakland in the evenings

after work. The buildings in Chinatown were later burned down.

About Katsusaburo and Fusa Matsumoto's children.....Sumiko Matsumoto married Motoshin Motozaki, Ben Matsumoto married Sumiko Handa, Grace Handa married Barney Handa. and Dorothy Matsumoto never married.

Grace was a teacher at Loyola School in Alvarado and lived in the old house near the grocery store for many years. When she passed away, her son Steve spruced up the house and is presently residing there.

Dorothy Matsumoto now resides at the Senior Housing near the Ruggieri Senior Center.

### **Steve Handa Nephew of Ben Matsumoto**



Steve Handa is the son of Barney and Grace Matsumoto Handa. Grace lived in the old house near the grocery store. Steve's sisters Marian Handa and Jeri O'Brian live in another town. Steve attended Alvarado Elementary School in 1961, Barnard Jr. High School in 1969 and graduated at Logan High School in 1974. He attended Chabot and CalState Hayward. He is presently a contractor.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



**Teresita "Tessie" Gatan**

The Union City Historical Museum continues to thrive.

The purpose of the Union City Historical Museum is to preserve, maintain, protect and educate the public about the architectural, cultural, natural and historical heritage resources of the City of Union City.

With the resignation of our president Ben Elias, due to a very busy schedule in his job, I plan to continue the strategic plans that he started.

I will try to recruit more members and will make sure that they maintain their membership for a long time. I will try to stress to them the value of being lifetime members. I am sure they will reap excellent benefits by being "lifetimers."

There are many tasks to be done in the Museum.

The assigned Executive Director is doing an excellent job of the day-to-day work in the Museum.

The Fundraising Committee chairperson continues to come up with some fundraising ideas to generate the funds to keep the Museum going.

Some of the members work as docents and are doing great jobs in telling the history of our city.

The Union City Historical Museum Newsletter is a very good material to read. It is a source of historical news and new happenings in the area.

The Museum website contains information about the Museum.

The city has around 400 historic homes and buildings that the Historic Preservation Chairperson manages by sending letters to owners for possible historic designation of their properties.

Again, thank you for helping me and the Museum officers and directors in the achievement of our objectives and goals. We will continue with our good works.

Thank you Ben for helping the Museum during your term.

TESSIE GATAN

## CALL FOR BOARD NOMINATIONS

Dear Members,

It is time to elect new members to our Union City Historical Museum Board of Directors.

There are four seats open for officers and five seats open for directors.

The officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer) will hold their seats for a one-year term July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008.

The directors will hold their seats for a two-year term July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2009.

The purpose of the Union City Historical Museum is to preserve, maintain, protect and educate the public about the architectural, cultural, natural and historical heritage resources of the City of Union City.

The Nominating Committee will accept written nominations either in person or through the mail. Nominations must be received by the Museum no later than **5:00 PM – Friday April 20, 2007**. Nomination forms are attached.

Election will be held on the General Membership Meeting on **May 7, 2007** Monday at 7:00 PM at the Museum.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact the Museum at 324-3298.

## Meeting Agenda May 7, 2007

1. Approval of Museum Bylaws Changes. The following proposed revisions to the Museum Bylaws were approved by the Board of Directors in their meeting of April 2, 2007. It will be presented to the General Membership meeting on May 7, 2007 for final approval.

### ARTICLE VI: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 6: Regular Meetings –  
First sentence should be changed to:

*Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held **once every quarter**, but may be more frequent depending upon the corporation's needs.*

### ARTICLE IX: EXECUTION OF INSTRUMENTS AND FUNDS

Section 1: Delete Section 1 and replace with:

*Expenditures up to \$250 are to be approved by the President and Treasurer. Expenditures greater than \$250 are to be approved by the Board of Directors.*

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Myrla Raymundo, MBA, Founder/CEO

**Officers - July 1, 2006-June 30, 2007**

Teresita Gatan, President

Hugh McNamara, Treasurer

**Directors – July 1, 2006-June 30, 2008**

Mike Christ

Miles Price

Rorie Rabuy

Myrla Raymundo

Al Rose

Joey Golaw

**Directors- July 1, 2005- June 30, 2007**

Lupe St. Denis

Bruce Hevelin

Timothy Swenson

Al Minard

Dom S. Filardo

**Past President**

Ligfinio (Ray) Raymundo

**EDITORIAL BOARD**

**FY 2005-2007**

Myrla Raymundo, Editor

Jo Ann Lew

Miles Price

Ligfinio (Ray) Raymundo  
(Layout Artist/Production)

**MUSEUM TOURS**

Tours are conducted by Museum docents every Thursdays and Fridays. If you are interested to know the history of Union City, please stop by the Museum.

**MUSEUM LIFETIME MEMBERS**

Phil & Leila Verzola

John & Cathy Tester

Timothy & Catherine Swenson

Eva Kamakea

Georgia Megue & Mike dela Cruz

Ligfinio (Ray) & Myrla Raymundo

Gina Lewis

Reiner & Sheryl Glausch

Al & Marsha Badella

Barbara Scheifler

William & Dorothy Hubbard

Bob & Leslie Swartz

Steve Miller & Diane LaMountaine

Fernando & Helen Cabiles

Allen & Simona Cecil

Josephine Pando

Frank, Jr. & Elvamae Borghi

Angelo dela Cruz

Marcos, Jr. & Tessie Gatan

Joey and Vilma Golaw

**READ ALL ABOUT IT**

News coverage about Union City are clipped and filed by subject matter and are available at the Museum.

Myrla Raymundo started the collection in 1971. The Union City Library gave the Museum news clippings from 1800 through 1970.

**BOOKS! BOOKS! BOOKS!**

Several books are available for sale at the Museum. Please come and check them out. The book "UNION CITY THROUGH THE YEARS" authored by Myrla Raymundo is also available.